V.I. Lenin

Karl Marx

A Brief biographical sketch with an exposition of Marxism

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Karl Marx
V.I. Lenin

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Notes
The article on Karl Marx now appearing in a separate printing was written by me in 1913 (as far as I can remember) for the Granat Encyclopaedia¹. A rather detailed bibliography of literature on Marx, mostly foreign, was appended at the end of the article. This has been omitted in the present edition².

The editors of the Encyclopedia, on their part, cut out, for censorship reasons, the end of the article on Marx, namely, the section in which his revolutionary tactics were explained. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to reproduce that end here, because the rough draft remained in my papers somewhere in Cracow or in Switzerland. I only remember that in that concluding part of the article I quoted, among other things, the passage from Marx’s letter to Engels of the 16th of April, 1856, where he wrote: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then everything will be splendid." That is what our Mensheviks, who have now sunk to utter betrayal of socialism and to desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie, failed to understand in 1905 and after.

N. Lenin
Moscow, May 14, 1918

Published in 1918 in the pamphlet: Translated from V. I. Lenin’s Works.
1. Karl Marx

Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in the city of Trier (Rhenish Prussia). His father was a lawyer, a Jew, who in 1824 adopted Protestantism. The family was well-to-do, cultured, but not revolutionary. After graduating from the gymnasium in Trier, Marx entered university, first at Bonn and later at Berlin, where he studied jurisprudence, but chiefly history and philosophy. He concluded his course in 1841, submitting his doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of Epicurus. In his views Marx at that time was a Hegelian idealist. In Berlin he belonged to the circle of "Left Hegelians" (Bruno Bauer and others) who sought to draw atheistic and revolutionary conclusions from Hegel’s philosophy.

After graduating from the university, Marx moved to Bonn, expecting to become a professor. But the reactionary policy of the government—which in 1832 deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair and in 1836 refused to allow him to return to the university, and in 1841 forbade the young professor Bruno Bauer to lecture at Bonn—forced Marx to abandon the idea of pursuing an academic career.
At that time the views of the Left Hegelians were developing very rapidly in Germany. Ludwig Feuerbach, particularly after 1836, began to criticize theology and to turn to materialism, which in 1841 gained the upper hand in his philosophy (The Essence of Christianity); in 1843 his Principles of the Philosophy of the Future appeared. "One must himself have experienced the liberating effect" of these books, Engels subsequently wrote of these works of Feuerbach. "We" (i.e., the Left Hegelians, including Marx) "all became at once Feuerbachians." At that time some Rhenish radical bourgeois who had certain points in common with the Left Hegelians founded an opposition paper in Cologne, the *Rheinische Zeitung* (the first number appeared on January 1, 1842). Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October 1842 Marx became chief editor and removed from Bonn to Cologne. The revolutionary-democratic trend of the paper became more and more pronounced under Marx’s editorship, and the government first subjected the paper to double and triple censorship and then decided to suppress it altogether on January 1, 1843. Marx had to resign the editorship before that date, but his resignation did not save the paper, which was closed down in March 1843. Of the more important articles contributed by Marx to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels notes, in addition to those indicated below, an article on the condition of the peasant wine-growers of the Moselle Valley. His journalistic activities convinced Marx that he was not sufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he zealously set out to study it.

In 1843, in Kreuznach, Marx married Jenny von Westphalen, a childhood friend to whom he had been engaged while still a student. His wife came from a reactionary family of the
Prussian nobility. Her elder brother was Prussian Minister of the Interior at a most reactionary period, 1850-58. In the autumn of 1843 Marx went to Paris in order, together with Arnold Ruge (born 1802, died 1880; a Left Hegelian; in 1825-30, in prison; after 1848, a political exile; after 1866-70, a Bismarckian), to publish a radical magazine abroad.

Only one issue of this magazine, Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher, appeared. It was discontinued owing to the difficulty of secret distribution in Germany and to disagreements with Ruge. In his articles in this magazine Marx already appears as a revolutionary who advocates the "merciless criticism of everything existing," and in particular the "criticism of arms," and appeals to the masses and to the proletariat.

In September 1844 Frederick Engels came to Paris for a few days, and from that time forth became Marx’s closest friend. They both took a most active part in the then seething life of the revolutionary groups in Paris (of particular importance was Proudhon’s doctrine, which Marx thoroughly demolished in his Poverty of Philosophy, 1847), and, vigorously combating the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois socialism, worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary proletarian socialism, or communism (Marxism). See Marx’s works of the period, 1844-48. In 1845, on the insistent demand of the Prussian government, Marx was banished from Paris as a dangerous revolutionary.

He moved to Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society called the Communist League; they took a prominent part in the Second Congress of the League (London, November 1847), and at its request
drew up the famous *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in February 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines the new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat the creator of the new, communist society.

When the Revolution of February 1848 broke out, Marx was banished from Belgium. He returned to Paris, from where, after the March Revolution, he went to Germany, to Cologne. There the *Neue Rheinische Zeititung* appeared from June 1, 1848, to May 19, 1849; Marx was the chief editor. The new theory was brilliantly corroborated by the course of the revolutionary events of 1848-49, as it has been since corroborated by all proletarian and democratic movements of all countries in the world. The victorious counter-revolution first instigated court proceedings against Marx (he was acquitted on February 9, 1849) and then banished him from Germany (May 16, 1849). Marx first went to Paris, was again banished after the demonstration of June 13, 1849, and then went to London, where he lived to the day of his death.

His life as a political exile was a very hard one, as the correspondence between Marx and Engels (published in 1913) clearly reveals. Marx and his family suffered dire poverty. Were it not for Engels’s constant and self-sacrificing financial support, Marx would not only have been unable to finish Capital, but would have inevitably perished from want. Moreover, the prevailing doctrines and trends of petty-bourgeois socialism, and of non-proletarian socialism in
general, forced Marx to carry on a continuous and merciless fight and sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (Herr Vogt). Holding aloof from the circles of political exiles, Marx developed his materialist theory in a number of historic works devoting his efforts chiefly to the study of political economy. Marx revolutionized this science (see below, "The Marxian Doctrine") in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (Vol. I, 1867).

The period of revival of the democratic movements at the end of the fifties and the sixties recalled Marx to practical activity. In 1864 (September 28th) the International Workingmen’s Association, the famous First International, was founded in London. Marx was the heart and soul of this organization; he was the author of its first Address and a host of resolutions, declarations and manifestoes. Uniting the labour movement of various countries, striving to direct into the channel of joint activity the various forms of non-proletarian, pre-Marxian socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, liberal trade unionism in England, Lassallean vacillations to the Right in Germany, etc.), and combating the theories of all these sects and petty schools, Marx hammered out a uniform tactics for the proletarian struggle of the working class in the various countries. After the fall of the Paris Commune (1871) of which Marx gave such a profound, clear-cut, brilliant and effective, revolutionary analysis (*The Civil War in France*, 1871) and after the International was split by the Bakuninists, the existence of that organization in Europe became impossible. After the Hague Congress of the International (1872) Marx had the General Council of the International transferred to New York. The First International
had accomplished its historical role, and it made way for a period of immeasurably larger growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, a period, in fact, when the movement grew in breadth and when mass socialist labour parties in individual national states were created.

