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KARL MARX, 1818-1883

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KARL MARX, 1818-1883

Introduction

Karl Marx, born in Germany in 1818, died a hundred years ago, on 14 March 1883. He struggled throughout his politically conscious life for the liberation of the working class and all humanity from all forms of oppression.

Together with his comrade, Friedrich Engels, he developed the theoretical framework of scientific socialism which remains the essential guide in the ongoing struggle against capitalism.

In this Supplement we reprint articles by Marxists outlining aspects of the life and work of Karl Marx. They also explain the continuing relevance for the working class and all oppressed people of Marxist theory and method.

The 100th anniversary of Marx's death has spilled onto the surface the capitalists' bitter fear and hatred of Marxism—which has continued to well up since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848 in which Marx and Engels signed the certificate of the inevitable death of capitalism.

In 1983 the spectre of Marxism is haunting the entire world of capitalism, and the totalitarian bureaucracies ruling the deformed workers' states of Russia, Eastern Europe, etc in the name of 'Marxism'.

To exorcise it, the political witchdoctors of the capitalists are piling on their anti-Marxist propaganda.

In the advanced capitalist countries, they argue that Marxism is irrelevant and outdated. In the ex-colonial world, they dismiss Marxism as a foreign ideology.

Also the Stalinist bureaucracies accuse the Polish workers struggling for workers' democracy, which is essential to the programme of Marxism, of

being imperialist agents!

The SA capitalist class, with its backward political habits, marked the anniversary with an aggressive and cynical note:

"Marxism is, and always has been, a disaster. In the interests of freedom (?) and prosperity (!?) of ordinary people it must be resisted with all the force at our command." (*Financial Mail*, 18/3/83)

As Lenin explained long ago, no other attitude is to be expected from capitalists or their 'scientists':

"The teaching of Marx evokes the greatest hostility and hatred on the part of all bourgeois science (both official and liberal) which regards Marxism as something in the nature of a 'pernicious sect'. All official and liberal science *defends* wage-slavery in one way or another, whereas Marxism has declared relentless war on that slavery. To expect science to be impartial in a society of wage-slavery is as silly and naive as to expect impartiality from employers on the question as to whether the workers' wages should be increased by decreasing the profits of capital." (*The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*.)

But what is Marxism? Marxism is the generalised experience of life of

the working class under capitalism. It is the conscious understanding of the experience of political oppression and economic exploitation of the working class by the capitalists, and of their struggle for political and social liberation.

For the black SA workers, political rightlessness, pass laws, influx control, homelessness, poverty wages, unemployment, etc., and struggles against these evils, are the embodiment of capitalism.

It is these social evils that the SA capitalists vow to maintain "with all the force at (their) command".

The capitalists' virulent hatred of Marxism reflects the world-wide bankruptcy of their system. It reflects their fear of the workers and oppressed who are today moving into huge struggles all around the world against the monstrous barriers of capitalism and Stalinism which stand in the way of human progress.

Scientific

All these struggles, however, are vindicating the truth and scientific correctness of the teaching of Marx that obsolete systems will be thrown on the junkheap of history.

The first two articles reprinted here, outlining Marx's political development and the method that he evolved, are from *Militant*, weekly Marxist paper in the British labour movement (4 and 18 March, 1983). The British capitalists and right-wing labour leaders have launched a furious witchhunt against the supporters of *Militant* precisely because, through its application of the Marxist method and relentless fight for a socialist programme, it is gaining a growing response among workers and youth.

The articles explain that Marx was not merely spinning out theories in the British Museum about the working-class revolution, but that he was a revolutionary himself. His own life showed, as his teachings explained, that revolutionary theory and practice are inseparable.

These articles are followed by extracts from three other great teachers of Marxism: Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Engels's letter to Bloch deals with the familiar distortion of Marxism, that it is 'one-sided' and explains the historical development of society as being determined purely by economics. In reply, Engels shows that there is a much more complex and many-sided interaction of forces which determines social conditions, although "the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life..."

Since the time of Marx and Engels, history has not moved in a straight line. The working class has experienced victories but also defeats. The transition from capitalism to socialism has been more protracted, and taken a more complex course, than they could have anticipated.

Each ebb and flow of the struggle, however, has confirmed the correctness of the Marxist method and enriched it through the labour of those who have understood and applied it consistently.

At the same time, there have been many Marxists who have lost their bearings, their perspective and their confidence in the working class. The traditions of Marxism have also been obscured by the many opportunists, imposters and quacks who have mas-

queraded in its name.

These developments are placed in perspective in the article here by Lenin, written in 1913—its arguments are confirmed even more profoundly by the later history of the 20th century.

Within a year after Lenin wrote this article, most of the so-called 'Marxist' leaders of the Second International were supporting their 'own' bourgeois governments in the First World War—a huge setback for the workers' movement.

Confidence

Yet Lenin's confidence in the workers' revolution was not shaken. Through the method of Marxism, he was able to comprehend the new developments and thus prepare the way for the Bolshevik Party to lead the Russian working class in 1917 to establish the first lasting workers' state in history.

Scarcely ten years later Trotsky, together with Lenin the leader of the Russian Revolution, found himself exiled from Russia and isolated, as a result of the Stalinist political counter-revolution in the USSR, and the defeats of the working class internationally. Nevertheless he continued to apply and enrich the Marxist method in brilliant analyses of the complex events through which the working class was passing.

Reprinted here is his introduction to the first Afrikaans edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, prepared by his supporters in South Africa. This short piece shows the fundamental

and lasting correctness of the *Manifesto's* perspective, and simultaneously updates it in the light of history since 1848.

Trotsky's revolutionary leadership served to maintain and develop the Marxist armoury of the working class through the period of huge defeats inflicted on it in the inter-war years. His writings have also provided the foundations on which Marxism since the Second World War has maintained itself and launched into new growth.

Marxism is above all a guide to working-class action and struggle. The final article reprinted here is from the *Militant Irish Monthly* (March 1983), Marxist journal in the Irish labour movement. It sums up the programme of Marxism in relation to different parts of the world—a programme which is the practical conclusion of the painstaking analysis carried out by Marxists of the lessons of history and class struggle up to the present stage.

Concretely working out the tasks of national and social liberation in Southern Africa is the responsibility resting on all militants active in our struggle. Reading the articles reprinted here, and studying the classic writings of Marxism, activists can help to arm themselves and the working class against disorientation, against the disappointment of setbacks, against the diversions of 'pacifist' opportunism, armed adventurism, etc.

Unity on this basis is the key to building a mass ANC of the working class that can lead all the oppressed to the armed overthrow of the apartheid regime and the whole capitalist system.

Marx the revolutionary

By Brian Ingham

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it".

These now famous words were written by Marx in 1845. They fully convey the spirit in which he was to live out his life over the next 38 years.

No one has ever understood more clearly than Marx the importance of theory to the working class movement and his contribution in the theoretical field has been acknowledged ever since by all the great teachers of socialism as second to none.

But Marx was not the white-haired academic recluse which, since his death, countless historians have attempted to depict. He was to his core a revolutionary fighter, an organiser, speaker, publicist and pamphleteer, vigorously struggling to free society of class oppression, exploitation, misery and want.

After Marx's death in 1883, Engels, his lifelong friend, co-thinker and intimate political co-worker, paid tribute to the theoretical legacy which Marx, "the greatest living thinker", had left to the workers of the world. "Marx", Engels added, "was above all a revolutionary, and his great aim in life was to co-operate in this or that fashion in the overthrow of capitalist society and the state institutions which it had created, to co-operate in the emancipation of the modern proletariat, to whom he was the first to give a consciousness of its class position and its class needs, a knowledge of the conditions necessary for its emancipation. In this struggle he was in his element, and he fought with a passion and tenacity and with a success granted to few".

When only 24 years old, he had collaborated with sections

of the Rhineland liberal capitalist class in establishing the radical *Rheinische Zeitung* ('Rhineland Newspaper'), of which he soon became the editor. Engels later commented that the *Rheinische Zeitung* "wore out one censor after another. Finally it came under double censorship...that also was of no avail. In the beginning of 1843 the government declared that it was impossible to keep this newspaper in check and suppressed it without more ado".

Marx was never intimidated by such acts of oppression. On the contrary, they merely steeled his resolve to continue the struggle in an even more steadfast manner. On this occasion he left for France where he was able to gain more experience of the socialist and communist ideas circulating outside Germany, and where he began his lifelong collaboration with Engels.

Marx and Engels clarified the basic tenets of scientific socialism, and they began to work painstakingly to build the very first foundations of a party based upon these principles.

Various groupings of intellectuals existed in Europe at that time, each peddling some utopian socialist scheme, but each also devoid of any real contact with the working class. Marx and Engels refused to join any of these organisations, most of which still cloaked themselves in masonic-type conspiratorial airs. Instead, they formed their own tiny propaganda group.

Marx later explained that in this period: "We issued a series of pamphlets, some of them printed, other lithographed, mercilessly criticising the mixture of Anglo-French socialism or communism and German philosophy...and putting forward instead a scientific insight into the economic structure of bourgeois society as the only tenable basis, explaining this in a popular form and pointing out that the task was not to work out a utopian system but to participate consciously in the historical process of social transformation taking place before our eyes".

In January 1847 Marx and Engels were persuaded to join the 'League of the Just', an organisation, mainly, though by no means exclusively, made up of expatriate German artisans, which had been formed in a number of European centres. The leaders of the League had been won round to the ideas and organisational methods of Marx and Engels.

Under their influence it changed its name to the 'Communist League' and re-organised itself for active propaganda work among the working class. It also dropped its old slogan: "All men are brothers" in favour of the battle cry: "Workers of the world unite".

