THE

CLASS STRUGGLE

(From the Erfurt Programme).

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THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

I.—SOCIALISM AND THE POSSESSING CLASSES.

The last clauses of the general part of our present programme reads as follows:—

"This social transformation means the emancipation not only of the proletariat, but of the whole human race, which is suffering under present-day conditions. But it can only be accomplished by the working class, because all other classes, in spite of the antagonism of their interests among themselves, yet take up their stand upon the private ownership of the means of production, and have as their common goal the preservation of the foundation of present-day society.

"The struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation is of necessity a political struggle. The workers cannot direct their economic struggles nor develop their economic organisation without political rights. They cannot accomplish the transition by which the means of production pass into the hands of the community without having first gained political power.

"To make this struggle of the working class into a conscious and united one, and to direct it towards its natural goal—that is the task of the Social-Democratic Party.

"The interests of the working class are the same in all countries dominated by the capitalist method of production. With the extension of international communication, and of production for the world's market, the condition of the workers in each country becomes more and more dependent on that of the workers in the other countries. The liberation of the working class is thus a task in which the workers of all civilised countries are generally engaged. In the realisation of this the Social-Democratic Party of Germany feels and declares itself at one with the class-conscious workers of all other countries.

"The Social-Democratic Party of Germany is thus fighting not for new class privileges and rights, but for the abolition of class rule, and of the classes themselves, and for equal rights and equal duties for all, without reference to sex or descent. According to these principles, what it fights against in present-day society is not merely the exploitation and oppression of the wage workers, but every kind of exploitation and oppression, whether directed against a class, a party, a sex, or a race."

The introductory sentence to the first of these clauses hardly needs any explanation. We have already shown in detail that the superseding of the capitalist by the Socialist method of production is not only in the interests of the propertyless and exploited, but also in the interests of social development—therefore, in a certain sense, even in the interests of the property-holders and exploiters. For they, too, suffer under the contradictions of the present system. Some of them are degenerating into idleness, while others are wearing themselves out in the breathless scramble for profit; and over all alike hangs the Damocles sword of bankruptcy—the danger of sinking into the ranks of the proletariat.

But on looking round we see that the great mass of property holders and exploiters look at Socialism, not only with doubt and mistrust, but even with the bitterest enmity.

Is the reason for this to be sought simply in the want of knowledge and insight? The leaders among the opponents of Socialism are just those whose position in the State, in society, and in the scientific world ought to make them the most capable of understanding social and economic relations, and the direction of social development.

And, indeed, so desperate are the conditions of present-day society that no one who wishes to be taken seriously in politics or science can any longer deny the justification of Socialist criticism. On the contrary, the most enlightened minds in all non-Socialist parties admit that there is a "grain of truth" in that criticism; some of them, indeed, even declare that the victory of Socialism is unavoidable—but only conditionally, namely, only if society does not suddenly turn round and improve, which, according to them, could be done with ease, according to desire, if only it would speedily act up to the wishes of one or other of these parties.

Thus even those members of the non-Socialist parties who have best understood Socialist criticism save themselves by a by-path from the necessity of seeing the logical consequences of that criticism.

The cause of this strange phenomenon is not difficult to recognise. For though certain interests, not to be underrated, appeal even to the property holder against the private ownership of the means of production, other interests, nearer at hand and easier to comprehend, urge upon him the conservation of private property.

Of course, this is especially the case with the rich. They have nothing to gain, directly, by the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production. It is true that certain socially beneficial effects would arise from it by which they also would profit, but these are relatively remote. The disadvantages, on the contrary, which the abolition of this private property must bring to them are at once apparent; they must certainly lose in power and influence, some of them, perhaps, even in comfort and good living, according to the conditions under which the social revolution is accomplished.

With the lower strata of property owners, especially with those among them who are exploited—small producers, small peasants, etc.—it is different. These have no power and influence to lose, and their material conditions could but improve with the introduction and development of the Socialist method of production. But in order to understand that they have to raise themselves above the point of view of the class to which they belong. From the narrow point of view of the small bourgeois or small peasant even the capitalist system is incomprehensible, though they actually feel its effects, and modern Socialism is far more incomprehensible still. On the other hand, what they do at once grasp is the necessity that they themselves should own their own implements of production if production is to continue in the customary fashion. As long as the handicraftsman thinks of himself as handicraftsman, the peasant as peasant, and the small tradesman as small tradesman, as long as they are strongly class-conscious, they needs must cling to the private ownership of the means of production, and be unreceptive to the teachings of Socialism, however bad their own condition may be.

We have seen in a former pamphlet how the private ownership of the means of production chains the perishing small shopkeepers and peasants to their backward system of production, even when it is no longer capable of providing them with sufficient means of existence, and even when a transition to wage labour would ameliorate their condition. In this way private property is the force that binds all the possessing classes to the present-day method of production, even those who at the same time are among the exploited, even those whose possessions are only a caricature of what is generally understood by "property."

Only those among the small producers and peasants who despair of the further existence of their class, who can no longer shut their eyes to the conviction that the forms of production on which it is founded are doomed—they alone are in a position to grasp Socialism. But want of education, and the narrowness of their horizon—the natural results of their conditions of life—make it very difficult for them to realise the hopelessness of their position as a class. Their misery, their spasmodic efforts to find a means of escape from it, have hitherto had no other effect than to make them an easy prey to every demagogue who assumed the necessary self-confidence, and did not fail to make the most glowing promises.

In the higher ranks of property owners more culture and a wider range are to be met with. Also, there is still in the minds of some cultured persons some remains of the old idealism from the time of the revolutionary struggles of the rising bourgeoisie—the time of enlightenment. But woe to the bourgeois who lets himself be persuaded to take an interest in Socialism, and to engage in active propaganda! He soon sees that he must take his choice between renouncing his ideas or severing all the social links that have up till now not only fettered him, but have also supported him. Only a few are brave and independent enough to reach the cross-roads, and only a minority of these few, having arrived there, have the strength to break decidedly with their class. But even of these the majority have hitherto soon become weary; they soon realised their "youthful follies" and became "reasonable."