His strenuous work in the International and his still more strenuous theoretical occupations completely undermined Marx’s health. He continued his work on the reshaping of political economy and the completion of Capital, for which he collected a mass of new material and studied a number of languages (Russian, for instance); but ill-health prevented him from finishing Capital’s three volumes.

On December 2, 1881, his wife died. On March 14, 1883, Marx peacefully passed away in his armchair. He lies buried with his wife in the Highgate Cemetery, London. Of Marx’s children some died in childhood in London when the family lived in deep poverty. Three daughters married English and French Socialists: Eleanora Aveling, Laura Lafargue and Jenny Longuet. The latter’s son is a member of the French Socialist Party.
2. Marx’s Philosophical Core

Marxism is the system of the views and teachings of Marx. He was the genius who continued and completed the three main ideological currents of the nineteenth century, belonging to the three most advanced countries of mankind: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism together with French revolutionary doctrines in general. The remarkable consistency and integrity of Marx’s views, acknowledged even by his opponents, views which in their totality constitute modern materialism and modern scientific socialism, as the theory and programme of the labour movement in all the civilized countries of the world, oblige us to present a brief outline of his world conception in general before proceeding to the exposition of the principal content of Marxism, namely, Marx’s economic doctrine.

Philosophical Materialism

From 1844-45, when his views took shape, Marx was a materialist, in particular a follower of Ludwig Feuerbach, whose weak sides he even later considered to consist exclusively in the fact that his materialism was not consistent and comprehensive enough. Marx regarded the historic and "epoch-making" importance of Feuerbach to be that he had resolutely broken away from Hegelian idealism and had proclaimed materialism, which already "in the eighteenth century, especially in France, had been a struggle not only
against the existing political institutions and against . . . religion and theology, but also . . . against all metaphysics" (in the sense of "intoxicated speculation" as distinct from "sober philosophy"). (*The Holy Family*, in the *Literarischer Nachlass.*). "To Hegel . . ." wrote Marx, "the process of thinking, which, under the name of the *idea*, he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos (the creator, the maker) of the real world. . . .

With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." (Capital, Vol. I, afterword to the Second Edition.) In full conformity with this materialist philosophy of Marx’s, and expounding it, Frederick Engels wrote in *Anti-Dürring* (which Marx read in manuscript): "The unity of the world does not consist in its being. . . . The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved ... by a long and wearisome development of philosophy and natural science.

Motion is the mode of existence of matter. Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, or motion without matter, nor can there be. ... But if the . . . question is raised what thought and consciousness really are and where they come from, it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of nature, which has developed in and along with its environment; hence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature’s interconnections but are in correspondence with them."
"Hegel was an idealist. To him the thoughts within his brain were not the more or less abstract pictures (Abbilder, reflections; Engels sometimes speaks of ‘imprints’) of actual things and processes, but, conversely, things and their evolution were only the realized pictures of the Ideas existing somewhere from eternity before the world was." 7 In his *Ludwig Feuerbach* in which he expounds his and Marx’s views on Feuerbach’s philosophy, and which he sent to the press after re-reading an old manuscript written by Marx and himself (in 1844-45) on Hegel, Feuerbach and the materialist conception of history, Frederick Engels writes: "The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being, the relation of the spirit and nature . . . which is primary, spirit or nature. . . The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other . . . comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."

Any other use of the concepts of (philosophical) idealism and materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views, especially widespread in our day, of Hume and Kant, agnosticism, criticism, positivism in their various forms, regarding such a philosophy as a "reactionary" concession to idealism and at best a "shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world." 8 On this question, see, in addition to the above-mentioned works of Engels and Marx, a letter of Marx to Engels dated December 12, 1868, in which
Marx, referring to an utterance of the well-known naturalist Thomas Huxley that was "more materialistic" than usual, and to his recognition that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism," reproaches Huxley for leaving a "loop-hole" for agnosticism, Humanism. It is especially important to note Marx’s view on the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood." This means the recognition of objective law in nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (in the same manner as the transformation of the unknown, but knowable, "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us," of the "essence of things" into "phenomena").

Marx and Engels considered the fundamental shortcoming of the "old" materialism, including the materialism of Feuerbach (and still more of the "vulgar" materialism of Buchner, Vogt and Moleschott), to be: (1) that this materialism was "predominantly mechanical," failing to take account of the latest developments of chemistry and biology (in our day it would be necessary to add: and of the electrical theory of matter); (2) that the old materialism was non-historical, non-dialectical (metaphysical, in the sense of anti-dialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the standpoint of development; (3) that it regarded the "human essence" abstractly and not as the "ensemble" of all (concretely defined historical) "social relations," and therefore only "interpreted" the world, whereas the point is to "change" it; that is to say, it did not understand the importance of "revolutionary, practical activity."
Dialectics

Hegelian dialectics, as the most comprehensive, the most rich in content, and the most profound doctrine of development, was regarded by Marx and Engels as the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. They considered every other formulation of the principle of development, of evolution, one-sided and poor in content, and distorting and mutilating the real course of development (which often proceeds by leaps, catastrophes and revolutions) in nature and in society.

"Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics" (from the destruction of idealism, including Hegelianism) "and apply it in the materialist conception of nature. . . . Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials" (this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.) "increasing daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, nature works dialectically and not metaphysically."12

"The great basic thought," Engels writes, "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 . . . this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in
detail to each domain of investigation are two different things."
"For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain." Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought."13

This revolutionary side of Hegel’s philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences." Of former philosophy there remains "the science of thought and its laws formal logic and dialectics."14 And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes What is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalizing the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from non-knowledge to knowledge.

Nowadays, the idea of development, of evolution, has penetrated the social consciousness almost in its entirety, but by different ways, not by way of the Hegelian philosophy. But as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel, this idea is far more comprehensive, far richer in content than the current idea of evolution. A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis ("negation of negation"), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a
development by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions; "breaks in continuity"; the transformation of quantity into quality; the inner impulses to 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 interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connexion of all sides of every phenomenon (while history constantly discloses ever new sides), a connexion that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion such are some of the features of dialectics as a richer (than the ordinary) doctrine of development. (Cf. Marx’s letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein’s "wooden trichotomies" which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

The Materialist Conception Of History

Having realized the inconsistency, incompleteness, and one-sidedness of the old materialism, Marx became convinced of the necessity of "bringing the science of society . . . into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon."¹⁵ Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, materialism as applied to the social life of mankind has to explain social consciousness as the outcome of social being.