It was the Communist League which commissioned Marx and Engels to write the *Communist Manifesto*. This appeared only a matter of weeks before the February Revolution in Paris began a revolutionary earthquake that reverberated around the whole of Europe.

Marx was to emerge as one of the central and most decisive leaders of the German revolution of 1848-49. He had been prepared for the epic part he was to play, by his political and revolutionary activity over the previous 10 years or so. Now his painstaking propaganda work gave way to energetic activity in the maelstrom of great historical events.

Having been hounded out of France in 1845, after pressure from the Prussian government, Marx now faced arrest and banishment from his new home in Belgium. Momentarily he returned to Paris, where a representative of the Provisional government elected in February was offering him both refuge and citizenship.

Then he moved to the Rhineland as editor of the newly founded *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* ('New Rhineland Newspaper'), a paper established mainly with money from liberal capitalist shareholders.

In both France and England revolutionary conflict unfolded between the working class and the capitalists, as foreshadowed in the *Communist Manifesto*, but in Italy and Germany it was still necessary for the infant proletariat to ally itself with the emerging liberal industrialists in order to successfully conclude

the struggle with feudal despotism.

The capitalist class, however, proved to be contemptible allies, even in their own revolution! At every serious test they gave way to reaction.

Marx fought through the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and through tireless personal activity to stiffen these temporary allies, but in vain. The liberal bourgeoisie in general retreated under pressure from the reaction, and as they did, those connected with the paper withdrew their financial support so that Marx was compelled to plough his own meagre savings into the paper as the only means of keeping it alive.

Marx attempted to lead the movement in the Rhineland back onto the offensive. Special editions of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* called for: a boycott of taxes to the victorious counter-revolutionary government; for the arming of the people; and for armed resistance against "the enemy".

For this stand he faced arrest and trial. But neither Marx nor the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* were that easily silenced. At his trial he stood firm, defended the revolutionary movement and mercilessly attacked the forces of reaction. As a result the jury acquitted him and the foreman even thanked him for his instructive remarks!

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* continued for a short time after this until the reaction had gathered enough strength to close it down altogether and expel Marx from Prussian territory. The last defiant issue, after 301 issues in all (sometimes appearing 7 days a week), appeared in red ink on May 19th 1849, warning the people against any attempt to seize power while the military situation was unfavourable, thanking its readers for their sympathy and support, and declaring that their final word always and everywhere would be: "The emancipation of the working class".

Marx was again forced into exile, first in France, and then, compelled to move once more, he settled in London where he lived for the rest of his life.

Initially he worked to help re-assemble the Communist League, in the preparation for the expected renewed revolutionary upsurge. This upsurge, however, did not materialise. By 1852 it was clear that the tide of European revolt had temporarily ebbed.

The Communist League began to break up into different squabbling sects. Marx and Engels stepped to one side, finding the atmosphere of these groups increasingly sterile. Marx began to devote his energies primarily to his important theoretical work on economics and to earning a precarious living as a correspondent of the *New York Tribune*.

Nevertheless, he still kept in regular active contact with the emerging working class movements, especially in Germany and Britain. He was, for instance, a frequent contributor to *The People's Paper*, the paper founded in 1852 by the revolutionary wing of the Chartists.

It was not until 1864, however, that Marx was able fully once again to pick up the threads of his practical revolutionary activity. By then, Engels wrote: "The Labour Movement in the various countries of Europe had so far regained strength that Marx could entertain the idea of realising a long-cherished wish: the foundation of a Workers' Association embracing the most advanced countries of Europe and America, which would demonstrate bodily, so to speak, the international character of the socialist movement both to the workers themselves and to the bourgeois and the governments...A mass meeting in favour of Poland...on September 28, 1864 provided the occasion..."

"The International Working Men's Association was founded; a provisional General Council with its seat in London, was elected at the meeting, and Marx was the soul of this as of all subsequent General Councils up to the Hague Congress. He drafted almost every one of the documents issued by the General Council of the International, from the *Inaugural Address* of 1864, to the *Address on the Civil War in France*".

"For 10 years", wrote Engels, "the International dominated

one side of European history—the side on which the future lies”. The International gathered under its banner all the various conflicting tendencies within the Labour Movement of Europe and America, including French, Swiss and Belgian followers of the anarchist Bakunin, the utopian Proudhon, German followers of Lassalle and British trade unionists.

London was the home of the General Council. Marx considered Britain to be the key country in the struggle for socialism, given the more advanced stage that both capitalism and the organisations of the working class had achieved.

Marx therefore insisted upon direct representation on the General Council for all trade unions and other working class organisations affiliated from Britain, and it was only towards the end of the life of the International that there was a separate British Federation.

Marx strove to develop the International as a truly mass movement. Affiliation was open to all individuals and organisations which accepted the need to struggle for an end to the yoke of capitalist exploitation. But Marx never attempted to bureaucratically force his own theoretical views or tactics on any section; he believed that it was only through joint action and discussion that genuine agreement and genuine unity emerge.

In drawing up the *Inaugural Address*, Marx was conscious of the different stages of theoretical development reached by the labour movement in each country. Therefore, while repeating the fundamental ideas expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*, the tone was different. “Time is necessary”, he wrote to Engels; “before the movement can allow the old boldness of speech. The need of the moment is bold in matter, but mild in manner”.

The practical achievements of the International included mobilising solidarity during numerous industrial struggles, among them the 1871 Tyneside Engineers’ strike and the London basket makers dispute of 1867. Such was the authority of the International among British trade unionists that at one point the Annual Congress of Trades Unions in 1869 urgently called all working class organisations in the United Kingdom to affiliate to the International.

The authority of the International in Britain was also built up by its work in the Reform League, the body created to fight for the old Chartist demand: “Universal Manhood Suffrage”. Half the executive of the Reform League were members of the General Council.

Marx personally worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help establish the Reform League, which then rapidly developed as a mass campaigning force, dreaded by the capitalist class which saw within it the spectre of revolution. Continual mass pressure from the League bore down upon the ruling class until the government brought in new electoral reform legislation.

It was a limited reform, extending the vote only to the middle class and to skilled workers, but it was sufficient to mollify the main trade union leaders and split the movement. After this, most of the union leaders who had been active in the International began more and more to accommodate themselves to the Liberals, some hoping in this way to find their own personal passage into Parliament.

The final cleavage with these opportunist leaders came after the Paris Commune, the finest hour for the working class during the lifetime of the International.

In 1871, after the fall of France in the war with Prussia, Parisian workers seized control of Paris, forming the first ever workers’ state in history. From afar—and through intermediaries—Marx made every effort to steer the Commune along the path to victory.

The Commune was to prove, however, to be only a brief if glorious episode. Tragically, the Commune was drowned in blood.

“The Commune gave the mischievous abortion Thiers (the leader of the French government—*Editor*) time to centralise

hostile forces”, wrote Marx... “They should immediately have advanced on Versailles”, in other words spread the revolution by taking over the Bank of France, the government buildings and advancing to the other cities.

After the crushing of the Commune, the International came under a savage assault from all the European governments who saw the International’s, and Marx’s, guiding hand in the Commune.

The response of many fainthearts in the International—including some of those trade union leaders associated with the International—was to denounce the Commune and distance themselves from the heroic French workers.

Even though he had not advocated the formation of the Commune, such a stand would never have entered Marx’s head. Within days of the fall of the Commune he issued his defiant defence of the Commune, *The Civil War in France*, which to this day remains an inspiration and as an invaluable source of guidance for the labour movement.

Marx and Engels immediately understood the tremendous historic significance of the Commune. They studied it carefully to see how the experience of the Commune could enrich further the working class movement and help it to be better prepared for the future.

With this in mind they wrote into the Preface of the 1872 German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, the following central lesson: “One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz, that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes’”.

Throughout the life of the International Marx and Engels had to contend with political opponents who fought political battles not with ideas but with manoeuvre and intrigue. After the defeat of the Commune these intrigues intensified, especially on the part of the followers of the anarchist, Bakunin.

With the International facing crippling blows from state authorities throughout Europe, the danger existed that Bakunin’s followers might wrest control. Marx and Engels acted decisively to prevent this and to preserve intact the historical prestige of the International in the eyes of the world working class.

At the 1872 Hague Congress they secured the transfer of the General Council to New York, thus effectively bringing to an end this momentous chapter of working class history.

Engels, later explaining the action of himself and Marx at this time, wrote: “There are circumstances in which one must have the courage to sacrifice momentary success for more important things. Especially for a party like ours, whose ultimate success is so absolutely certain...”

“...We knew very well that the bubble (of the International) must burst. All the riff-raff attached themselves to it. The sectarians within it became arrogant and misused the International in the hope that the meanest and most stupid actions would be permitted them. We did not allow that. Knowing well that the bubble must burst at some time our concern was not to delay the catastrophe but to take care that the International emerged from it pure and unadulterated”.

With the end of the International Marx once again began to give priority to his theoretical work. Though always as long as he lived he remained actively involved in the life of the labour movement, attempting to steer it forward along the most constructive path.

In 1881 Engels commented: “By his theoretical and practical achievements Marx has gained for himself such a position that the best people in all the working class movements throughout the world have full confidence in him. At critical junctures they turn to him for advice and then usually find that his counsel is the best.”

“This position he holds in Germany, in France, in Russia, not to mention in the smaller countries. It is therefore not a case of Marx forcing his opinion, and still less his will, on people but of the people coming to him of themselves. And it is

upon this that Marx's peculiar influence, so extremely important for the movement, reposes".