The bourgeois idealists are the only ones among the higher bourgeoisie for whom it is at all possible to become Socialists. But for the greater number of those among these idealists who have gained a deeper insight into social conditions and into the problems that arise out of them, the insight they have gained only makes them exhaust their strength in the fruitless search for a so-called "peaceful" solution of the "social question," for a solution which will reconcile the demands of their more or less Socialistic knowledge and conscience with the class interests of the bourgeoisie, which is as impossible as wet fire or burning water.

Only those bourgeois idealists who not only gain the necessary theoretical insight, but who have already, at any rate inwardly, broken with the bourgeoisie, and who possess the courage and strength to break with it externally also, are capable of developing into true Socialists.

Thus the Cause of Socialism has not much to expect from the possessing classes. A few of their individual members may be won for Socialism, but only such as no longer feel themselves as belonging to the class in which their economic position places them. These will always be a small minority, except in revolutionary times, when the scales seem turning in favour of Socialism. Then, indeed, there will probably be many who will desert from the ranks of the possessing classes.

But hitherto the only fruitful recruiting-ground of the Socialist armies has been, not the class of those who have anything—be it ever so little—to lose, but those who have "nothing to lose but their chains, and have a world to win."

II.—SERVANTS AND INDENTURED LABOUR.

It is, however, on no account every grade of the propertyless class which can be regarded as a favourable recruiting ground for Social-Democracy.

It is, of course, impossible to give here a "natural history" of the proletariat; the most important points have been mentioned in a previous pamphlet,* where the position of the proletariat under the present-day method of productiion was considered. It therefore only needs a few remarks here which seem necessary to explain the part played by the different grades of proletarians in the economic and political struggles of our time.

We know that, even though the Philistines' favourite phrase about the poor having always existed, is false, one must still recognise that poverty is as old as commodity production. It is true that in former times it was an exceptional phenomenon. In the Middle Ages, for instance, the number of those who did not possess the means of production necessary to satisfy their own wants was small. Of these few the majority easily succeeded in obtaining employment in propertied families as assistants, labourers, apprentices, servants; they were for the most part young people who still had the hope of setting up their own workshop and their own household. In any case, they worked together with the head of the family or his wife, and shared with them the fruits of their labour. As members of a property-holding family, they were not proletarians; they felt at one with the interests of the family, sharing its prosperity and suffering with it from any adversity. And this is still the case in those remote districts where a patriarchal relationship still survives. Where the workpeople still belong to the family of their employer they will defend his property, although they have no property themselves, and under such conditions Socialism cannot take root.

The same in the case of the journeyman, as shown in the pamphlet "The Proletariat."

Side by side with the journeyman and apprentices arose the servant class. A certain number of the propertyless turned to the families of the richer exploiters, in the Middle Ages and up to the beginning of modern times, especially to the nobles and princes, the higher grades of clergy and the merchants. They entered their service, not to help them with their work, but to protect them and minister to their luxuries as men-at-arms and lackeys. The mutual sharing of work and pleasure, the patriarchal relationship, was absent here, and with it the solidarity between master and man which arose from it. But another kind of solidarity grew up between master an servant. Where a large retinue is kept there are differences of rank among them also. The individual hopes for advancement, a rise in salary, in power and importance. This advancement depends, however, on the disposition of his master. The more cleverly he can adapt himself and submit to the latter, and the more he can surpass his fellow-servants in this respect, the better is his own outlook. Thus the servant feels a sense of solidarity with the master, but a secret enmity to all his fellow-workers. And yet another interest binds the servant to the master. The larger the income, the greater the power and honour of the master, the more of all this accrues to the servant. This is especially the case with those servants of luxurious people who have nothing to do but to "represent," to show how much superfluous money is at the disposal of their master, and to help him to run through it as quickly and pleasurably as possible, by serving him fearlessly and "faithfully" in all its follies and vices. The lackey thus feels solidarity with the exploiter and oppressor, as against those who are

* "The Proletariat."

exploited and oppressed by him; he often, indeed, behaves with less consideration towards them than his master himself. For the latter, if he is at all reasonable, will not kill the goose that lays him the golden eggs; he needs it not only for himself, but for his descendants. This consideration does not exist for the lackey.

No wonder that nothing is more detested among the people than the race of lackeys, whose cringing towards their "superiors" and brutality towards their "inferiors" are proverbial. The term lackey nowadays conveys the idea of all that is mean and despicable.

Of course, these influences on the characters of servants do not only affect the propertyless who come from the lower classes, but also the propertyless, or those who have but a little property among the higher classes; for instance, the impoverished nobleman who seeks his fortune as a high retainer, a gentleman-in-waiting at the court of some prince.*

But it is only necessary to deal here with the lower classes of servants, and we cannot, therefore, however tempting it would be, follow up the comparison with the aristocratic servants—a comparison which is apparent and not difficult to follow further. The object here is to trace why the servant class, in spite of its belonging to the proletariat, does not form a promising recruiting ground for Socialism. It is, on the contrary, a bulwark of existing society.

The growth of exploitation, the quantity of surplus-value produced annually, and the resulting increase of luxury, favours a continual decrease in the number of servants. But luckily for social development, the military species of it, the system of squires, has been very much thrown back since the overthrow of the military constitution for which the way was paved by the French Revolution—the substitution of the paid army by conscription. It has, certainly, not quite disappeared, and it is owing to its remnants in the modern armies that the "armed people" has hitherto, in most cases, not proved a very democratic institution.

But there is a strong tendency which is working against the growth of the servant class, properly so-called, in spite of the increase of luxury; and that is the dissolution of the transmitted form of the family and the division of labour which keeps converting more and more kinds of household work into special trades; for instance, those of hairdressers, waiters, cabmen, porters, etc. These occupations, which have evolved from that of domestic service, still, indeed, conserve the characteristics of their origin after they become independent, but they are gradually beginning to assume the qualities and views of the industrial wage-labouring class.

III.—THE SUBMERGED.