"Technology," writes Marx (Capital, Vol. I), "discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them."¹⁶ In the preface to his Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of
materialism as extended to human society and its history, in the following words:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

"The sum-total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or what is but a legal expression for the same thing with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.
"Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. ... In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society."  

(Cf. Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: "Our theory that the organization of labour is determined by the means of production."  

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or rather, the consistent continuation and extension of materialism into the domain of social phenomena, removed two chief defects of earlier historical theories. In the first place, they at best examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings, without investigating what produced these motives, without grasping the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, and without discerning the roots of these relations in the degree of development of material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not cover the activities of the masses of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with the accuracy of the natural sciences the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions.

Pre-Marxian "sociology" and historiography at best provided an accumulation of raw facts, collected sporadically, and a depiction of certain sides of the historical process. By examining the whole complex of opposing tendencies, by
reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various classes of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of various "leading" ideas or in their interpretation, and by disclosing that all ideas and all the various tendencies, without exception, have their roots in the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of rise, development, and decline of social-economic formations. People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people, that is; what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings; what is the sum-total of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man; what is the law of development of these conditions to all this Marx drew attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a uniform and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness.

The Class Struggle

That in any given society the strivings of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, that history discloses a struggle between nations and societies as well as within nations and societies, and, in addition, an alternate nation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline are facts that are generally known. Marxism provided the clue which enables us to discover the laws governing this seeming labyrinth and chaos, namely, the theory of the class struggle. Only a study of the whole complex of strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies can lead
to a scientific definition of the result of these strivings. And the source of the conflicting strivings lies in the difference in the position and mode of life of the classes into which each society is divided. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," wrote Marx in the Communist Manifesto (except the history of the primitive community Engels added subsequently). "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has very clearly revealed in a number of countries this real under-surface of events, the struggle of classes. And the Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Thiers) who, generalizing from events, were forced to recognize that the class struggle was the key to all French history. And the modern era the era of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, wide (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap, popular
daily press, etc., the era of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc., has revealed even more manifestly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, "peaceful," "constitutional" form) that the class struggle is the mainspring of events.

The following passage from Marx’s Communist Manifesto will show us what Marx required of social science in respect to an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society in connexion with an analysis of the conditions of development of each class: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat." 19

In a number of historical works (see Bibliography), Marx has given us brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of each individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how "every class struggle is a political struggle." 20 The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social
relations and transitional stages between one class and another, from the past to the future, Marx analyzes in order to determine the resultant of historical development. The most profound, comprehensive and detailed confirmation and application of Marx’s theory is his economic doctrine.
3. Marx’s Economic Core

"It is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society" (that is to say, capitalist, bourgeois society), says Marx in the preface to Capital.  

The investigation of the relations of production in a given, historically defined society, in their genesis, development, and decline such is the content of Marx’s economic doctrine. In capitalist society it is the production of commodities that dominates, and Marx’s analysis therefore begins with an analysis of the commodity.

Value

A commodity is, in the first place, a thing that satisfies a human want; in the second place, it is a thing that can be exchanged for another thing. The utility of a thing makes it a use-value. Exchange-value (or simply, value) presents itself first of all as the ratio, the proportion in which a certain number of use-values of one sort are exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another sort. Daily experience shows us that millions upon millions of such exchanges are constantly equating one with another every kind of use-value, even the most diverse and incomparable. Now, what is there in common between these various things, things constantly equated one with another in a definite system of social relations? What is common to them is that they are products of labour. In exchanging products people equate to one another the most diverse kinds of labour. The
production of commodities is a system of social relations in which the individual producers create diverse products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in exchange. Consequently, what is common to all commodities is not the concrete labour of a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but abstract human labour human labour in general. All the labour power of a given society, as represented in the sum-total of values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power: millions and millions of acts of exchange prove this. And, consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain share of the socially necessary labour time.

The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or by the labour time that is socially necessary for the production of the given commodity, of the given use-value. "Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it." 22

As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relation between two persons; only he ought to have added: a relation disguised as a relation between things. We can understand what value is only when we consider it from the standpoint of the system of social relations of production of one particular historical formation of society, relations, moreover, which manifest themselves in the mass phenomenon of exchange, a phenomenon which repeats itself millions upon millions of times.

"As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour time." 23
Having made a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyze the forms of value and money. Marx’s main task here is to study the genesis of the money form of value, to study the historical process of development of exchange, from single and casual acts of exchange ("elementary or accidental form of value," in which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another) to the universal form of value, in which a number of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and to the money form of value, when gold becomes this particular commodity, the universal equivalent. Being the highest product of the development of exchange and commodity production, money masks and conceals the social character of all individual labour, the social tie between the individual producers who are united by the market.

Marx analyzes in very great detail the various functions of money; and it is essential to note here in particular (as generally in the opening chapters of Capital), that the abstract and seemingly at times purely deductive mode of exposition in reality reproduces a gigantic collection of factual material on the history of the development of exchange and commodity production.

"If we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according to the extent and relative preponderance of the one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production." (Capital, Vol. I.)
Surplus Value

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C M C (commodity money commodity), i.e., the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. The general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M C M, i.e., purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The increase over the original value of the money put into circulation Marx calls surplus value. The fact of this "growth" of money in capitalist circulation is well known.

It is this "growth" which transforms money into capital, as a special, historically defined, social relation of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of commodity circulation, for the latter knows only the exchange of equivalents; it cannot arise out of an addition to price, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers, would equalize one another, whereas what we have here is not an individual phenomenon but a mass, average, social phenomenon. In order to derive surplus value, the owner of money "must . . . find ... in the market a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value" a commodity whose process of consumption is at the same time a process of creation of value. And such a commodity exists. It is human labour power. Its consumption is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which, like the value of every other commodity, is determined by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production (i.e., the cost of maintaining the worker and his family).
Having bought labour power, the owner of money is entitled to use it, that is, to set it to work for the whole day twelve hours, let us suppose. Yet, in the course of six hours ("necessary" labour time) the labourer creates product sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance; and in the course of the next six hours ("surplus" labour time), he creates "surplus" product, or surplus value, for which the capitalist does not pay. In capital, therefore, from the standpoint of the process of production, two parts must be distinguished: constant capital, expended on means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), the value of which, without any change, is transferred (all at once or part by part) to the finished product; and variable capital, expended on labour power. The value of this latter capital is not invariable, but grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. Therefore, to express the degree of exploitation of labour power by capital, surplus value must be compared not with the whole capital but only with the variable capital. Thus in the example given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this ratio, will be 6:6, i.e., 100 percent.