In 1883 he finally fell victim to his chronic ill health. Throughout his adult life he had been plagued by recurring illness. He also had to endure desperate poverty and terrible personal tragedies. But because of his unshakeable confidence in the socialist future of mankind he always was able to summon the will for the struggle against capitalism.

Marx's ideas and the example of his personal revolutionary activity live on.

In 1917 when the Russian working class threw out Czarist autocracy and took their destinies into their own hands, they were led by conscious followers of Marx.

The Stalinist totalitarian bureaucracy which usurped the Russian Revolution nowadays print the works of Marx, and no doubt they will also perform elaborate "celebrations" this year, supposedly in his honour. If only Marx had been alive to answer them himself! Their totalitarian police regime is a monstrous affront to the socialist cause to which he dedicated his entire life.

In Britain and other capitalist countries, there are many who boast some allegiance to Marx, only to deny his heritage by working continually to reconcile the separate and irreconcilable interests of the working class with those of the capitalist class. Fortunately, throughout his works, Marx has already answered these so-called "Marxists" in advance!

If he were active today Marx would be more confident than ever of the future. The working class throughout the world possesses an absolutely unrivalled strength, way beyond that built up during Marx's life-time. All the social diseases of the capitalist world which he fought are returning again with a vengeance. But never have there been greater objective possibilities for socialism.

Let our generation end forever the nightmare of capitalism and Stalinism. Let us build the kind of society about which Marx wrote and to which he dedicated his life.

At Marx's graveside in 1883, Engels finished his address with these words: "Marx was the best-hated and most slandered man of his age. Governments, both absolutist and republican, expelled him from their territories, whilst the bourgeois, both conservative and extreme democratic, vied with each other in a campaign of vilification against him.

"He brushed it all to one side like cobwebs, ignored them and answered them only when compelled to do so. And he died honoured, loved and mourned by millions of revolutionary workers from the Siberian mines over Europe and America to the coast of California, and I make bold to say that though he had many opponents he had hardly a personal enemy.

"His name will live on through the centuries and so also will his work."

(*Militant* 18/3/1983)

Marx - founder of scientific socialism

By John Pickard

Marx was born and educated in the Rhine province, the most industrialised and economically advanced part of Prussia.

Sections of the Rhenish capitalist class were involved in the movements for democratic rights and for the unification of Germany, because the division of Germany into small kingdoms and principalities (with the exception being the relatively large Prussian state), with all their separate feudal customs and legal restrictions, was an obstacle to the development of capitalism. The Prussian state-bureaucracy was dominated by the old class of landlords, the 'Junkers', particularly of East Prussia.

When the young Marx went to university to study law, like most of his contemporaries, he came to embrace the philosophy of Hegel whose ideas dominated the German universities.

Both Marx and Engels considered that Hegelian *dialectics*, described by Engels as "the science of the general laws of motion, both of external world and of human thought," represented an enormous achievement in modern philosophy.

The basic idea of dialectics, as Engels later wrote, was "that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away..."

Lenin, in his pamphlet on the *Three Sources and Component Parts of Marxism*, described dialectical development as a process "that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis ("the negation of the negation"), a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes and revolutions; in continuity; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society..."

The practical proof of dialectics lies in nature and also in the development of society. Darwin, for example, first explained how living things develop and change as a result of "the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies ac-

ting on a given body" (the theory of evolution). Marx and Engels, applying the dialectical method to human society, were to explain how different social systems had arisen historically and, as a result of their inner contradictions, had given way in turn to higher social systems in a series of "leaps, catastrophes and revolutions".

The dialectical method thus differs fundamentally from the mode of thought accepted as 'normal' in capitalist society, which confines itself to the horizons of the existing social order; to which society, and with it the world in general, consists of more or less fixed, unchanging 'categories', without inner impulses towards transformation. On this basis, change in society or elsewhere becomes understood as something accidental, or as the result of 'outside' influences (divine intervention, communist agitation, etc.).

However, Hegel's own view of the world, whilst embracing dialectics, was based on a *idealistic* framework, that is to say, it was based on the supremacy of ideas, of thoughts, of concepts—of *mental* processes, in other words—over *material* things. Hegel viewed the historical development of society, of the living world, as being due in the final analysis to the development of the human spirit, the 'Absolute Idea'.

His political ideas were out-and-out reactionary. He sought to justify the strong Prussian state as something approaching the ideal constitutional form. After his death, a furious struggle developed between the 'Old Hegelians' who followed the old man's politics and the 'Young Hegelians' who accepted the basis of his philosophy—dialectics—but who were radical democrats, opposed to the Prussian state.

Marx himself became involved in one of the Young Hegelian clubs and gained an early reputation as one of its most able advocates. It was because of his involvement in these circles that he was given, in 1842, the job of contributor and then editor of the radical-democratic newspaper, *Rheinische Zeitung*, backed financially by Rhenish radicals.

Marx was by this time influenced by another German philosopher, the materialist Feuerbach, and in his *Contribu-*

tion to the *Critique of Hegel's philosophy of Law*, Marx already concluded that legal relations could not be understood on the basis of the "general development of the human mind", as Hegel believed. He argued, on the contrary, that legal relations originated in the material conditions of life.

During the period of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, unlike many of his Young Hegelian contemporaries, Marx became more involved in the concrete political questions of the day. Through the pages of his paper he furiously attacked the privileges of the Junkers and the restrictions and oppression of the Prussian state bureaucracy.

He commented on the debates in the Rhenish Diet (parliament) where the representatives of the capitalist class fought out their battles with the state, and at the other end of the scale, on the struggles of ordinary workers and peasants, even, for example, in relation to their fight for the right to collect firewood in the royal forests.

Marx also saw, as he was to see many times in his life, the weakness of these capitalist democrats who were often 'radical' in words but who were not prepared to struggle against the feudal reaction because they feared the working class more than they feared the Prussian Junkers.

In a later period, after the 1848 revolution was betrayed by them, he wrote bitterly of the capitalists as a class:

"Without faith in itself, without faith in the people, grumbling at those above, frightened of those below, egotistical towards both and aware of its egoism, revolutionary with regard to the conservatives and conservative with regard to the revolutionaries. It did not trust its own slogans, used phrases instead of ideas, it was intimidated by the world storm and exploited it for its own ends; it displayed no energy anywhere..."

The weakness of the Rhenish capitalist class brought about Marx's first enforced exile. Despite the increasing circulation of *Rheinische Zeitung* under Marx's editorship, when the Prussian government finally decided to suppress or behead the paper in March 1843, the 'radical' capitalist shareholders meekly submitted. Rather than stand and fight for the paper, they sacrificed its editor and Marx went into exile in Paris.

There he became involved in the local revolutionary-democratic movements. He was particularly associated with an organisation of German workers, known as the 'League of the Just', of whom he wrote, in a letter to Feuerbach, "...the brotherhood of man is no mere phrase with them, but a fact of life, and the nobility of man shines upon us from their work-hardened bodies."

While others of his contemporaries were indifferent to, or underestimated the role of the working class, Marx already saw the enormous potential of their struggles and their political organisation.

At about this time Marx began a collaboration with another former 'Young Hegelian', Frederick Engels, and it proved to be a partnership which lasted a lifetime. Their first joint work was a polemic against the stagnant, sectarian politics of their former associates among the Young Hegelians. *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism* was, as the irony in the title implies, a merciless criticism of those Young Hegelians who were trapped in the mire of scholastic 'criticism', divorced from the realities of life.

Whereas Marx and Engels had moved on from their former days, some of the Young Hegelians had not. They were radicals in name only; they saw the labouring classes as a more or less inert mass incapable of changing society. They looked instead to their own intellectual labours, their "critical criticism", as the only motive force in history, not unlike all those present-day "Marxist" professors and academics who have long since written-off the working class. Marx and Engels, in contrast, spoke of the workers as the class which "can and must emancipate itself" by the abolition of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Although in *The Holy Family*, Marx and Engels give an

outline of their materialist conception of history, the most complete and general exposition was contained in a later work by them begun in December 1845, *The German Ideology*. Marx and Engels, it should be noted, had come to the same general conclusions quite independently of each other, and their subsequent collaboration was so close, that it is difficult to discuss the work of one without discussing the other.

In a later reference to *The German Ideology*, in his *Preface to the first part of A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx wrote: "Frederick Engels...arrived by another road at the same result as I and...we decided to set forth together our conception as opposed to the ideological conception of German philosophy." Thus together, they set to work on *The German Ideology*, in order, as Marx phrased it, "to settle accounts with our former philosophical consciences."

In this work, Marx and Engels described the *material* basis of all historical development, as opposed to the *idealistic* view held by Hegel and others:

"The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals..."

"Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas etc., that is real active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these..."

"In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here it is a matter of ascending from earth to heaven. That is to say, not of setting out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh; but setting out from real active men and on the basis of their real life processes demonstrating the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life process..." In other words: "It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness."

Although both Marx and Engels were influenced by the materialist philosophy of Feuerbach, they could also see the weakness in his ideas. Feuerbach's materialism was *undialectical*; it contained no element of change and development. Whereas Feuerbach saw the world, as Marx and Engels put it, "as a thing given direct for all eternity, remaining ever the same..." *The German Ideology* presented a view of a world which was "the product of industry...a historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the previous one."

"As far as Feuerbach is a materialist", they wrote, "he does not deal with history, and as far as he considers history, he is not a materialist."

Marx and Engels, therefore, rejected Hegel's idealism, while embracing the dialectic; they embraced Feuerbach's materialism, while rejecting his "fixed" view of the world. Their view of history was at once dialectical and materialist, a synthesis of the best elements of Hegel and Feuerbach.