However numerous the class of servants in all branches has at times been, it has yet never been capable of absorbing all who were without property. Those proletarians who are unable to work—children, aged persons, invalids, cripples—were from the outset not in a position to get their living by any trade. To these, as we have seen, were added, since the beginning of modern times, such a number of persons in search of work—especially peasants who had been driven from their holdings or had fled from ill-treatment—that many of those capable of work came into the same position as the incapable. There remains nothing for them but begging, stealing and prostitution. The choice was given them between starving or to act in contradiction to all the prevailing ideas of decency, honour and respectability. They could only preserve their lives by setting their most pressing personal needs before any regard for their reputation. It is clear that such a state of things must be in the highest degree demoralising and corrupting.

This corruption was, and still is, aggravated by the fact that the unemployed poor are quite superfluous to society. Not only has the latter no need of them, but, on the contrary, would free itself from an undesired burden if it could get rid of them. But every class which is superfluous, which has no necessary functions to perform in society, is bound to degenerate; this is as true of the lowest as of the highest.

And the beggars cannot even buoy themselves up with the illusion that they are necessary; they have not even the memory of any time when their class did society any service; they cannot force their parasitic existence on society by pointing to their power.

* How near the lackey and the courtier are to each other is shown in a very amusing way by Le Sage's novel, "Gil Blas," that classic natural history of lackeydom. On the other side, the lackey approaches the vagabond class. Gil Blas rises, without changing in his nature, from the lowest menial and associate of swindlers to be the secretary and favourite of the Prime Minister at the Spanish Court.

They are only on sufferance, therefore meekness is the beggar's primary duty, and is reckoned as the highest virtue of the poor. Like the lackeys, this kind of proletarian is servile towards the mighty; they constitute no opposition against the existing order of society. On the contrary, they are dependent upon the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table; how can they wish that he should disappear! They themselves are not exploited, but the greater the degree of the exploitation of the workers, the greater the income of the rich, the more generous the latter can be and the more the poor have to expect from them. They, like the lackeys, take part in the exploitation; what reason should they, then, have to fight against it? At the beginning of the reformation in Germany, when the Catholic Church was utterly hated by all classes because she exploited them all, it was these proletarians who remained faithful to her, because they received more alms from her than from the stingy town-bourgeoisie or the exploited peasantry.

This kind of proletarian—the submerged—has never, on its own initiative, resisted exploitation. But still, it is not a bulwark of the latter, as is the soldier section of the servant class. Cowardly and unprincipled, it has no scruple in deserting those whose alms it has pocketed as soon as they have lost their riches and power. It has never stood in the front ranks of a revolutionary movement, but it has always been on the spot in any times of unrest ready to fish in the mud. It has sometimes assisted in giving the last blow to a falling class. As a rule it has contented itself during a revolution by exploiting and compromising the latter, only to betray it on the first opportunity.

The capitalist method of production has greatly increased this class; it is always bringing it in new recruits. In the large towns especially, the submerged, or vagabond class, constitutes a considerable portion of the population.

In character and views this class is approached by that portion of the small peasantry and small bourgeoisie who have come down to the utmost extreme of poverty, who despair of their own strength and seek to keep their heads above water by means of the alms thrown to them by the upper classes.

IV.—THE ORIGIN OF THE WAGE-EARNING PROLETARIAN.

It is from these last-mentioned categories that the budding capitalist production, especially the large industry, preferred to draw its supply of labour-power. It asks not so much for skilled as for patient, unresisting workers, who adapt themselves passively to the arrangements of a modern factory, which is only able to perform its functions without disturbance if each of its innumerable wheels makes continuously and exactly the movements allotted to it. And as it was from those classes which most nearly approached the submerged, indeed, often from the latter itself, that the rising capitalist large industry drew its workers, so the treatment to which these classes submitted became the rule for the treatment to which the capitalists meted out to their workers. The work itself, the ennobling influence of which bourgeois economists and moralists are so fond of pointing out, became, in the first instance, a source, not of elevation, but of deeper degeneration for the proletarians. The non-resistance of the workers enabled the capitalists to extend the hours of labour to the utmost limits. The strong motives they have for so doing have been set forth in a previous pamphlet.* Capitalism, unless obliged, allows the proletarian no time to live, to educate himself. When it meets with no resistance, it prolongs the work to the point of complete exhaustion. If a short interval remains between work and sleep, it only just suffices to indulge in the most transitory pleasures in order to dull the consciousness of misery, such as alcoholic excess or sexual intercourse. The working of men and women, of children and adults together, that might, among happy, free and conscientious people, be a source of the greatest mutual help and moral nobility for them all, became in the capitalist factory at first only a means, through its demoralising and unnerving influences, of increasing the danger of moral pestilence, and of spreading degeneration still more rapidly among the proletariat.

No wonder that in the beginning of capitalist large industry the working proletarian was hardly to be distinguished from the vagabond class. How deeply they were sunk in crime, drunkenness, coarseness and filth—physical and moral—can be best seen by Friedrich Engels's book on the condition of the working classes in England in the first decades of the nineteenth century.†

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* "The Proletar at."

† This very important work was first published in 1845, It has since been re-published in a new edition by J. H. Dietz in Stuttgart.

V.—THE RISING OF THE WAGE PROLETARIAT.

The idea of a proletarian once seemed to be synonymous with that of the utmost depravity. Even to-day there are people holding this opinion, among them some who consider themselves to be very modern. And yet, even at the time when the working class had externally many characteristics in common with the vagabond class, there existed a great gulf between them.

The vagabond class has, where and whenever it arose as a universal phenomenon, remained practically the same. That of modern Berlin or London differs comparatively little from that of ancient Rome. The modern working proletariat is, on the contrary, a quite unique phenomenon, which the whole history of the world has not hitherto known.

Between the vagabond class and the working proletariat of capitalist production exist, first of all, the immense fundamental difference that the former is a parasite, while the latter is one of the roots of society, and one which is rapidly becoming not only one of the most important, but finally the *only* one from which society draws its strength. The working proletarian is without property, but is not a receiver of alms. Far from his being supported by society, he supports society by his labour. It is true that in the early days of capitalist production the working proletarian still felt himself a pauper; in the capitalist who was exploiting him he saw his benefactor who gave him work and thus bread—the bread-giver, the work-giver. Such a "patriarchal" relationship was, of course, very pleasant to the capitalists. Even to-day they demand in return for the wages they pay to their workmen, not only the fulfilling of their contract, but also their submission and gratitude.