The historical prerequisites for the genesis of capital were, firstly, the accumulation of a certain sum of money in the hands of individuals and a relatively high level of development of commodity production in general, and secondly, the existence of a labourer who is "free" in a double sense: free from all constraint or restriction on the sale of his labour power, and free from the land and all means of production in general, a free and unattached labourer, a proletarian, who cannot subsist except by the sale of his labour power.
There are two principal methods by which surplus value can be increased: by lengthening the working day ("absolute surplus value"), and by shortening the necessary working day ("relative surplus value").

Analyzing the first method, Marx gives a most impressive picture of the struggle of the working class to shorten the working day and of governmental interference to lengthen the working day (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century) and to shorten the working day (factory legislation of the nineteenth century). Since the appearance of Capital, the history of the working-class movement in all civilized countries of the world has provided a wealth of new facts amplifying this picture.

Analyzing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three main historical stages by which capitalism has increased the productivity of labour:

1) simple co-operation;
2) division of labour and manufacture;
3) machinery and large-scale industry.

How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is incidentally shown by the fact that investigations of what is known as the "kustar" industry of Russia furnish abundant material illustrating the first two of the mentioned stages. And the revolutionizing effect of large-scale machine industry, described by Marx in 1867, has been revealed in a number of "new" countries (Russia, Japan, etc.) in the course of the half-century that has since elapsed.
To continue. New and important in the highest degree is Marx's analysis of the accumulation of capital, i.e., the transformation of a part of surplus value into capital, its use, not for satisfying the personal needs or whims of the capitalist, but for new production. Marx revealed the mistake of all the earlier classical political economists (from Adam Smith on) who assumed that the entire surplus value which is transformed into capital goes to form variable capital. In actual fact, it is divided into means of production and variable capital. Of tremendous importance to the process of development of capitalism and its transformation into socialism is the more rapid growth of the constant capital share (of the total capital) as compared with the variable capital share.

The accumulation of capital, by accelerating the supplanting of workers by machinery and creating wealth at one pole and poverty at the other, also gives rise to what is called the "reserve army of labour," to the "relative surplus" of workers, or "capitalist over population," which assumes the most diverse forms and enables capital to expand production at an extremely fast rate. This, in conjunction with credit facilities and the accumulation of capital in means of production, incidentally furnishes the clue to the crises of over-production that occurred periodically in capitalist countries at first at an average of every ten years, and later at more lengthy and less definite intervals. From the accumulation of capital under capitalism must be distinguished what is known as primitive accumulation: the forcible divorcement of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants from the land, the stealing of the commons, the system of colonies and national debts, protective tariffs, and the like. "Primitive accumulation" creates the "free"
proletarian at one pole, and the owner of money, the capitalist, at the other.

The "historical tendency of capitalist accumulation" is described by Marx in the following famous words: "The expropriation of the immediate producers is accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self‐earned private property" (of the peasant and handicrafts man), "that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring‐individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others. . . .

That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co‐operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science,, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation,
grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it.

Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they be come incompatible with their capitalist integument.

Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated." (Capital, Vol. I.)

New and important in the highest degree, further, is the analysis Marx gives in the second volume of Capital of the reproduction of the aggregate social capital. Here, too, Marx deals not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society but with this economy as a whole. Correcting the mistake of the classical economists mentioned above, Marx divides the entire social production into two big sections: I) production of means of production, and II) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with arithmetical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital both in the case of reproduction in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation. The third volume of Capital solves the problem of the formation of the average rate of profit on the basis of the law of value. The immense advance in economic science made by Marx consists in the fact that he conducts his analysis from the
standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, and not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external, superficial aspects of com petition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern "theory of marginal utility" are frequently limited. Marx first analyzes the origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent.

Profit is the ratio between the surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a "high organic composition" (i.e., with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital exceeding the social average) yields a lower than average rate of profit; capital with a "low organic composition" yields a higher than average rate of profit. The competition of capitals, and the freedom with which they transfer from one branch to another equate the rate of profit to the average in both cases. The sum-total of the values of all the commodities of a given society coincides with the sum-total of prices of the commodities; but, owing to competition, in individual undertakings and branches of production commodities are sold not at their values but at the prices of production (or production prices), which are equal to the expended capital plus the average profit.

In this way the well-known and indisputable fact of the divergence between prices and values and of the equalization of profits is fully explained by Marx on the basis of the law of value; for the sum-total of values of all commodities coincides with the sum-total of prices. However, the equation of (social) value to (individual) prices does not take place simply and directly, but in a very complex way. It is quite natural that in a society of separate producers of commodities, who are united only by the market, law can
reveal itself only as an average, social, mass law, when individual deviations to one side or the other mutually compensate one another.

An increase in the productivity of labour implies a more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. And since surplus value is a function of variable capital alone, it is obvious that the rate of profit (the ratio of surplus value to the whole capital, and not to its variable part alone) tends to fall.

Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of a number of circumstances that conceal or counteract it. Without pausing to give an account of the extremely interesting sections of the third volume of Capital devoted to usurer’s capital, commercial capital and money capital, we pass to the most important section, the theory of ground rent. Owing to the fact that the land area is limited and, in capitalist countries, is all occupied by individual private owners, the price of production of agricultural products is determined by the cost of production not on average soil, but on the worst soil, not under average conditions, but under the worst conditions of delivery of produce to the market. The difference between this price and the price of production on better soil (or under better conditions) constitutes differential rent. Analyzing this in detail, and showing how it arises out of the difference in fertility of different plots of land and the difference in the amount of capital invested in land, Marx fully exposed (see also Theories of Surplus-Value, in which the criticism of Rodbertus deserves particular attention) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is derived only when there is a successive transition from
better land to worse. On the contrary, there may be inverse transitions, land may pass from one category into others (owing to advances in agricultural technique, the growth of towns, and so on), and the notorious "law of diminishing returns" is a profound error which charges nature with the defects, limitations and contradictions of capitalism. Further, the equalization of profit in all branches of industry and national economy in general presupposes complete freedom of competition and the free flow of capital from one branch to another. But the private ownership of land creates monopoly, which hinders this free flow. Owing to this monopoly, the products of agriculture, which is distinguished by a lower organic composition of capital, and, consequently, by an individually higher rate of profit, do not participate in the entirely free process of equalization of the rate of profit; the landowner, being a monopolist, can keep the price above the average, and this monopoly price engenders absolute rent. Differential rent cannot be done away with under capitalism, but absolute rent can for instance, by the nationalization of the land, by making it the property of the state.