Using the materialist conception of history as the basis, it was possible to understand the progress of humanity from one form of society to another.

In a later work, his *Preface to the first part of a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, (1859), Marx summarised the basics of historical materialism:

"The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but their social being that determines their consciousness."

"At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters."

"Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the

economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political religious or philosophic—in short, ideological forms—in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.”

Marx and Engels thus argued that the laws, morals and ideas generally which were dominant in capitalism were only those of the ruling class. “The class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force.” The theoreticians of capitalism—economists and philosophers—would attempt, of course, to picture their own system as the most perfect, the product not of their own class interests but of general human development, progressing from less perfect forms of society. The capitalist system, they argue, would endure for ever.

Marx and Engels, on the other hand, put capitalism in its historical context, showing its emergence from feudalism, its flowering and its eventual decay. It was the very development of the means of production which had forced the breakdown of feudalism (and was still doing so in Germany and central Europe), overcoming the old property rights, customs and legal restrictions standing in its way.

Where the legal and juridical values of capitalism were established, as they were in England especially, they provided the framework for the unfettered growth of industrial capitalism.

But capitalism also carried within it the seeds of its own destruction, in the form of the proletariat, the industrial working class. Marx and Engels saw the working class, a new social class developing alongside the capitalist class, as the standard-bearers of the future.

As the means of production, the material forces of society, developed further, a point would be reached where the property relations (i.e. the property laws of capitalism) would themselves become a barrier to further social development. “From the forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters.”

Thus Marx and Engels anticipated the present day situation where world capitalism is in crisis, unable to develop society, because private property and the nation state, once progressive social features, are now absolute fetters on economic progress.

The authors of *The German Ideology* thus separated themselves by a huge chasm from all those various philanthropists, do-gooders and social reformers who sought to retain capitalism itself, while satisfying their consciences by trying to ameliorate the worst aspects of capitalist exploitation. They also distinguished themselves from the ‘utopian’ socialists who thought that moral persuasion or the establishment of ‘co-operatives’ would offer a means of changing society.

Marx and Engels did not run away from the idea of class struggle; they embraced it, and gave it its historical justification. “Revolution”, they wrote, “is the driving force of history, also of religion, of philosophy and all other kinds of theory.”

The working class, they explained, through its very conditions of existence under capitalism, would inevitably come into conflict with its ‘masters’, at first partially and spontaneously, and later consciously, as a class. The working class, overthrowing the capitalists, would take hold of the levers of society and prepare the way for a classless society; private property and the nation state would disappear.

Socialism was thus given a solid foundation and a scientific basis for the first time. It was no longer in the realm of ‘dreams’ and ‘nice ideas’ but was firmly rooted in the science of material social development.

Paul Lafargue, the French socialist who later married Marx’s daughter, Laura, wrote, on reading the manuscript of *The Ger-*

man Ideology, “...it was if scales fell from my eyes. For the first time I could see clearly the logic of world history and could trace the apparently so contradictory phenomena of development of society and ideas to their material origins. I felt dazzled...”

However, despite initial attempts, *The German Ideology* was never published in the lifetime of either author. “We abandoned the manuscript”, Marx wrote later, “to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly since we had achieved our main purpose—self clarification.”

In the next few years, Marx was involved with Engels in organising “communist correspondence committees”, linking groups of socialists in Brussels where they now lived, to others in London, Paris, Hamburg, Cologne, and other cities. During this period, Marx was forced on many occasions to take up the cudgels against a variety of confused semi-utopian, sectarian and middle-class trends in the socialist movement.

Joseph Proudhon, the French utopian socialist, wrote *The Philosophy of Poverty*, and when Marx published his devastating reply, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, it was the first occasion that the general basis of historical materialism, was published, although in a polemical form.

The most popular exposition of historical materialism, however, and the work which still “dazzles” workers who read it for the first time today, is the *Communist Manifesto*, another joint work with Engels.

Marx and Engels had both been invited in 1847 to join the ‘League of the Just’ and they very quickly became the theoretical leaders of that organisation. The League changed its name to the “Communist League” under their persuasion because Marx and Engels wanted to distinguish their group from the ‘Owenites’ in Britain, and other strands of utopians, on the one hand, and the “social quacks” and philanthropists on the other, ‘who all at that time went under the general title of ‘socialists’.

The Communist League, at its congress in late 1847, instructed Marx and Engels to draft a manifesto outlining the philosophy and the policy of the League. This they did and the *Communist Manifesto*, published the following February, had an immediate and powerful effect on those workers it reached.

Written in a popular and accessible style, without vulgarising the ideas however, the pamphlet describes the rise and development of capitalism, as neither an historical ‘accident’ nor as a permanent feature.

They described the role of the working class in production under capitalism and its future role in forging a new society: “not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself, it has called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the proletarians.”

The *Communist Manifesto*, from the first section that comments: “the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggle”, is at the same time a perspective, a programme, a polemic against the utopians and others, and a call to action, ending with the famous lines, “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!”

The prophetic words that opened the *Communist Manifesto*—“A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism”—were given substance a few days after it was published. On February 22nd, King Louis Phillippe of France was overthrown, launching France into a turbulent period of revolution and counter-revolution.

Weeks later, other European nations were caught in the same whirlwind as insurrections broke out in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Central Europe, Italy and Poland. Marx and Engels themselves were to play no small part in the revolutionary movement that developed in Germany, in 1848-1849.

The same “spectre” referred to by Marx and Engels still haunts Europe, and the world, today. The economic and social crises in the three main areas of the world—the advanced capitalist states, the Stalinist states, and the underdeveloped

world—are reaching such a stage that the next historical period promises to be the most turbulent in the whole of human history.

Only the socialist transformation of society, on a world scale, can offer a future for mankind.

The fundamental ideas of Marxism, of scientific socialism, retain their full force and validity today. Marxism is at present a minority view within society, and even in the labour movement, but a glimpse of the enormous potential of these ideas today can be caught by the frantic attempts of the capitalist class and their spokesmen in the labour movement to expel the *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party. But they will fail to expel the ideas.

In the course of his own lifetime, Marx was forced into exile not once, but four times. His ideas were often ridiculed by 'theoreticians' who unlike Marx, have since sunk into deserved obscurity.

While more 'modern' philosophies have disappeared without trace, leaving no impression on society, the method and outlook

of Marxism retains its full force today. Even the spokesmen and representatives of capitalism acknowledge and employ the method of Marx, of *class analysis* (though of course from their own standpoint) in their more serious journals and publications.

In the last one hundred and forty years all kinds of attempts have been made to suppress Marx's ideas, to distort and misrepresent them, or to simply write them off. But as Marx said, "Life determines consciousness". As much as Marx's ideas have been an enormous inspiration to the struggles of workers in the hundred years since his death—the outstanding example being the October Russian Revolution—the very condition that workers will experience in the dead-ends of capitalism and Stalinism will ensure that the best period for these ideas lies in the future not in the past.

One hundred years on, Marxism is still the most modern and relevant philosophy and the only one to hold a future for mankind. (*Militant*, 4/3/83)

On historical materialism

Letter by Friedrich Engels to Joseph Bloch

London, September 21, 1890

According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc.—forms of law—and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the combatants: political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into systems of dogma—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (i.e., of things and events, whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible to prove that we regard it as absent and can neglect it), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history one chose would be simpler than the solution of a simple equation....

We make our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political ones, etc., and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds also play a part, although not the decisive one. The Prussian state arose and developed from historical, ultimately from economic causes. But it could scarcely be maintained without pedantry that among the many small states of North Germany, Brandenburg was specifically determined by economic necessity to become the great power embodying the economic, linguistic and, after the Reformation, also the religious difference between north and south, and not by other elements as well (above all by its entanglement with Poland, owing to the possession of Prussia, and hence with international, political relations—which were indeed also decisive in the formation of the Austrian dynastic power). Without making oneself ridiculous it would be difficult to succeed in explaining in terms of economics the existence of every small state in Germany, past and present, or the origin of the High German consonant mutations, which the geographical wall of partition formed by the mountains from the Sudetic range to the Taunus extended to a regular division throughout Germany.

In the second place, however, history makes itself in such

a way that the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each again has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event. This again may itself be viewed as the product of a power which, taken as a whole, works *unconsciously* and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed. Thus past history proceeds in the manner of a natural process and is also essentially subject to the same laws of movement. But from the fact that individual wills—of which each desires what he is impelled to by his physical constitution and external, in the last resort economic, circumstances (either his own personal circumstances or those of society in general)—do not attain what they want, but are merged into a collective mean, a common resultant, it must not be concluded that their value = 0. On the contrary, each contributes to the resultant and is to this degree involved in it.

I would ask you to study this theory further from its original sources and not at second hand; it is really much easier. Marx hardly wrote anything in which it did not play a part. But especially *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is a most excellent example of its application. There are also many allusions in *Capital*. Then I may also direct you to my writings, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* and *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, in which I have given the most detailed account of historical materialism which, so far as I know, exists.

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights. But when it was a case of presenting a section of history, that is, of a practical application, the thing was different and there no error was possible. Unfortunately, however, it happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have mastered its main principles, and even those not always correctly. And I cannot exempt many of the more recent "Marxists" from this reproach, for the most wonderful rubbish has been produced from this quarter too.

The historical destiny of the teaching of Karl Marx

By V.I. Lenin

The main thing in the teaching of Marx is the elucidation of the world-wide historical role of the proletariat as the builder of a socialist society. Has the progress of events in the world confirmed this teaching since it was expounded by Marx?