But capitalist production cannot exist long anywhere without causing the downfall of these beautiful patriarchal conditions of its early days. However enslaved and dulled the workers may be, they still, sooner or later, discover that it is they who give bread to the capitalist, and not the other way about. While they remain poor, or possibly become still poorer, the capitalist becomes ever richer. And when they ask their employer—this supposed patriarch—for more bread, he gives them a stone.

The working proletarians may be distinguished from the vagabond class and the servant class by the fact that they do not live upon the exploitation of the exploiter; from the peasants, labourers, and apprentices by their not living and working together with their exploiter, by every personal relation with the latter having for them died out. They live in miserable slums and build palaces for their exploiter; they hunger while they prepare him a luxurious banquet; they slave till they collapse from exhaustion to procure for him and his the means to pass his life in pleasure.

This is a far greater contrast than that between the rich and the "small proprietor," the poor of the pre-capitalist era. The latter admires the rich, to whom he looks up with admiration, who are his example, his ideal. He would like to be in their place, an exploiter such as they. To make an end to the exploitation does not occur to him. The working proletarian does not envy the rich man, nor wish himself in his place; he hates him as his exploiter, and despises him as a drone.

He began by hating only the particular capitalist with whom he has to do, but he soon recognises that on the whole they all treat him in the same way, and his hatred, hitherto personal, develops into conscious antagonism to the whole capitalist class.

This antagonism towards the exploiting class is one of the earliest characteristics of the working proletarian. Class hatred is by no means a result of Socialist propaganda—it manifested itself long before Socialist propaganda among the working class began. Such a degree of class hatred is impossible among a man's personal servants, assistants, and journeymen. With the intimate personal relationship between any of these and their master, such hatred would make any fruitful activity impossible for them. In these relations there are plenty of struggles between the wage-workers and the heads of the household and other employers; but they are soon reconciled again. Under the capitalist method of production the workers may feel the bitterest enmity against their employer without the production being thereby hindered, indeed, without the employer himself being conscious of it.

This hatred at first only manifests itself timidly and in individual cases. If it takes some time for the proletarians to discover that it is by no means generosity that prompts the capitalist to employ them, it takes still longer for them to find the courage to engage openly in a conflict with the "masters."

The vagabond class are cowardly and humble because they feel themselves superfluous, and are destitute of any material means of support. The working proletarian, in so far as he has been drawn from that class, has at first the same characteristics.

He feels, indeed, all the ill-treatment meted out to him, but he only protests in secret and clenches his fist unseen. Alongside of this, the revolt of particularly vigorous and passionate natures manifests itself in secret crime.

The consciousness of their own strength and the spirit of resistance only then develop in the categories of wage-workers, with whom we are now dealing, when they come to realise that they all have the same interests. With the awakening of the feeling of solidarity begins the moral regeneration of the proletariat, the rising of the working proletariat out of the quagmire of the vagabond class.

The conditions of labour under capitalist production themselves point the workers to the necessity of standing by each other, the necessity that the individual should be subservient to the collective body. While in handicraft, in its classic form, each individual himself created a complete whole, capitalist industry is based upon working together, upon co-operation. The individual worker can accomplish nothing without his comrades. If they attack the work unitedly and according to plan, the productivity of each one of them is doubled and trebled. Thus their work makes them realise the force of united action, and develops in them a voluntary joyful discipline which is the first condition of co-operative Socialist production, but which is also a primary condition of any successful struggle of the proletariat against exploitation under capitalist production. The latter itself in this way educates the proletariat to overthrow it and to work under Socialist production.

The equality of the conditions of labour has been, perhaps, a still more mighty factor than co-operation in awakening the feeling of solidarity among the proletariat. In a factory there are practically no different ranks, no hierarchy among the workers. The higher posts are, as a rule, not open to the proletarians, but in any case they are so few as hardly to come under consideration for the mass of the workers. Only a select few can be corrupted by these favoured positions. For the great mass equal conditions of labour obtain, and there is no chance for the individual to improve his position for himself alone; he can only do so if that of the general body of all his fellow-workers is raised together. The employers do, indeed, attempt to sow discord among the workers by artificially creating inequality in the conditions of labour. But the levelling effect of modern large industry is so forcible that any make-shift of that kind—piece-work, premiums, etc.—cannot permanently kill the consciousness of the solidarity of interest among the workers. The longer capitalist production continues, the more strongly the solidarity of the proletariat develops, the deeper rooted it becomes, growing more and more to be a striking characteristic of the class.

It need only be remembered what was said in the preceding pages with regard to servants to show how very greatly the industrial proletarians differ from them in this respect. But even the farm labourers are behind the industrial proletarians in this respect, as are also the handicraftsmen.

The solidarity of these latter ends at a point which the solidarity of the industrial proletariat has already passed. The solidarity of neither category confines itself to workers in the same institution; like the modern proletarians, the journeymen become by degrees convinced that the workers meet everywhere with the same opponents, and have everywhere the same interests. The journeymen founded national organisations which encompassed the whole nation at a time when the bourgeoisie was still confined in its relations within the boundaries of small towns and small States. The proletariat of to-day is thoroughly international in its feeling and action; in the midst of the bitterest struggles of nationalities, of the most eager war preparations of the governing classes, the proletarians of all lands have united.

Already among the handicraft journeymen we find the beginnings of international organisation; they showed themselves capable of breaking down national barriers. But there was one barrier they were not able to surmount, that of their trade. The German hat maker or coppersmith might, on his travels, find hospitality with his colleagues in Sweden or Switzerland, but the shoemaker or carpenter of his own country, indeed of his own town, remained a stranger to him. The trades in the handicraft period were strictly separate. The apprentice had to learn for years before he become a journeyman, and he then remained for his whole life faithful to his trade. The success and power of the latter were shared by him. If the journeyman was, in a certain way, in antagonism to his master, he was no less in antagonism to both masters and journeymen of other trades. At the highest point of handicraft we find the unions of the different trades violently at enmity one with another.