Making the land the property of the state would undermine the monopoly of private landowners, and would lead to a more systematic and complete application of freedom of competition in the domain of agriculture. And, therefore, Marx points out, in the course of history bourgeois radicals have again and again advanced this progressive bourgeois demand for the nationalization of the land, which, however, frightens away the majority of the bourgeoisie, because it too closely "touches" another monopoly, which is particularly important and "sensitive" in our day the monopoly of the means of production in general. (Marx gives a remarkably
popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of the average rate of profit on capital and of absolute ground rent in a letter to Engels dated August 2, 1862. See Briefwechsel, Vol. III, pp. 77-81; also the letter of August 9, 1862, ibid., pp. 86-87.  

For the history of ground rent it is also important to note Marx’s analysis showing how labour rent (when the peasant creates surplus product by labouring on the lord’s land) is transformed into rent in produce or in kind (when the peasant creates surplus product on his own land and cedes it to the lord due to "non-economic constraint"), then into money rent (which is rent in kind transformed into money, the "obrok" of the old Russia, due to the development of commodity production), and finally into capitalist rent, when the peasant is replaced by the agricultural entrepreneur, who cultivates the soil with the help of wage labour. In connexion with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalist ground rent," note should be made of a number of penetrating ideas (especially important for backward countries like Russia) expressed by Marx on the evolution of capitalism in agriculture. "The transformation of rent in kind into money rent is not only necessarily accompanied, but even anticipated by the formation of a class of property-less day labourers, who hire themselves out for wages. During the period of their rise, when this new class appears but sporadically, the custom necessarily develops among the better- situated tributary farmers of exploiting agricultural labourers for their own account, just as the wealthier serfs in feudal times used to employ serfs for their own benefit. In this way they gradually acquire the ability to accumulate a certain amount of wealth and to transform themselves even into future capitalists. The old self-employing possessors of

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the land thus give rise among themselves to a nursery for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned upon the general development of capitalist production outside of the rural districts." (Capital, Vol. III, p. 332.)

"The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market." (Capital, Vol. I, p. 778.) The impoverishment and ruin of the agricultural population lead, in their turn, to the formation of a reserve army of labour for capital. In every capitalist country "part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat. . . . (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing. . . . The agricultural labourer is there fore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism." (Capital, Vol. I, p. 668.)

The private ownership of the peasant in the land he tills constitutes the basis of small-scale production and the condition for its prospering and attaining a classical form. But such small-scale production is compatible only with a narrow and primitive framework of production and society. Under capitalism the "exploitation of the peasants differs only in form from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the state taxes." (The Class Struggles in France.) "The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil,
while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages." (The Eighteenth Brumaire.)

As a rule the peasant cedes to capitalist society, i.e., to the capitalist class, even a part of the wages, sinking "to the level of the Irish tenant farmer all under the pretence of being a private proprietor." (The Class Struggles in France.) What is "one of the causes which keeps the price of cereals lower in countries with a predominance of small farmers than in countries with a capitalist mode of production"? (Capital, Vol. III, p. 340.)

It is that the peasant cedes to society (i.e., to the capitalist class) part of his surplus product without an equivalent. "This lower price (of cereals and other agricultural produce) is also a result of the poverty of the producers and by no means of the productivity of their labour." (Capital, Vol. III, p. 340.) The small-holding system, which is the normal form of small-scale production, deteriorates, collapses, perishes under capitalism. "Small peasants property excludes by its very nature the development of the social powers of production of labour, the social forms of labour, the social concentration of capitals, cattle raising on a large scale, and a progressive application of science. Usury and a system of taxation must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land with draws this capital from cultivation. An infinite dissipation of means of production and an isolation of the producers themselves go with it." (Co-operative societies, i.e., associations of small peasants, while playing an extremely progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency without eliminating it; nor must it be forgotten that these co-operative societies do much for the well-to-do peasants, and very little, almost nothing, for the mass of poor peasants; and then the
associations themselves become exploiters of wage labour.)
"Also an enormous waste of human energy.

A progressive deterioration of the conditions of production and a raising of the price of means of production is a necessary law of small peasants property." In agriculture, as in industry, capitalism transforms the process of production only at the price of the "martyrdom of the producer." "The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour power itself.

Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil. . . . Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth the soil and the labourer." (Capital, Vol. I, end of Chap. 13.)
4. Socialism

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of motion of contemporary society. The socialization of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms, and which has manifested itself very strikingly during the half-century that has elapsed since the death of Marx in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, forms the chief material foundation for the inevitable coming of socialism. The intellectual and moral driving force and the physical executant of this transformation is the proletariat, which is trained by capitalism itself.

The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, which manifests itself in various and, as to its content, increasingly multifarious forms, inevitably becomes a political struggle aiming at the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialization of production is bound to lead to the conversion of the means of production into the property of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators." This conversion will directly result in an immense increase in productivity of labour, a reduction of working hours, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins of small-scale, primitive, disunited production by collective and improved labour.
Capitalism finally snaps the bond between agriculture and industry; but at the same time, in its highest development it prepares new elements of this bond, of a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the combination of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (putting an end at one and the same time to rural remoteness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger generation are being prepared by the highest forms of modern capitalism: female and child labour and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society.

Nevertheless "...modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of
production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery." (Capital, Vol. I, end of Chap. 13.)

In the factory system is to be found "the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings." (Ibid.)

Marxian socialism puts the question of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a fearless forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, could not become mature and formed without "constituting itself within the nation," without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). But the development of capitalism more and more breaks down national barriers, destroys national seclusion, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true that in the developed capitalist countries "the workingmen have no country" and that "united action" of the workers, of the civilized countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat." (Communist Manifesto.) The state, which is organized violence, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the development of society, when society had split into irreconcilable classes, and when it could not exist without an "authority" ostensibly standing above society and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes ". . . the state of the most
powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital." (Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, a work in which the writer expounds his own and Marx’s views.)

Even the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, the democratic republic, in no way removes this fact, but merely changes its form (connexion between the government and the stock exchange, corruption direct and indirect of the officialdom and the press, etc.). Socialism, by leading to the abolition of classes, will thereby lead to the abolition of the state. "The first act," writes Engels in Anti-Dühring, "by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not abolished. It dies out."33 "The society that will organize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze
axe." (Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.)

Finally, as regards the attitude of Marxian socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels which expresses Marx’s views: ". . . when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regard less of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today." (Engels, The Peasant Question in France and Germany, p. 17, Alexeyeva ed.; there are mistakes in the Russian translation. Original in the Neue Zeit.) 34
5. Tactics Of The Class Struggle Of The Proletariat

Having as early as 1844-45 examined one of the chief defects of the earlier materialism, namely, its inability to understand the conditions or appreciate the importance of practical revolutionary activity, Marx, along with his theoretical work, all his life devoted unrelaxed attention to the tactical problems of the class struggle of the proletariat. An immense amount of material bearing on this is contained in all the works of Marx and particularly in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels published in 1913.