It was first put forward by Marx in 1844. Already the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, which appeared in 1848, gave a systematic exposition of this teaching, which exposition still remains the best even now. World history, since that time, is clearly divisible into three main periods: (1) From the 1848 Revolution to the Paris Commune (1871); (2) From the Paris Commune to the Russian Revolution (1905); (3) Since the Russian Revolution.

Let us cast a glance on the fate of the teaching of Marx in each of these periods.

I

In the beginning of the first period Marx's teaching does not by any means dominate. It is only one of very many fractions or streams in socialism. The forms of socialism which dominate are those which, in the main, are akin to our *Narodniks*; the lack of understanding of the materialist basis of the historical movement, the inability to assign the role and significance of each class in capitalist society, the masking of the bourgeois essence of democratic reorganisation by various, ostensibly socialist, phrases about "the people", "justice", "right", etc.

The 1848 Revolution struck a fatal blow at all these vociferous, multi-coloured and noisy varieties of pre-Marxian socialism. In all countries the Revolution showed the various classes of society *in action*. The shooting of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in the June Days in Paris, in 1848, finally established that the proletariat *alone* was of a socialist nature. The liberal bourgeoisie feared the independence of this class a hundred times more than any kind of reaction. Cowardly liberalism grovels before the latter. The peasantry is satisfied with the abolition of the remnants of feudalism and passes over to the side of order, and only from time to time wavers between *labour democracy and bourgeois liberalism*. All doctrines of class-less socialism and class-less politics turn out to be sheer nonsense.

The Commune of Paris (1871) completes this development of bourgeois reforms; it was only the heroism of the proletariat that brought about the consolidation of the republic, i.e., the form of state organisation in which the class relations appear in their most naked form.

In all other European countries a more confused and less finished development leads to the same formation of a bourgeois society. By the end of the first period (1848-71)—a period of storm and revolution—pre-Marxian socialism *dies*. Independent proletarian parties are born: the First International (1864-72) and the German Social-Democracy.

II

The second period (1872-1904) is distinguished from the first by its "peaceful" character, by the absence of revolutions. The West has finished with bourgeois revolutions. The East has not yet grown ripe for them.

The West enters into the phase of "peaceful" preparation for the epoch of future transformations. Socialist parties, proletarian in essence, are formed everywhere, parties which learn to use bourgeois parliamentarism, to establish their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their co-operatives. The teaching of Marx gains a complete victory

and *expands in breadth*. The process of selection and gathering of the forces of the proletariat and its preparation for the battles ahead proceeds slowly but steadily.

The dialectics of history is such that the theoretical victory of Marxism forces its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten to the core, tries to revive itself in the form of socialist *opportunism*. The period of preparation of the forces for great battles, is interpreted by them as the renunciation of these battles. Improvements in the position of the slaves enabling them to carry on a fight against wage-slavery is explained by them in the sense that the slaves are selling their liberty rights for a penny. In a cowardly manner they preach "social peace" (i.e., peace with slave-ownership), renunciation of the class struggle, etc. They have many adherents among socialist parliamentarians, the various officials in the labour movement, and the "sympathising" intellectuals.

III

The opportunists hardly had time to finish their hymns of praise to "social peace" and the needlessness of storms under "democracy", when a new source of the greatest of world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian Revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese. We are now living in the very epoch of these storms and their "repercussions" on Europe. Whatever fate may befall the great Chinese republic against which various "civilised" hyenas are now sharpening their teeth, no power in the world will re-establish serfdom in Asia, or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.

Some people, inattentive to the conditions of preparation and development of mass struggle, were reduced to a state of despair and anarchism by the long postponements of the decisive fight against capitalism in Europe. We now see how shortsighted and pusillanimous is this anarchist despair.

The fact of Asia, with its eight hundred million people, being drawn into the struggle for the same European ideals must be a source of courage and not of despair.

The Asiatic revolutions have shown us the same lack of backbone and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp line dividing the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. Anyone who, after the experience of Europe and Asia, speaks of class-less politics and class-less socialism, simply deserves to be put in a cage, to be exhibited side by side with some Australian kangaroo.

After Asia, Europe has also begun to stir, but in no Asiatic way. The "peaceful" period of 1872-1904 has gone completely, never to return. High cost of living and the pressure of the trusts is causing an unprecedented intensification of the economic struggle, which has roused even the British workers who are most of all corrupted by liberalism. Before our eyes, a political crisis is maturing even in the "die-hard", bourgeois-Junker country, Germany. Owing to the feverish race for armaments, and the policy of imperialism, the "social peace" of modern Europe is more like a barrel of gunpowder. And the decay of *all* bourgeois parties together with the maturing of the proletariat is proceeding steadily apace.

Since the rise of Marxism, every one of the three great epochs in world history has provided it with fresh proof and has brought it new triumphs. But the coming historical epoch is holding in store for Marxism, as the teaching of the proletariat, a still greater triumph.

Written in March 1913

The Communist Manifesto today

By Leon Trotsky

Coyoacan, October 30, 1937.

It is hard to believe that the centennial of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is only ten years away! This pamphlet, displaying greater genius than any other in world literature, astounds us even today by its freshness. Its most important sections appear to have been written yesterday. Assuredly, the young authors (Marx was 29, Engels 27) were able to look further into the future than anyone before them, and perhaps than anyone since them.

Already in their joint preface to the edition of 1872, Marx and Engels declared that despite the fact that certain secondary passages in the *Manifesto* were antiquated, they felt that they no longer had any right to alter the original text inasmuch as the *Manifesto* had already become a historical document, during the intervening period of twenty-five years. Sixty-five additional years have elapsed since that time. Isolated passages in the *Manifesto* have receded still further into the past. We shall try to establish succinctly in this Preface both those ideas in the *Manifesto* which retain their full force today and those which require important alteration or amplification.

1. The materialist conception of history, discovered by Marx only a short while before and applied with consummate skill in the *Manifesto*, has completely withstood the test of events and the blows of hostile criticism. It constitutes today one of the most precious instruments of human thought. All other interpretations of the historical process have lost all scientific meaning. We can state with certainty that it is impossible in our time not only to be a revolutionary militant but even a literate observer in politics without assimilating the materialist interpretation of history.

2. The first chapter of the *Manifesto* opens with the following words: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." This postulate, the most important conclusion drawn from the materialist interpretation of history, immediately became an issue in the class struggle. Especially venomous attacks were directed by reactionary hypocrites, liberal doctrinaires and idealistic democrats against the theory which replaced "common welfare," "national unity" and "eternal moral truths" as the driving force by the struggle of material interests. They were later joined by recruits from the ranks of the labor movement itself, by the so-called revisionists, i.e., the proponents of reviewing ("revising") Marxism in the spirit of class collaboration and class conciliation. Finally, in our own time, the same path has been followed in practice by the contemptible epigones of the Communist International (the "Stalinists"): the policy of the so-called "People's Front" flows wholly from the denial of the laws of the class struggle. Meanwhile, it is precisely the epoch of imperialism, bringing all social contradictions to the point of highest tension, which gives to the *Communist Manifesto* its supreme theoretical triumph.

3. The anatomy of capitalism, as a specific stage in the economic development of society, was given by Marx in its finished form in *Capital* (1867). But already in the *Communist Manifesto* the main lines of the future analysis are firmly sketched: the payment for labor power as equivalent to the

cost of its reproduction; the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists; competition as the basic law of social relations; the ruination of intermediate classes, i.e., the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry; the concentration of wealth in the hands of an ever diminishing number of property owners at the one pole, and the numerical growth of the proletariat, at the other; the preparation of the material and political pre-conditions for the socialist regime.

4. The proposition in the *Manifesto* concerning the tendency of capitalism to lower the living standards of the workers, and even to transform them into paupers had been subjected to a heavy barrage. Parsons, professors, ministers, journalists, social-democratic theoreticians, and trade union leaders came to the front against the so-called "theory of impoverishment". They invariably discovered signs of growing prosperity among the toilers, palming off the labor aristocracy as the proletariat, or taking a fleeting tendency as permanent. Meanwhile, even the development of the mightiest capitalism in the world, namely, U.S. capitalism has transformed millions of workers into paupers who are maintained at the expense of federal, municipal or private charity.

5. As against the *Manifesto*, which depicted commercial and industrial crises as a series of ever more extensive catastrophes, the revisionists vowed that the national and international development of trusts would assure control over the market, and lead gradually to the abolition of crises. The close of the last century and the beginning of the present one were in reality marked by a development of capitalism so tempestuous as to make crises seem only "accidental" stoppages. But this epoch has gone beyond return. In the last analysis, truth proved to be on Marx's side in this question as well.

6. "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." This succinct formula, which the leaders of the social democracy looked upon as a journalistic paradox, contains in fact the only scientific theory of the state. The democracy fashioned by the bourgeoisie is not, as both Bernstein and Kautsky thought, an empty sack which one can undisturbedly fill with any kind of class content. Bourgeois democracy can serve only the bourgeoisie. A government of the "People's Front," whether headed by Blum or Chautemps, Caballero or Negrin, is only "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." Whenever this "committee" manages affairs poorly, the bourgeoisie dismisses it with a boot.

7. "Every class struggle is a political struggle." "The organization of the proletariat as a class (is) consequently its organization into a political party." Trade unionists, on the one hand, and anarcho-syndicalists on the other, have long shied away—and even now try to shy away—from the understanding of these historical laws. "Pure" trade unionism has now been dealt a crushing blow in its chief refuge: the United States. Anarcho-syndicalism has suffered an irreparable defeat in its last stronghold—Spain. Here too the *Manifesto* proved correct.