Capitalist production, on the contrary, throws the most different trades together. In a capitalist institution workers of various trades work for the most part side

by side and together towards the attainment of a common object. On the other side there is the tendency to obliterate altogether the idea of the special trade in production. The machine shortens the apprenticehip of the workers which formerly extended over years to a training of a few weeks, or often even days. It makes it possible for the individual worker to change over from one trade to another without too great difficulty. It often forces him to do so by rendering him superfluous in that branch in which he was hitherto employed, throwing him into the street, and forcing him to look round for a new trade. The freedom of the choice of occupation, which the Philistine fears so greatly to lose in Socialist society, has to-day already lost all meaning for the worker.

Under these circumstances it is easy for him to overstep the barrier before which the handicraftsman halted. The feeling of solidarity in the modern proletarian is not only international, but it includes the whole working class.

Various forms of wage work existed already in ancient and mediæval times, neither are the struggles between wage-workers and their exploiters anything new; but it is not until the dominion of capitalist large industry that we see a united class of wage-workers arise, who are quite conscious of the unity of their interests, and who make their special interests (not only personal, but also local and—as far as they still exist—trade interests) more and more subservient to the larger interests of the class as a whole. It was not until the nineteenth century that the struggles of the wage-workers against exploitation assumed the character of a class struggle. And this is the only means of giving to these struggles a broader and higher goal than the liberation from monetary evils, of converting the Labour movement into a revolutionary movement.

But the term "working class" is ever becoming broader. In the first instance, what has been said here applies to the working proletarians in large industry. But in the same measure a industrial capital sets the pace more and more for all capital, indeed, for all economic undertakings in the domain of capitalist nations, so the thought and feeling of the industrial proletariat sets the pace more and more for the thought and feeling of the wage-workers in general. The consciousness of the general community of interests is dawning also upon the workers in capitalistic manufacture and handicraft, the latter, indeed, all the more the more that handicraft loses its original character and approaches nearer to manufacture, or sinks to the level of capitalistically exploited home-industry.

To these gradually become added the workers of the non-industrial urban trades, such as commerce, transport, provision trades, etc. Even the country workers gradually realise the solidarity of their interests with those of the other wage-workers as soon as capitalist production dissolves the old patriarchal state of affairs in agriculture, and converts the latter into a branch of industry which produces by means of wage-earning proletarians instead of, as hitherto, the workpeople who belonged to the family of the farmer, and, finally, the feeling of solidarity begins to reach even the less favourably situated of the independent artisans, and under certain circumstances even peasants; thus the working classes are by degress becoming fused into one united working class, fired by the spirit of the proletariat of large industry, which is steadily increasing in numbers and economic importance. The spirit peculiar to the proletariat of large industry, of comradeship, solidarity of co-operative discipline, of antagonism towards capital is growing more and more among the rest of the working class, within the ranks of which is also spreading more and more that insatiable thirst for knowledge peculiar to the proletariat alluded to at the end of a former pamphlet.*

Thus from among the despised, ill-treated, downtrodden proletariat arises a new historic world-power, before which the old powers are beginning to tremble; a new class is growing up with a new morality and a new philosophy, and increasing daily in numbers, in solidarity, economic indispensability, self-confidence and insight.

VI.—THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TENDENCIES WHICH ELEVATE AND THOSE WHICH DEBASE THE PROLETARIAT.

The upraising of the proletariat from its degradation is an unavoidable process, based on natural necessity. But it is by no means a peaceful or steady process. The capitalist method of production tends, as we have seen in a previous pamphlet,† to crush down the working population more and more. The moral regeneration of the proletariat is only possible by means of the reaction against this tendency and the capitalists who are the representatives of it. It is only possible by means of the

* "The Socialist Commonwealth." † "The Proletariat."

sufficient strengthening of the reaction, the contrary tendencies which are engendered among the proletarians by the new conditions under which they work and live. The debasing tendencies of the capitalist method of production, however, vary extremely at different times, in different localities and in the different branches of industry; they depend upon the state of the market, on the competition between the individual undertakings, on the degree to which the machine system has developed in any given branch, on the amount of insight possessed by the capitalists into their more permanent interests, etc. The opposing tendencies, which are developing among the individual categories of proletarians, depend also upon various circumstances, upon the habits and requirements of the classes of the population from which these particular proletarians are for the most part drawn; on the degree of skill or strength demanded by the labour in that branch of industry in which they are engaged; on the extension of women's and children's labour; on the size of the industrial reserve army, which is by no means equal in every trade; on the insight of the workers, and, finally, upon whether the nature of the work tends to disperse and cut off the workers from each other, or to unite and draw them together, etc.

Each of these conditions vary much in different branches of industry and among different categories of workers, and are subject to constant changes as the technical and economic revolution uninterruptedly progresses. Every day fresh districts and fresh trades are subjected to exploitation and proletarisation through capital; every day new branches of industry are created, while the present ones are incessantly revolutionised. As in the early days of capitalism, so to-day we see ever new categories of the population sinking into the proletariat, perishing among the outcasts of society, while new categories are also continually rising out of it; among the working proletariat itself a continual rise and fall may be seen, some strata moving in an upward, others in a downward direction, according as the elevating or degrading conditions happen to preponderate among them.