This material is still far from having been assembled, collected, studied and examined. We shall therefore have to confine ourselves here to the most general and briefest remarks, emphasizing that Marx justly considered that without this side to it materialism was irresolute, one-sided, and lifeless. Marx defined the fundamental task of proletarian tactics in strict conformity with all the postulates of his materialist-dialectical conception. Only an objective consideration of the sum-total of reciprocal relations of all the classes of a given society without exception, and, consequently, a consideration of the objective stage of development of that society and of the reciprocal relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for correct tactics of the advanced class.
At the same time, all classes and all countries are regarded not statically, but dynamically, i.e., not in a state of immobility, but in motion (the laws of which are determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded not only from the standpoint of the past, but also from the standpoint of the future, and, at the same time, not in accordance with the vulgar conception of the "evolutionists," who see only slow changes, but dialectically: "in developments of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day," Marx wrote to Engels, "though later on days may come again in which twenty years are concentrated." (Briefwechsel, Vol. III, p. 127) At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand utilizing the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called "peaceful" development in order to develop the class consciousness, strength and fighting capacity of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, conducting all this work of utilization towards the "final aim" of the movement of this class and towards the creation in it of the faculty for practically performing great tasks in the great days in which "twenty years are concentrated."

Two of Marx’s arguments are of special importance in this connexion: one of these is contained in The Poverty of Philosophy and concerns the economic struggle and economic organizations of the proletariat; the other is contained in the Communist Manifesto and concerns the political tasks of the proletariat. The first argument runs as follows: "Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this
common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance combination. . . . Combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups . . . and in face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them [i.e., the workers] than that of wages. ... In this struggle a veritable civil war all the elements necessary for a coming battle unite and develop. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character,"36

Here we have the programme and tactics of the economic struggle and of the trade-union movement for several decades to come, for all the long period in which the proletariat will muster its forces for the "coming battle." Side by side with this must be placed numerous references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labour movement; how industrial "prosperity" leads to attempts "to buy the workers" (Briefwechsel, Vol. I, p. 136)37, to divert them from the struggle; how this prosperity generally "demoralizes the workers" (Vol. II, p. 218); how the British proletariat becomes "bourgeoisified" "this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat as well as a bourgeoisie" (Vol. II, p. 290)38; how its "revolutionary energy" oozes away (Vol. III, p. 124); how it will be necessary to wait a more or less long time before "the English workers will free themselves from their apparent bourgeois infection" (Vol. III, p. 127); how the British labour movement "lacks the mettle of the Chartists" (1866, Vol. III, p. 305)39; how the British workers leaders are becoming a type midway between "a radi al bourgeois and a worker" (in reference to Holyoak, Vol. IV, p. 209); how, owing to British monopoly,
and as long as this monopoly lasts, "the British working-man will not budge" (Vol. IV, p. 433).\(^\text{40}\)

The tactics of the economic struggle, in connexion with the general course (and outcome) of the labour movement, are here considered from a remarkably broad, comprehensive, dialectical, and genuinely revolutionary standpoint.

The Communist Manifesto set forth the fundamental Marxian principle on the tactics of the political struggle: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." That was why in 1848 Marx supported the party of the "agrarian revolution" in Poland, "that party which fomented the insurrection of Cracow in 1846."\(^\text{41}\) In Germany in 1848 and 1849 Marx supported the extreme revolutionary democracy, and subsequently never retracted what he had then said about tactics. He regarded the German bourgeoisie as an element which was "inclined from the very beginning to betray the people" (only an alliance with the peasantry could have brought the bourgeoisie the integral fulfilment of its tasks) "and compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society."\(^\text{42}\)

Here is Marx’s summary of the analysis of the class position of the German bourgeoisie in the era of the bourgeois-democratic revolution an analysis which, incidentally, is a sample of that materialism which examines society in motion, and, moreover, not only from the side of the motion which is directed backwards: "With out faith in itself, without faith in the people, grumbling at those above, trembling before
those below . . . intimidated by the world storm . . . no energy in any respect, plagiarism in every respect . . . without initiative . . . an execrable old man, who saw himself doomed to guide and deflect the first youthful impulses of a robust people in his own senile interests. . . ."

( Neue Rheinische Zeitung, 1848; see Literarischer Nachlass, Vol. III, p. 212.)

About twenty years later, in a letter to Engels (Briefwechsel, Vol. III, p. 224), Marx declared that the cause of the failure of the Revolution of 1848 was that the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of a fight for freedom.

When the revolutionary era of 1848-49 ended, Marx opposed every attempt to play at revolution (the fight he put up against Schapper and Willich), and insisted on ability to work in the new phase which in a seemingly "peaceful" way was preparing for new revolutions. The spirit in which Marx wanted the work to be carried on is shown by his estimate of the situation in Germany in 1856, the blackest period of reaction: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War." (Briefwechsel, Vol. II, p. 108.)

As long as the democratic (bourgeois) revolution in Germany was not finished, Marx wholly concentrated attention in the tactics of the socialist proletariat on developing the democratic energy of the peasantry. He held that Lassalle s attitude was "objectively . . . a betrayal of the whole workers movement to Prussia" (Vol. III, p. 210), incidentally be cause Lassalle connived at the actions of the Junkers and Prussian nationalism. "In a predominantly agricultural country," wrote Engels in 1865, exchanging ideas with Marx on the subject of an intended joint statement by them in the press, " . . . it is dastardly to make an exclusive
attack on the bourgeoisie in the name of the industrial proletariat but never to devote a word to the patriarchal exploitation of the rural proletariat under the lash of the great feudal aristocracy." (Vol. III, p. 217.)

From 1864 to 1870, when the era of the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, the era of the efforts of the exploiting classes of Prussia and Austria to complete this revolution in one way or another from above, was coming to an end, Marx not only condemned Lassalle, who was coquetting with Bismarck, but also corrected Liebknecht, who had inclined towards "Austrophilism" and the defence of particularism; Marx demanded revolutionary tactics which would combat both Bismarck and the Austrophiles with equal ruthlessness, tactics which would not be adapted to the "victor," the Prussian Junker, but which would immediately renew the revolutionary struggle against him also on the basis created by the Prussian military victories. (Brief wechsel, Vol. III, pp. 134, 136, 147, 179, 204, 210, 215, 418, 437, 440- 41.)