8. The proletariat cannot conquer power within the legal

framework established by the bourgeoisie. "Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." Reformism sought to explain this postulate of the *Manifesto* on the grounds of the immaturity of the movement at that time, and the inadequate development of democracy. The fate of Italian, German, and a great number of other "democracies" proves that "immaturity" is the distinguishing trait of the ideas of the reformists themselves.

9. For the socialist transformation of society, the working class must concentrate in its hands such power as can smash each and every political obstacle barring the road to the new system. "The proletariat organized as the ruling class"—this is the dictatorship. At the same time it is the only true proletarian democracy. Its scope and depth depend upon concrete historical conditions. The greater the number of states that take the path of the socialist revolution, the freer and more flexible forms will the dictatorship assume, the broader and more deep-going will be workers' democracy.

10. The international development of capitalism has predetermined the international character of the proletarian revolution. "United action, of the leading civilized countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat." The subsequent development of capitalism has so closely knit all sections of our planet, both "civilized" and "uncivilized," that the problem of the socialist revolution has completely and decisively assumed a world character. The Soviet bureaucracy attempted to liquidate the *Manifesto* with respect to this fundamental question. The Bonapartist degeneration of the Soviet state is an overwhelming illustration of the falseness of the theory of socialism in one country.

11. "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character." In other words: the state withers away. Society remains, freed from the straitjacket. This is nothing else but socialism. The converse theorem: the monstrous growth of state coercion in the USSR is eloquent testimony that society is moving away from socialism.

12. "The workingmen have no fatherland." These words of the *Manifesto* have more than once been evaluated by philistines as an agitational quip. As a matter of fact they provided the proletariat with the sole conceivable directive in the question of the capitalist "fatherland." The violation of this directive by the Second International brought about not only four years of devastation in Europe, but the present stagnation of world culture. In view of the impending new war, for which the betrayal of the Third International has paved the way, the *Manifesto* remains even now the most reliable counsellor on the question of the capitalist "fatherland."

Thus, we see that the joint and rather brief production of two young authors still continues to give irreplaceable directives upon the most important and burning questions of the struggle for emancipation. What other book could even distantly be compared with the *Communist Manifesto*? But this does not imply that, after ninety years of unprecedented development of productive forces and vast social struggles, the *Manifesto* needs neither corrections nor additions. Revolutionary thought has nothing in common with idol-worship. Programs and prognoses are tested and corrected in the light of experience, which is the supreme criterion of human reason. The *Manifesto*, too, requires corrections and additions. However, as is evidenced by historical experience itself, these corrections and additions can be successfully made only by proceeding in accord with the method lodged in the foundation of the *Manifesto* itself. We shall try to indicate this in several most important instances.

1. Marx taught that no social system departs from the arena of history before exhausting its creative potentialities. The *Manifesto* excoriates capitalism for retarding the development of the productive forces. During that period, however, as well as in the following decades, this retardation was only *relative*

in nature. Had it been possible in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, to organize economy on socialist beginnings, its tempos of growth would have been immeasurably greater. But this theoretically irrefutable postulate does not, however, invalidate the fact that the productive forces kept expanding on a world scale right up to the world war. Only in the last twenty years, despite the most modern conquests of science and technology, has the epoch begun of out-and-out stagnation and even decline of world economy. Mankind is beginning to expend its accumulated capital, while the next war threatens to destroy the very foundations of civilisation for many years to come. The authors of the *Manifesto* thought that capitalism would be scrapped long prior to the time when from a relatively reactionary regime it would turn into an absolutely reactionary regime. This transformation took final shape only before the eyes of the present generation, and changed our epoch into the epoch of wars, revolutions, and fascism.

2. The error of Marx and Engels in regard to the historical dates flowed, on the one hand, from an underestimation of future possibilities latent in capitalism, and, on the other, an overestimation of the revolutionary maturity of the proletariat. "The revolution of 1848 did not turn into a socialist revolution as the *Manifesto* had calculated, but opened up to Germany the possibility of a vast future capitalist ascension. The Paris Commune proved that the proletariat, without having a tempered revolutionary party at its head, cannot wrest power from the bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, the prolonged period of capitalist prosperity that ensued brought about not the education of the revolutionary vanguard, but rather the bourgeois degeneration of the labor aristocracy, which became in turn the chief brake on the proletarian revolution. In the nature of things, the authors of the *Manifesto* could not possibly have foreseen this "dialectic."

3. For the *Manifesto*, capitalism was—the kingdom of free competition. While referring to the growing concentration of capital, the *Manifesto* did not draw the necessary conclusion in regard to monopoly which has become the dominant capitalist form in our epoch, and the most important pre-condition for socialist economy. Only afterwards, in *Capital*, did Marx establish the tendency toward the transportation of free competition into monopoly. It was Lenin who gave a scientific characterization of monopoly capitalism in his *Imperialism*.

4. Basing themselves primarily on the example of "industrial revolution" in England, the authors of the *Manifesto* pictured far too unilaterally the process of liquidation of the intermediate classes, as a wholesale proletarianization of crafts, petty trades and peasantry. In point of fact, the elemental forces of competition have far from completed this simultaneously progressive and barbarous work. Capitalism has ruined the petty bourgeoisie at a much faster rate than it has proletarianized it. Furthermore, the bourgeois state has long directed its conscious policy toward the artificial maintenance of petty bourgeois strata. At the opposite pole, the growth of technology and the rationalization of large scale industry engenders chronic unemployment and obstructs the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie. Concurrently, the development of capitalism has accelerated in the extreme the growth of legions of technicians, administrators, commercial employes, in short, the so-called "new middle class." In consequence, the intermediate classes, to whose disappearance the *Manifesto* so categorically refers, comprise even in a country as highly industrialized as Germany, about one-half of the population. However, the artificial preservation of antiquated petty bourgeois strata nowise mitigates the social contradictions, but, on the contrary, invests them with an especial malignancy, and together with the permanent army of the unemployed constitutes the most malevolent expression of the decay of capitalism.

5. Calculated for a revolutionary epoch the *Manifesto* contains (end of Chapter II) ten demands, corresponding to the period of direct transition from capitalism to socialism. In their Preface of 1872, Marx and Engels declared these demands to be in part antiquated, and, in any case, only of secondary im-

portance. The reformists seized upon this evaluation to interpret it 'in the sense that transitional revolutionary demands had forever ceded their place to the social-democratic "minimum program," which, as is well known, does not transcend the limits of bourgeois democracy. As a matter of fact, the authors of the *Manifesto* indicated quite precisely the main correction of their transitional program, namely, "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." In other words, the correction was directed against the fetishism of bourgeois democracy. Marx later counterposed to the capitalist state, the state of the type of the Commune. This "type" subsequently assumed the much more graphic shape of Soviets. There cannot be a revolutionary program today without Soviets and without workers' control. As for the rest, the ten demands of the *Manifesto*, which appeared "archaic" in an epoch of peaceful parliamentary activity, have today regained completely their true significance. The Social Democratic "minimum programs," on the other hand, has become hopelessly antiquated.

6. Basing its expectation that "the German bourgeois revolution . . . will be but a prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution," the *Manifesto* cites the much more advanced conditions of European civilization as compared with what existed in England in the Seventeenth Century and in France in the Eighteenth Century, and the far greater development of the proletariat. The error in this prognosis was not only in the date. The Revolution of 1848 revealed within a few months that precisely under more advanced conditions, none of the bourgeois classes is capable of bringing the revolution to its termination: the big and middle bourgeoisie is far too closely linked with the landowners, and fettered by the fear of the masses; the petty bourgeoisie is far too divided, and in its leading tops far too dependent on the big bourgeoisie. As evidenced by the entire subsequent course of development in Europe and Asia, the bourgeois revolution, taken by itself, can no more in general be consummated. A complete purge of feudal rubbish from society is conceivable only on the condition that the proletariat, freed from the influence of bourgeois parties, can take its stand at the head of the peasantry and establish its revolutionary dictatorship. By this token, the bourgeois revolution becomes interlaced with the first stage of the socialist revolution, subsequently to dissolve in the latter. The national revolution therewith becomes a link of the world revolution. The transformation of the economic foundation and of all social relations assumes a permanent (uninterrupted) character.

For revolutionary parties in backward countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, a clear understanding of the organic connection between the democratic revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat—and thereby, the international socialist revolution—is a life-and-death question.

7. While depicting how capitalism draws into its vortex backward and barbarous countries, the *Manifesto* contains no reference to the struggle of colonial and semi-colonial countries for independence. To the extent that Marx and Engels considered the social revolution "in the leading civilized countries at least," to be a matter of the next few years, the colonial question was resolved automatically for them, not in consequence of an independent movement of oppressed nationalities but in consequence of the victory of the proletariat in the metropolitan centers of capitalism. The questions of revolutionary strategy in colonial and semi-colonial countries are therefore not touched upon at all by the *Manifesto*. Yet these questions demand an independent solution. For example, it is quite self-evident that while the "national fatherland" has become the most baneful historical brake in advanced capitalist countries, it still remains a relatively progressive factor in backward countries compelled to struggle for an independent existence.

"The Communists," declares the *Manifesto*, "everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things." The movement of the colored

racess against their imperialist oppressors is one of the most important and powerful movements against the existing order and therefore calls for the complete, unconditional and unlimited support on the part of the proletariat of the white race. The credit for developing revolutionary strategy for oppressed nationalities belongs primarily to Lenin.