But happily for the development of human society, the moment arrives sooner or later with most categories of proletarians when the elevating tendencies decidedly get the upper hand, and when these tendencies have once become so effectual among any such category as to awaken in it self-confidence, class-consciousness, the consciousness of the solidarity of all its members with each other and with the whole working class, the consciousness of the strength which springs from unity of action; as soon as they have aroused in this category of proletarians self-respect and the consciousness of their economic indispensability, and the conviction that the working class is moving on towards a better future, as soon as a category of proletarians has once risen so far, then it becomes immensely difficult to crush them down again to the level of the indifferent masses of those degenerate existences, who, indeed, hate, but without being able to band themselves together to a prolonged struggle, who despair of themselves and their future and seek oblivion in drink, who, from their sufferings do not draw the spirit of defiant revolt, but of timid submission. It is almost impossible to destroy class-consciousness in any category of proletarians when it has once become deeply rooted there. However strongly the debasing tendencies of capitalism may be brought to bear upon them—they may, indeed, debase them economically, but not morally—unless, indeed, the pressure is sufficient, not only to debase, but completely to crush, as in some of our home-industries. In all other cases the pressure will only have the effect of creating opposing pressure; it will have the effect, not so much of saddening as of embittering; the proletarian will, through its agency, no longer be debased to the level of a good-for-nothing, but raised to that of a martyr.

VII.—PHILANTHROPY AND SOCIAL REFORM.

If each category of proletarians were dependent on its own strength alone, the process of elevation would, with most of them, begin much later, and be much slower and more painful than is in fact the case. Without external help many a category of proletarians which now occupies a respectable position would never have managed to overcome the difficulties, which are inseparable from all beginnings, and so, also, from the beginning of the elevation from the quagmire into which capitalist development had hurled the proletariat. This help may come to these categories of proletarians from many classes of society which stand above them, from the higher categories of the working proletariat as well as from the possessing classes.

The help of the latter was, especially in the early days of capitalist large industry, not inconsiderable.

In the Middle Ages poverty was so rare that public (especially ecclesiastical) and private charity sufficed to cope with it. It did not constitute any problem needing

solution; in so far as it caused any thought, the most it did was to arouse uplifting meditations. It was looked upon as a chastening sent by God; if those it affected happened to be sinful, it was a chastening rod; if they were pious, a trial to prove their faith that it might shine forth the more brilliantly. But for the rich poverty was an exercising ground for their value, quite as necessary for the salvation of their soults as was a gymnasium for the health of their bodies.

But when, through the development of commodity production, old feudal agriculture began to disintegrate, the liberated peasants began pouring into the towns, where "over-population," unemployment, and mass-poverty began to extend, this phenomenon, new as it was fearful and dangerous, attracted the attention of all thinking and feeling persons.

In face of this mass of poverty, the mediæval method of charity was insufficient, and added to this, the Reformation closed up the most important source of alms—the charity of the Catholic Church. To look after all the poor appeared more and more as a task beyond the strength of society; a new social problem arose—the abolition of poverty. The most widely differentiating solutions to it were proposed, according to the humanity and insight of those who invented them, from the easiest method of abolishing poverty, by clearing the poor out of the way (for instance, by means of the gallows and transportation) down to the deeply thought-out plans for a new, communistic state of society. These latter always met with a great deal of applause from the cultured persons of the community, but the easy methods were the only ones to which the various monarchs and statesmen consented. Meanwhile, a new generation of poor people arose to take the place of those whose heads had been cut off, or who had been sent out of the country.

But gradually the question of poverty began to assume a new aspect. The capitalist method of production had arisen and began to extend further and further, and to become the predominating force in society. With that the solution of the problem of poverty ceased to exist for the thinkers of the bourgeoisie. Capitalist production depends upon the proletariat; to abolish the latter would be to render capitalist production impossible. The mass of poverty is the basis of the capitalists' mass of riches. Whoever puts an end to poverty commits a crime against wealth. Whoever to-day would help the workers against their propertyless condition, undermines property, is a revolutionist, an enemy of society.

Pity and fear are indeed active as hitherto—for poverty is dangerous for the whole of society, it engenders pestilence and crime—in bourgeois circles in favour of the proletariat, and make many of those among the bourgeoisie who think deepest and feel most inclined to do something to help the proletariat; but for the great mass of these bourgeoisie who dare not or cannot break with their class the problem can no longer be the abolition of the proletariat, but only the elevation of the proletarians. These must be kept in good working condition and be made contented, but they must not cease to be obliging proletarians. Beyond this boundary bourgeois philanthropy is no longer able to pass.

Within these boundaries philanthropy can, of course, be active in many ways. Most of its methods are either entirely useless, or, at the best, only ably to give temporary relief to some individuals. But when in the first decades of last century capitalism made its entry into England (at first in the textile industry) in all the terrors which it is capable of producing, those of the philanthropists who possessed most insight became convinced that only one thing would be able to prevent the degeneration of the workers in this industry, namely, State protection of the workers—at least for the most helpless categories among them, the women and children.

The capitalists of large industry did not yet, at that time, constitute so important a factor among the possessing classes as to-day. Many of the economic and political interests of the non-capitalists in those classes—landowners and petty bourgeoisie—favoured the restriction of their power over the workers, as did also the realisation that without such restriction the foundation of the glory of England's industry, her working class, would perish, a consideration which necessarily won for the protection of the workers the sympathy of any member of the ruling class who was gifted with any insight and could rise above the interests of the moment; and, finally, the special interest of a few large factory owners themselves, who possessed the means to bear these restrictions with ease and adapt the production to them, while those of their smaller rivals, who could only keep their heads above water with difficulty, and by means of the worst oppression of the workers, were driven towards ruin by the protection of the workers by the State. In spite of this, and although in the working

class itself a strong movement developed in favour of this protection, it cost many a hard battle before even the first, very modest, protection laws could be attained to, and then extended further.

All the same, however small might be the concessions obtained, they still constituted, for the categories of proletarians affected by them, an impetus to arouse them from their stupor, and to liberate the elevating tendencies of their social position. Indeed, even before any victories had been gained, the very struggles in themselves were sufficient to show the proletarians how important, how necessary they were, and what a force they constitute. These struggles already woke them up, gave them self-confidence and self-respect, destroyed their hopelessness, and gave to their aspirations a more elevated goal than simply little tinkering reforms.

Another of those means of elevating the working class which were supported by the middle classes also was universal popular education. To go into this detail would be outside the province of this pamphlet. It is an important means, the importance of which must not be underrated, but still, as a means of raising the whole class, as a class, it is of less importance than the laws for the protection of labour.