In the famous Address of the International of September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising; but when the uprising nevertheless took place (1871), Marx enthusiastically hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses, who were "storming heaven" (letter of Marx to Kugelmann). The defeat of the revolutionary action in this situation, as in many others, was, from the standpoint of Marxian dialectical materialism, a lesser evil in the general course and outcome of the proletarian struggle than the abandonment of a position already occupied, than a surrender without battle. Such a surrender would have demoralized the proletariat and undermined its fighting
capacity. Fully appreciating the use of legal means of struggle during periods when political stagnation prevails and bourgeois legality dominates, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, after the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, sharply condemned Most's "revolutionary phrases"; but he no less, if not more sharply, attacked the opportunism that had temporarily gained sway in the official Social-Democratic Party, which did not at once display resoluteness, firmness, revolutionary spirit and a readiness to resort to an illegal struggle in response to the Anti-Socialist Law. (Briefwechsel, Vol. IV, pp. 397,. 404, 418, 422, 424, cf. also letters to Sorge.)


ENDNOTES

1 Lenin began work on Karl Marx in spring 1914 for the encyclopædic dictionary of the Granat Brothers Society in Poronino, Galicia, and completed it in November 1914 in Berne, Switzerland. In a preface written when the article was published as a separate pamphlet, he cites from memory the year of writing as 1913.

The article appeared in the dictionary in 1915, signed V. Ilyin and was supplemented with a bibliography of Marxist literature. For censorship reasons the editors deleted two chapters: Socialism and Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat and made a number of textual changes.

In 1918 the Priboi Publishers issued the work in pamphlet form with Lenin’s preface, just as it had appeared in the dictionary, although omitting the Bibliography of Marxism.

The full text, corresponding to the manuscript, was first published in 1925 in a collection titled Marx-Engels-Marxism, prepared by the Lenin Institute of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

2 The present re-issue also omits the bibliography of Marxist literature. Those works are now part of the established cannon and the literature of Marxism has been greatly expanded.

3 The allusion here is to Marx’s statement in The Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right, Introduction.

4 The Communist League: the first international communist organization of the proletariat. Its establishment was preceded by considerable spadework by Marx and Engels in rallying Socialist and foremost workers of various countries ideologically and
organizationally. With this aim in view they organized the Communist Correspondence Committee in Brussels early in 1846.

Marx and Engels defended the ideas of scientific communism in bitter controversies with the vulgar equalitarian communism advocated by Wilhelm Weitling, "true socialism" and the petty-bourgeois Utopias of Proudhon, which had an influence, among other bodies, on members of the League of the Just, a secret society of workers and artisans which had lodges in Germany, France, Switzerland and Britain.

The London leadership of the League of the Just, convinced in the justice of Marx’s and Engels’s ideas, invited them to join their organization late in January 1847 and to take part in re-organizing it, and drafting a programme of the League based on principles which they set forth. Marx and Engels accepted the invitation. The congress of the League of the Just, held in London early in June 1847, has gone down in history as the first congress of the Communist League. Engels and Wilhelm Wolff took part. At this congress the League of the Just was renamed: the Communist League and the old obscure slogan, "All Men Are Brothers," was replaced with the militant internationalist slogan of the proletarian party: "Workingmen of All Countries, Unite!"

The congress also examined the "Rules of the Communist League," which Engels actively helped to draw up. The new rules clearly defined the final goals of the communist movement and omitted clauses which lent the organization the features of a secret society.

The structure of the League was based on democratic principles. Final approval of the rules came at the second congress of the Communist League. Both Marx and Engels took part in the second congress in London, November 29-December 8, 1847. In prolonged debates they upheld the principles of scientific communism, which were finally adopted by the congress unanimously. It was at the request of the congress that Marx and Engels wrote the Manifesto
of the Communist Party. This programmatic document was made public in February 1848.

When the revolution erupted in France the Central Committee of the League, with its seat in London, turned over the leadership, late in February 1848, to the Brussels District Committee headed by Marx. After the latter was deported from Brussels and moved to Paris, the seat of the new Central Committee was removed to the French capital early in March. Engels was also elected to the Central Committee. In late March and early April 1848 the Committee arranged for the repatriation of a few hundred German workers, mostly members of the Communist League, to take part in the German revolution, which had then begun. The political platform of the Communist League in this revolution was set forth in the Demands of the Communist Party in Germany, formulated by Marx and Engels late in March.

On arriving in Germany early in April 1848 Marx, Engels and their followers realized that in backward Germany, where the workers were disunited and insufficiently conscious politically, the two or three hundred members of the Communist League scattered throughout the country were unable to influence the broad masses to any appreciable extent. As a consequence, Marx and Engels saw fit to join the extreme, in effect proletarian, left-wing of the democratic movement. They joined the Cologne Democratic Society and recommended their followers to join democratic groups in order to uphold in them the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, to criticize the inconsistency and vacillation of petty-bourgeois democrats, and spur them to resolute action. At the same time, Marx and Engels urged them to organize workers’ societies, to concentrate on the political education of the proletariat, and to lay the foundations for a mass proletarian party.
The Neue Rheinische Zeitung edited by Marx was the guiding centre for members of the Communist League. Late in 1848 the League Central Committee in London tried to restore contacts and sent Joseph Moll to Germany as an emissary with the purpose of reorganizing the League. The London body had amended the 1847 rules, reducing their political impact. It was no longer the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of proletarian rule and the building of a classless communist society that were defined as the chief aims of the Communist League. Instead, they spoke of a social republic. Moll’s mission in Germany in the winter of 1848-49 fell through.

In April 1849 Marx, Engels and their followers resigned the Democratic Society. Now that the working masses had gained political experience and were bitterly disappointed by the petty-bourgeois democrats it was time to think of establishing an independent proletarian party. But Marx and Engels failed to carry out their plan. An uprising broke out in South-Western Germany, and its defeat put an end to the German revolution.

The course of the revolution revealed that the views of the Communist League, as set forth in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, were perfectly correct, and that the League was an excellent school of revolutionary skill. Its members participated with vigour in the movement, defending the standpoint of the proletariat, that most revolutionary class, in the press, on the barricades and in the battlefields.

The defeat of the revolution was a painful blow to the Communist League. Many of its members were imprisoned or had emigrated. Addresses and contacts were lost. Local branches had ceased to function. The League also suffered considerable losses outside Germany.
In autumn 1849 most of the leaders of the League assembled in London. Thanks to the efforts of the new, reorganized Central Committee headed by Marx and Engels, the former organization was restored and the activities of the League revived in spring 1850. The Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League, written by Marx and Engels in March 1850, summed up the results of the 1848-49 revolution and set the task of forming a proletarian party independent of the petty bourgeoisie. The Address was the first to define the idea of permanent revolution. A new communist organ came off the press in March 1850. It was the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-okonomische Revue.*

In the summer of 1850 a controversy arose in the Central Committee of the Communist League over the question of tactics. A majority headed by Marx and Engels firmly opposed the faction of August Willich and Karl Schapper, who proposed the sectarian and reckless tactics of starting a revolution without delay, in total disregard of objective developments and the realities of the political situation in Europe.