8. The most antiquated section of the *Manifesto*—not with respect to method but material—is the criticism of "socialist" literature for the first part of the Nineteenth Century (Chapter III) and the definition of the position of the Communists in relation to various opposition parties (Chapter IV). The movements and parties listed in the *Manifesto* were so drastically swept away either by the revolution of 1848 or the ensuing counter-revolution that one must look up even their names in a historical dictionary. However, in this section, too, the *Manifesto* is perhaps closer to us now than it was to the previous generation. In the epoch of the flowering of the Second International when Marxism seemed to exert an undivided sway, the ideas of pre-Marxist socialism could have been considered as having receded decisively into the past. Things are otherwise today. The decomposition of the Social Democracy and the Communist International at every step engenders monstrous ideological relapses. Senile thought seems to have become infantile. In search of all-saving formulas the prophets in the epoch of decline discover anew doctrines long since buried by scientific socialism.

As touches the question of opposition parties, it is in this domain that the elapsed decades have introduced the most deep-going changes, not only in the sense that the old parties have long been brushed aside by new ones, but also in the sense that the very character of parties and their mutual relations have radically changed in the conditions of the imperialist epoch. The *Manifesto* must therefore be amplified with the most important documents of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, the essential literature of Bolshevism, and the decisions of the Conferences of the Fourth International.

We have already remarked above that according to Marx no social order departs from the scene without first exhausting the potentialities latent in it. However, even an antiquated social order does not cede its place to a new order without resistance. A change in social régimes presupposes the harshest form of the class struggle, i.e., revolution. If the proletariat, for one reason or another, proves incapable of overthrowing with an audacious blow the outlived bourgeois order, then finance capital in the struggle to maintain its unstable rule can do nothing but turn the petty-bourgeoisie ruined and demoralized by it into the pogrom army of fascism. The bourgeois degeneration of the Social Democracy and the fascist degeneration of the petty-bourgeoisie are interlinked as cause and effect.

At the present time, the Third International far more wantonly than the Second performs in all countries the work of deceiving and demoralizing the toilers. By massacring the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat, the unbridled hirelings of Moscow not only pave the way for fascism but execute a goodly share of its labors. The protracted crisis of the international revolution which is turning more and more into a crisis of human culture, is reducible in its essentials to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

As the heir to the great tradition, of which the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* forms the most precious link, the Fourth International is educating new cadres for the solution of old tasks. Theory is generalized reality. In an honest attitude to revolutionary theory is expressed the impassioned urge to reconstruct the social reality. That in the Southern part of the Dark Continent our co-thinkers were the first to translate the *Manifesto* into the Afrikaans language is another graphic illustration of the fact that Marxist thought lives today only under the banner of the Fourth International. To it belongs the future. When the centennial of the *Communist Manifesto* is celebrated, the Fourth International will have become the decisive revolutionary force on our planet.

Marxism today

By Peter Hadden

"Apostles of freedom are ever idolised when dead but crucified when living." James Connolly, writing these words about United Irish leader Theobald Wolfe Tone, could have been writing about himself or Karl Marx who died 100 years ago.

Just as the real ideas and traditions of Connolly have been savagely distorted by many who claim to stand in his name, so the genuine ideas of Marx have been twisted beyond recognition, especially by many so-called 'Marxists'.

The powerful influence of Marx's ideas is shown by the fact that one third of the world's population live in countries officially described as 'Marxist'. In the capitalist world every mass working-class party was either founded as a Marxist party or else has had, or has, within it a strong current claiming to be Marxist. This enormous influence doubly emphasises the need to disentangle the true ideas and method of Marxism, or scientific socialism, from the accumulated rubbish of decades of distortion.

Marx and his co-thinker Frederick Engels described themselves as social democrats, emphasising that socialism would mean the development of democracy. Now this term 'social-democratic' has come to mean something very different. It has become synonymous with the right wing of the labour movement; people who are obviously light years removed from the ideas of Marx and Engels. Yet many social-democratic parties still claim a formal adherence to Marxism.

Likewise, the earliest Marxists, including Karl Marx himself, stood for what they termed the "dictatorship of the proletariat". Just as 'social democrat' has come to equal right-wing renegade, so this phrase is now generally presented as meaning the type of regime which exists in Russia, China and Eastern Europe.

But an equally unbridgeable gulf divides Marxism from the methods of Stalin and Stalinism, as that which sets it apart from today's social democrats. Marx and Lenin, while fully supporting, defending and struggling for every democratic right which could be won, demonstrated that democracy under capitalism merely disguised the reality of capitalist class rule. The state, as Engels put it, could in the last analysis be reduced to the simple formula of "armed bodies of men acting in defence of property". To this "dictatorship of capital" they counterposed the dictatorship of the working class, which would be exercised in a democratic form and would exist during the first period of socialist society.

Marx and Engels then envisaged that the state, and with it all forms of oppression, would quickly "wither away". By the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" Marx meant workers' democracy and the development of democratic rights to a degree never achieved under capitalism.

Never for a single moment did Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky advocate the monstrous development of the state apparatus, or the suppression of democratic rights, which has occurred in the Stalinist countries. In the collected works of these great thinkers there is not a line equating socialism with one-party rule.

For a Marxist newspaper and tendency the key task in commemorating the centenary of Marx's death is not to blindly idolise him. Rather it is to present the true ideas of scientific socialism as apart from the lies, myths and distortions propounded by social-democrats, Stalinists and academics plus a gallery of puffed-up pseudo-Marxists.

The programme of Marxism is merely the accumulated experience of the working class, past and present, summed up in the form of simple slogans and demands. This newspaper (the *Militant Irish Monthly*—Editor), representing the Marxist tradition in Ireland, fights for a 35-hour week, a £100 minimum wage tied to the cost of living, guaranteed jobs for all, a crash programme of useful public works, an immediate crash housing

and building programme, and the expansion of the education, hospital and other services, based on need.

These demands are for no more than a reasonable standard of life for all. From this point of view they are modest indeed. Yet to the Tories and the bosses, asking for these basic comforts is as extreme as asking for the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars.

Indeed, from their point of view, the capitalists are right. Capitalism cannot afford to grant such reforms. Schools, hospitals, and now jobs, are not profitable. On the other hand, the working class cannot afford the poverty conditions and unemployment inflicted by capitalism. In short, the working class cannot afford the continuation of this system.

All that stands in the way of the implementation in full of the above reforms is the thirst of the system for profit. The productive capacity to meet the basic requirements of the entire population of the planet already exists. The problem is that under this system it cannot be utilised.

Wealth is produced by manufacturing industry. Yet, in every capitalist country, vast amounts of the productive power of industry are being scrapped. In Ireland as a whole there are now more people wasting their energies on the dole than there are working in manufacturing industry. In the major capitalist powers, the OECD countries, there are more than 30 million unemployed. Five hundred million are out of work in the colonial and ex-colonial world. The labour of these people, if it could be used, could transform the world.

Historically, capitalism allowed society to take a huge step forward by breaking free of the vice of feudalism. Now capitalism, far from further expanding the productive forces, is incapable even of sustaining the productive capacity which it has itself built up.

Take the case of steel, which is the industrial backbone of any modern economy. Three years ago Britain had 160 000 steel workers. Today there are 85 000, and the British Steel Corporation plans to reduce this figure to 62 000. In America only 38% of steel producing capacity can be used. By the end of last year, Western Europe was producing less steel than 50 years ago.

Marx explained that an economic system would not leave the field of history until it had fully exhausted its potential to develop production. By this criterion, capitalism is overdue for removal. Tinkering with this obsolete system will not help. Cuts in real wages, in services, and increases in unemployment cannot be dressed up so as to appear presentable to the working people who suffer them.

Marxists therefore stand for the establishment of an economic system capable of guaranteeing a decent standard of life for all. This would be possible through the nationalisation of the major industries, the big banks and other finance houses, and the running of these on the basis of democratic control and management. This would make possible the implementation of a harmonised plan of production engined by need, not profit.

In relation to the Stalinist states, where property forms are already nationalised, Marxism stands for the overthrow of the bureaucratic caste which rests as a parasite on society, and for the introduction of a regime of full workers' democracy with such demands as those advanced by the Polish workers through the union Solidarity implemented as a minimum.

If these steps of social transformation in the West and political transformation in the East were taken, it would be possible, for the first time ever, to plan, integrate and develop the resources, technique and industries of the globe so as to eliminate poverty, starvation and want. This is the programme of Marxism.

Historically, the labour movement has been divided into two main camps—the camp of reformism and that of Marxism. At

different times, different circumstances have tended to strengthen one or other camp.

Today the growing miseries of capitalism in crisis is drawing thousands and tens of thousands of workers to the conclusions of Marxism. Its influence in the mass workers' organisations is again beginning to develop.

Only fifteen or twenty years ago, the learned professors, academics and economists of capitalism were happily embracing the right-wing labour and trade-union leaders with the common conclusion that Marxism was dead.

That was during the period of the unprecedented but temporary upswing of capitalism which followed the second world war. On the surface, the conclusions about capitalism which had been drawn by Marx seemed to be refuted by economic and social reality.

Capitalism appeared capable, through Keynesian methods, of resolving its contradictions and avoiding slump. Living standards did rise in the developed countries. Strikes became less frequent, and the all-out class confrontations of the 1930s and the immediate post-war period seemed only a memory.

These conditions enormously strengthened the hold of the ideas of right wing reformism over the workers' organisations.

In 1974-75 capitalism fell into recession internationally, and an epoch of contraction and slump opened up. Now the illustrious professors and academics with their accepted wisdom of 'crisis-free capitalism' are dumbfounded and silent.