The more the capitalist method of production develops, the more that large industry crowds out the other forms of production or revolutionises their nature, the more necessary becomes a continual development of labour protection and its continual extension, not only in all branches of large industry, but also in handicraft and home-work, as well as in agriculture. But in the same degree that the influence of the industrial capitalist grows in bourgeois society, the non-capitalist elements among the possessing classes, small traders, landowners and others, become infected by the capitalistic spirit, and the thinkers and statesmen of the bourgeoisie change from being its far-seeing leaders to be mere wranglers, ready to stand up for any of its monetary interests.

The devastations made among the workers by capitalist production are so terrible that only the most exacting and shameless among the capitalists and their friends dare refuse to labour a certain small amount of legal protection But there are but a few left in the ranks of the possessing classes who will support legislation which goes beyond this and demands a really thorough protection of labour; for instance, the eight hours day, which to-day has the same meaning as the ten hours day had in the forties in English industry. Bouregeois philanthropy is ever becoming more timid, and leaves it more and more to the workers alone to carry on the struggle for a sufficient protection of labour. The present-day struggles for a shorter working day have quite a different aspect from that which took place in England sixty or seventy years ago for the ten hours day. In so far as bourgeois politicians still stand up for the normal working day, they do so, not from humane motives, but because they are forced to it by the workers, who elect them. The struggle for the protection of labour is becoming more and more of an undiluted class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. On the Continent, where this struggle began much later than in England, it bore this character from the beginning. The proletariat, in its struggle for social elevation, need expect no more help from the possessing classes. It is quite thrown back on its own strength; that is, for the present, on the strength of those of its many categories who have attained or retained strength, eagerness and energy to fight.

VIII.—THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

Struggles between wage-workers and their exploiters are nothing new. We find them already at the close of the Middle Ages in handicraft, between journeymen and masters, as soon as the latter begin, under the influence of the development of commodity production and improvements in communication, to have capitalistic ideas and inclinations. Many a one tried, even as early as the fifteenth century, so to increase the number of journeymen whom he employed that he might be able to live upon the proceeds of their work without working himself, or at least to make over the lion's share of the work to the journeymen. Aspirations towards increasing the days of labour, towards the abolition of holidays, even, indeed, towards the institution of Sunday work, become evident. At the same time the lords and masters tried to make distinctions between themselves and the journeymen by expecting the latter to be satisfied with inferior food, etc. The familiar patriarchal relationship was loosened. At last the masters, as a class, began to cut themselves off altogether from the journeymen, to whom, when they did not happen to be sons or sons-in-law, it was rendered very difficult, often quite impossible, to become masters. Thus the journey-

men came by degrees to constitute more and more a class apart, which ceased to be merely the transition stage between apprentice and master.

The natural result of the masters posing as capitalists was that the relationship between them and their workers assumed something of the sharpness of the antagonism which followed later between capitalist employers and proletarian wage-workers. But the journeymen were very *different from the timid, oppressed proletarians* of the beginnings of large industry. Defiant and ready to fight, they not only parried every blow directed against them, but probably replied with a still heavier blow on their side.

The towns were small, the number of journeymen therefore in each trade in a town was approximately small also. The fact that as a rule each trade was plied in one particular street made it easier to unite them. It is true that the work separated them one from the other, for only a few, seldom more than one or two, worked with the same master. But the work did not fill their whole lives. The number of holidays in the year was legion; sociability at that time played quite as great a part as work in the life of the individual, and this sociability united the journeymen. Their tavern became the centre of their organisations, the starting points for the battles they had to fight with the masters. Any of them who did not join in was banned. In face of the separation of the different trades from each other, the exclusion of a journeyman from his handicraft guild was tantamount to his exclusion from society. The organisation in any trade, therefore, contained all the journeymen of that branch. An industrial reserve army was *practically unknown*, and it was impossible for many reasons to bring in workmen from other trades. No wonder, then, that the position of the journeyman towards his master was comparatively a very favourable one. The weapons he used were the strike and boycott, and these weapons were used unsparingly. Our "guild" enthusiasts, who dream of the resuscitation of mediæval hadicraft, and set their hopes upon it for the promotion of peace between workers and their exploiters, would be perfectly dumbfounded if there were to-day, relatively to the extension of industry, so many of such obstinate strikes as took place in the principal handicrafts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It was the rising of modern State force which first taught the journeymen manners. The subjection of the workers was one of the first services that it rendered to the bourgeoisie, and has remained one of its principal functions until to-day. The time of a standard wage (maximum rate of wages) and of the prohibition, or at least the keeping down by means of the police, of all wage-workers' organisations began. Still, the State did not succeed in completely suppressing the journeymen's organisations. The latter knew as well as their opponents what power they gained by the union of their forces, and how defenceless they were without an organisation. They made most desperate attempts to hold fast to it everywhere. Where open organisations were made impossible for them they organised secret societies. They were subjected, on this account, to the most terrible punishments and ill-treatment, but nothing weakened their determination. The sufferings and privations which the Anti-Socialist law brought to the German proletariat were, although bad enough in themselves, mere child's play compared to what the workers in some countries had to endure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and up to the middle of the nineteenth. And yet they victoriously overcame all persecutions.

The workers in the rising capitalist manufacture had not, in general, the same power of resistance as the journeymen of handicraft. The various processes necessary for the completion of a product are, as already noted, apportioned in manufacture to different workers, of whom each has only to perform one or more comparatively simple turns of the hand. The apprenticeship of the workers is thus very much shortened, women's and children's work already begin to creep in. Further, under the dominion of manufacture we find great armies of workers in the industrial cities. It is thus impossible that the workers should know each other personally, as was naturally the case with the journeymen in mediæval small towns. It is true that some of the journeymen of handicraft also suffered under the growth of large towns, but not excessively, for proportionately to the increase in their numbers, the numbers, and therefore the dissensions of their opponents, the masters, increased likewise. In capitalist institutions, on the contrary, many workers are faced by a few employers to whom it is easy to come to an understanding between themselves.