In the meantime, Marx and Engels laid prime emphasis on the propagation of scientific communism and the training of proletarian revolutionaries for forthcoming revolutionary clashes. This, they said, was the principal task of the Communist League at a time when the reactionaries had assumed the offensive. In mid-September 1850, the schismatic activities of the Willich-Schapper faction brought about a rupture. At a sitting on September 15 the powers of the Central Committee were transferred at Marx’s suggestion to the Cologne District Committee. The Communist League branches in Germany approved this decision of the London Central Committee.

On instructions from Marx and Engels, the new Central Committee in Cologne drew up a new set of League rules in December 1850. In May 1851, police persecution and arrests brought the activities of the Communist League in Germany to a virtual standstill. Soon after
the Cologne Communist trial, Marx urged the Communist League to announce its dissolution. It did so on November 17, 1852.

The Communist League has done its historical share as a school of proletarian revolutionaries, the nucleus of a proletarian party, and the predecessor of the International Workingmen’s Association the First International.

On returning to Germany after emigrating, Marx and Engels set out at once to realize their plan for a revolutionary organ of the press, which they regarded as a powerful means of influencing the masses. In view of the conditions obtaining in Germany at the time, Marx, Engels and their followers assumed the political standpoint of the Left, in effect proletarian, wing of the democratic movement. This predetermined the tendency of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, which appeared with Organ der Demokratie written into its masthead.

A militant organ of the proletarian wing of the democratic movement, the Neue Rheinische Zeitung served to educate the masses and rallied them to fight the counter-revolution. In its effort to keep its readers informed of all the important events of the German and European revolution, the paper often put out second editions. Whenever its four pages could not hold all the news, it published supplements, and whenever new important despatches came to hand it put out extra supplements and extra editions, which were printed in leaflet form. Editorials stating the attitude of the newspaper to the major issues of the revolution were, as a rule, written by Marx or Engels. These editorials are marked *Koln and **Koln. Articles marked with a single asterisk sometimes appeared in other sections of the paper (among despatches from Italy, France, Britain, Hungary, and other countries).
Aside from handling the correspondence and helping the editor-in-chief in technical matters, each of the editors dealt with a limited, specific round of questions. Engels wrote critical reviews of debates in the Berlin and Frankfurt national assemblies and the second chamber of the Prussian Landtag, articles about the revolutionary war in Hungary, the national-liberation movement in Italy, the war in Schleswig-Holstein and, between November 1848 and January 1849, a series of articles on Switzerland. Wilhelm Wolff wrote about the agrarian issue in the German revolution, the situation of the peasantry and the peasant movement, particularly in Silesia, and ran the section of current news, "In the Country." Georg Weerth ran the section of humour in rhyme and prose. Ernest Dronke was at one time the paper’s correspondent in Frankfurt-Am-Main, wrote some articles about Poland, and in March-May 1849 reviews of reports from Italy.

Ferdinand Wolff was for a long time correspondent of the paper in Paris. Heinrich Burger’s association with the paper confined itself, according to Marx and Engels, to a single article, which was furthermore radically revised by Marx. Ferdinand Freiligrath, who joined the editorial board in October 1848, contributed revolutionary verses.

The paper’s determined and irreconcilable stand, its militant internationalism and the appearance in it of political exposes of the Prussian government and the local Cologne authorities, from the first caused it to be baited by the feudal-monarchist and liberal-bourgeois press and persecuted by the government. The authorities refused Marx the right to Prussian citizenship to prejudice his stay in the Rhine Province, and initiated court proceedings against the paper’s editors, principally Marx and Engels. After the September events in Cologne the military authorities proclaimed martial law there on September 26, 1848, and banned a number of democratic publications, the Neue Rheinische Zeitung among them. Engels, Dronke and Ferdinand Wolff were compelled to leave Cologne temporarily to avoid arrest.
and Wilhelm Wolff had to go to the Pfalz for a few months, and then to hide from the police in Cologne itself. Owing to Engels’s forced departure from Germany the brunt of the editorial work, including the writing of editorials, fell to Marx until January 1849.

In the teeth of persecutions and political obstructions the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* courageously defended the interests of the revolutionary democrats and the proletariat. In May 1849, the time of a general counter-revolutionary offensive, the Prussian government took advantage of the fact that Marx was not granted Prussian citizenship to order his deportation. Marx’s departure and the repressions against the other editors of the paper caused it to cease publication. The last, 301st, issue of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, printed in red, appeared on May 19, 1849. In a parting statement to the Cologne workers the editors declared that "their last word always and everywhere will be: liberation of the working class!"


9 Letter from K. Marx to F. Engels, December 12, 1866.


See F. Engels, Anti-Duhring, Moscow 1954, p. 40. p. 25


See K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, p. 218. p. 27

See K. Marx and F. Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Moscow 1957, pp. 47-48, 66. p. 31

See K. Marx and F. Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Moscow 1957, p. 64. p. 31


K. Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p.33


27 See K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, pp. 157-62, 164-65. p. 42

28 See K. Marx, Das Kapital, Bd. Ill, Berlin 1953, S. 850. p. 43


30 See K. Marx, Dos Kapital, Bd. Ill, Berlin 1953, Ss. 858, 859. p. 45


33 See F. Engels, Anti-Duhring, Moscow 1954, p. 389. p. 49


35 See K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, p. 172. p. 51

36 See K. Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, Moscow, pp. 194-95. p. 52

37 Letter from F. Engels to K. Marx, February 5, 1854. p. 52

38 Letter from F. Engels to K. Marx, October 7, 1858. p. 52
Letter from F. Engels to K. Marx, April 8, 1863. Letters from K. Marx to F. Engels, April 9, 1863 and April 2, 1866. p.52

Letters from F. Engels to K. Marx, November 19, 1869 and August 11, 1881. p. 53

See K. Marx and F. Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Moscow 1957, pp. 109, 110. p. 53

See K. Marx, Bourgeoisie and Counter-revolution. p. 53

43 See K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, p. 111. p. 54

44 Letters from F. Engels to K. Marx, January 27, 1865 and February 5, 1865. p. 55

Letters from F. Engels to K. Marx, June 11, 1863; November 24, 1863; September 4, 1864; January 27, 1865; October 22, 1867; December 6, 1867. Letters from K. Marx to F. Engels, June 12, 1863; December 10, 1864; February 3, 1865; December 17, 1867. p. 55

The Anti-Socialist Law was enacted in Germany on October 21, 1878. It banned all the organizations of the Social-Democratic Party, mass organizations of workers, and the workers press, made socialist literature subject to confiscation and caused persecutions of Social-Democrats. Under pressure of the mass workers movement it was repealed on October 1, 1880. p. 55

Letters from K. Marx to F. Engels, July 23, 1877; August 1, 1877; September 10, 1879. Letters from F. Engels to K. Marx, August 20, 1879 and September 9, 1879. p. 56