Within the trade unions and labour organisations a deep discontent is stirring. The hold of the old right wing is being shaken, as their ideas are demonstrated to be worthless. The explanation of Marxism, twenty years ago that of a tiny minority, is now winning ever broader support.

In the last two decades of the last century mass working-class parties were formed in Europe. These in formal terms claimed to be Marxist, but their leading layers came under the pressures of an upswing when then developed in the economies of Europe. They degenerated along reformist lines. In 1914 these parties of the Second International stood shoulder to shoulder with their native capitalists in supporting the war.

1917, the Russian Revolution and then the conditions of stagnation and crisis which developed after the war, ushered in a period of revolutionary turmoil which lasted until 1921. Revolutions in Germany, Hungary and elsewhere were unsuccessful because they were betrayed by the leaders of the old mass parties of the Second International.

At the outset of the war, Marxism represented only a tiny and numerically insignificant minority within the class organisations internationally. Yet on the basis of the experience and the events of 1917-21 the programme of Marxism came to be accepted by millions of workers and peasants. In every one of the old parties of the social democracy, the ideas of Marxism grew in support and in some cases won a majority. By 1920, for example, the French Socialist Party, the Italian Socialist Party and the Norwegian Labour Party had all come out for affiliation to the new Communist International formed by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919.

The period now opening up in Europe and the world will be a period like that of 1917-21, except that it will be of a deeper and more protracted character. In the storms of struggle which will unfold in every corner of the globe, the old ideas of those who advocate change on the basis of capitalism will be put to the test and will be found wanting.

The tradition of Marxism, which has always been alive within every workers' organisation, can develop as never before in history. Even the successes of the period immediately following the Russian Revolution, before these gains were usurped and perverted by Stalin, will be put in the shade.

In Ireland, Britain and internationally, by democratic discussion and debate, Marxist ideas can win a majority within the workers' organisations.

In the hundred years since Marx's death, his enemies and false friends have managed to heap a great deal of mud on his ideas in order to obscure them. It has been left to this generation to restore these ideas in practice by changing society.

As feudalism is to us today, so capitalism and Stalinism will be to the generation of advanced humanity which will mark the second centenary of Marx's death a hundred years from now.

(Militant Irish Monthly, March 1983)

Explanatory notes

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Chartists—First political movement of the working class, arising in Britain round the democratic demands of the 'People's Charter' drawn up in 1838. Despite mass support its leadership, divided between reformist and revolutionary tendencies, did not have a clear programme for the conquest of power. After 1848 the movement disintegrated; but the best elements were won to the position of Marx and Engels, and helped in establishing the Marxist tradition in the British labour movement.

Lassalle, Ferdinand (1825-1864)—One of the pioneers of the German workers' movement, who differed from Marx on various issues.

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High German consonant mutations—Changes in the pronunciation of certain sounds in the German language following the migration of Germanic tribes from

north to south Germany, probably during the 6th century.

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Russian Revolution (1905)—Forerunner and 'dress rehearsal' of the Revolution of 1917, the 1905 Revolution established the working class as leading force in the struggle before eventually being defeated.

Narodniks—Revolutionary-democratic movement that arose among radical Russian intellectuals in the mid-19th century. They regarded the peasantry as the revolutionary class in Russian society and believed that Russia could advance to a form of socialism based on peasant collectives, without undergoing capitalist development—a false perspective which led to the disintegration of the movement.

Trusts—Capitalist monopolies.

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Communist International ('Comintern'; Third International)—Formed in 1919

under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky as a new centre for the revolutionary working-class struggles that were then developing internationally, to replace the discredited **Second International** (see note below). Following the Stalinist counter-revolution in the USSR the Comintern itself degenerated, becoming a tool of the ruling Russian bureaucracy until it was officially dissolved in 1943.

"People's Front"—Following its disastrous ultra-left period (1928-1934) which led to the coming to power of Hitler in Germany and the isolation of the Communist parties internationally, the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia recoiled to an opposite, equally false position of seeking alliances with all 'progressive' elements, including the 'progressive' bourgeoisie, against fascism. This policy was imposed on all Communist parties by the 7th Comintern Conference in 1935 under the slogan of the "People's (or Popular) Front". Waves of revolutionary struggle put Popular Front governments in power in France and Spain in 1936 but, failing to overthrow capitalism, in both countries they paved the way for counter-revolution.

Blum, Leon (1872-1950)—French Socialist leader and prime minister of the Popular Front government, 1936-37; succeeded by **Chautemps, Camille (1885-1963)** of the Radical (bourgeois) party.

Largo Caballero, Francisco (1869-1946)—Leader of the left wing of the Spanish Socialist Party and Popular Front prime minister, 1936-37; replaced by **Negrin, Juan (1894-1956)**, right-wing Socialist leader.

The governments of Chautemps as well as Negrin were supported by the Communist parties.

Trade unionists....and anarcho-syndicalists—"Trade unionists" here refers to that tendency in the workers' movement who seek to limit the aims of the struggle to reforms of capitalism, and do not see the need for an independent workers' party. **Anarcho-syndicalism** stood for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism but believed this could only be achieved through trade union struggle, with the use of the general strike, and denied the need for a revolutionary party.

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Fate of Italian, German, and....other democracies—A reference to the seizure of power by fascism in these countries in the 1920s and 1930s, as a result of the failure of the workers' leadership to carry through the socialist revolution in a period of acute social crisis.

Bonapartist—Term used by Marxism to describe a dictatorial regime which, reflecting conditions of deep social crisis, balances between the opposing classes while raising itself above society as a whole. The term derives from the example of Napoleon Bonaparte's dictatorship which took power in France in 1799.

A Bonapartist regime defending capitalism we call "bourgeois Bonapartist". But in the USSR from 1923 onwards, with the exhausted working class unable to sustain control of the state, the upper layers of state officials increasingly usurped power and consolidated themselves into a Bonapartist regime on the basis of the state-owned and planned economy. This regime, and those in Eastern Europe and elsewhere created in its image after World War II, we call "proletarian Bonapartist".

Turning its back on the workers' revolution internationally on the pretext of 'first' building 'socialism' in Russia (reflected in Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country"), this regime in turn contributed to the defeat of the working class in country after country, which led to the rise of fascism in Western Europe and culminated in World War II.

Violation....by the Second International—For a short explanation, see paragraph starting "In the last two

decades of the last century..." on page 15 of this Supplement.

Out-and-out stagnation—The foreseeable perspective, at the time when Trotsky wrote this article, was one of insoluble capitalist crisis leading up to a new world war, which would create conditions for new revolutionary upheavals in which the bankruptcy of Stalinism and reformism could be decisively exposed and the forces of the **Fourth International** (see note below) could lay the basis for mass revolutionary parties.

While correct in its anticipation of war and new revolutionary crises, this perspective was cut across by the peculiar course of developments during the war itself, as a result of which Stalinist Russia and the Communist parties emerged *strengthened* and played a key role in allowing capitalism in Western Europe to restabilise itself. This opened the way to an unprecedented boom of capitalism on the basis of the economic destruction created by the war and the depression of the 1930s.

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Monopoly....pre-condition for socialist economy—Socialist production will involve the planned use of the productive forces on the basis of public ownership and democratic control, as opposed to the private ownership and chaotic competition of capitalism. Monopoly capitalism, i.e. the large-scale concentration of the means of production in the hands of giant monopolies, marks a transitional stage which strains at the limits of capitalism. Competition among a host of small producers has been replaced with competition among a handful of monopolies. Only with workers' rule and socialist policies, however, can this development be taken to its logical conclusion, the system of competition abolished and a plan of production established.

Soviets—Democratic councils of workers' delegates first created spontaneously in the Russian Revolution of 1905. The workers', soldiers' and peasants' soviets for some time controlled the new state in Russia after the October Revolution of 1917, until eventually destroyed by the isolation of the revolution, the exhaustion of the working class and the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Fourth International—The founding conference of the Fourth International was held in 1938 to organise the tiny forces of Marxism, led by Trotsky, which had survived the political collapse of the Second and Third Internationals and the crushing defeats of the workers' movement in Europe and Asia, and were faced with the enormous responsibility of preparing for the new revolutionary opportunities that would be opened up by the impending world war. Trotsky's

reference here is to the conferences of the Marxists internationally that prepared for the new International

As a result of the developments mentioned above (see note on **Out-and-out stagnation**) and Trotsky's murder by a Stalinist agent in 1940, however, the initial cadre of the Fourth International largely disintegrated during and after World War II, and the task of building it still lies ahead.

Massacring the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat—Attempting to enforce the pro-capitalist policies of the Popular Front in the face of revolutionary struggles by the workers and peasants during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the Spanish CP and units of the Russian secret police sent to Spain for the purpose assisted in disarming and actually murdering many workers and left-wing leaders who rejected or criticised the government's policies.

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Connolly, James (1868-1916)—Builder and revolutionary leader of the workers' movement in Ireland, executed by British imperialism following the abortive Easter Uprising in Dublin, 1916.

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Keynesian methods—Policies for stimulating the capitalist economy through 'deficit financing' by the state, i.e. spending more than its income through borrowing and printing money. Named after the capitalist economist, John Maynard Keynes, who first advocated these methods in the 1930s.

During the post-war period of massive expansion of world trade, Keynesianism was one of the devices that speeded up growth. At the same time, however, it laid the basis for mounting inflation, which became acute as world production slowed down from the 1960s onwards. This has led to the abandonment of Keynesianism in all the leading capitalist countries and a return to the pre-war policies today called 'monetarism', i.e., strict control of the money supply and 'deflation' of the economy, involving massive cuts in state spending, production and employment.