Added to this, the rule of the Guild system hindered the development of manufacture in the old towns. The manufacturing institutions could only be founded outside the domain of the compulsory guild, for the most part in the country, where it was easier to keep an eye on the workers, who had no support from other categories

of the working population, and remained quite dependent on manufacture for opportunities of work.

Lastly, too, the leisure of the workers for social intercourse, this most important means of union and that united action which results from it, was very much curtailed, especially through the abolition of the mediæval holidays.

It is true that manufacture unites great numbers of workers at the work, forcing them to work together, to co-operate. But the beneficial effects which this should have on the solidarity of the workers are partially counteracted by the fact, not only that the workers are drawn from different grades of society, but that the wages for the different kinds of work vary very considerably; we thus find as many steps of rank among the workers as among the servants of a large, luxurious household. It is true that the position of the workers is principally determined by what they accomplish in production, and not by their personal adaptability. Hierarchy does not, therefore, in their case, bring forth servile qualities, but it does create such great diversity in the interests of the individual groups of workers in a firm that it is difficult for them to become conscious of the solidarity of their interests.

Still, the workers in manufacture have one great advantage; though their apprenticeship is much shorter than that of the handicraftsmen, their work needs great skill which can only be obtained by long practice. It is, therefore, not easy to replace them, and though even at the stage of development in question the number of unemployed proletarians seeking work is already very large, the percentage of skilled manufacture workers among them is still small. The industrial reserve army has thus but little importance in general for the workers of the manufacture period.

The advent of the machine changes all this; it renders the whole army of unemployed serviceable for industry, and throws even the wives and children of the proletarians in crowds on to the labour market. The result of this on the workers' power of resistance we have already seen.

Since the introduction of machinery in production, the process of revolutionising the whole of industry into a capitalist form has proceeded with extraordinary rapidity. But it is not in every domain of production that the capitalist undertakings at once change into factories, producing by machine-power. Even to-day hand industry still holds its ground in some industries; for instance, in that of the compositor. There are even branches of industry in which, under capitalist ownership, handicraft production may still continue for a time; for instance, in the tailoring industry, in so far as it is not for wholesale production. It is true that as a rule the capitalist exploitation of a trade that is still at the handicraft stage assumes the miniature form of home industry, and not that of large industry. But the home-workers have less power of resistance than any others.

There still exist under the rule of the machine-worked large industry of capitalist production a number (merging together by degrees, it is true) of branches of industry in which skilled workers who have attained a certain degree of proficiency are still indispensable. Large industry itself creates a number of new branches of work, or extends those already existing, which demands special strength or skill, or special knowledge, and which need not fear the competition of unskilled workers nor of women and children. This was, and to a great extent still is, the case; for instance, in many branches of the metal working industries.

The working proletariat is thus divided into two great categories, of which one, favoured in many ways by circumstances, stands higher; namely, that of the qualified or skilled workers. Beneath this category is a large and daily increasing mass of workers engaged in occupations to learn which no special knowledge, skill or capability is needed; however skilful or intelligent or capable many individuals among these workers may be, they are still classed in the category of unlearned, unskilled, unqualified workers, who are easy to replace, to whom no consideration is owed, and whose power of resistance is small.

It is the better-situated, qualified workers who head the van in the struggle for the elevation of the working class. They constitute the most belligerent element among the proletariat, and are, more than the others, in a position to oppose resistance to capital. And they have shown their fighting spirit in many battles.

Their position has many points of similarity with that of the guild journeymen; their traditions have been preserved among them to a great extent, and their organisation and methods of warfare have set them an example. The new economic fighting organisations of the workers—in the first instance only of the qualified workers—the trade unions, to a certain extent, constitute a direct continuation of the old

journeymen's associations, often, at least in the early days of the trade union movement, they grew up out of the traditions left by guild organisations among the workers.

The original relationship between the trade union movement and the journeymen's associations does not only show itself in the spirit of resistance and power of resistance of the unions. Sometimes a narrow, professional spirit appears in these—a tendency towards shutting themselves off as in a caste, towards a one-sided consideration of the narrower professional interests, without reference to the general interests of the workers. This may even extend so far as to make trade unions of qualified workers not only neglect all the duties of solidarity with the working class as a whole, but even attempt to obtain advantages for themselves at the cost of the rest of the workers —as, for instance, by limiting the number of apprentices who shall be trained to their trade They thereby indeed diminish the supply of labour-power available in their own trade, but only at the cost of the workers in other branches, who have not the strength to enforce such limitations in their numbers, so that all the more labour-power turns towards these latter.

It is sometimes only certain individual trades of which the organised members, as the "aristocrats" of labour, separate themselves from the "common herd," and try to rise higher by standing on their shoulders. This was the case, until a short time ago, with the majority of compositors in Germany. But in England the skilled workers have, as a whole, separated themselves from the unskilled. To them were added the workers in branches of industry under the control of the Factory Acts, who had been raised thereby to a more favourable position. These better-situated workers formed, until a short time ago—and to a certain extent still form—an aristocracy of labour separate from the great mass of the wage-earning proletariat.

Wherever the trade union movement has led to the cultivation of a one-sided caste spirit, and to an aristocratic exclusiveness on the part of the better-situated workers, it has not contributed anything to the elevation of the whole proletariat as a class, and is even liable to hinder and retard the latter. It does this much more efficiently than do the brutal and stupid measures which the traditional wisdom of the State uses to keep the workers down. These are, on the contrary, the best means of welding together the qualified and unqualified workers into one compact body which offers united resistance.

To-day, then, it is only the most unintelligent and ignorant statesmen who think they can hold down the proletariat by coercive measures. The dangerous enemies of the proletariat are, on the contrary, those who do not appear as opponents, but as friends, and try to divide the proletariat by the kind of trade union movement described above, and to change those elements among the proletariat which are most capable of resistance from pioneers into oppressors of the more unresisting elements. These false friends of the working class are at work in Germany as elsewhere; up till now, it is true, for the most part only at the universities. But they are also making attempts to gain influence over the workers themselves. Happily, the ruling classes are too thick-headed, the German workmen have too much insight, and the economic conditions are too far advanced for these gentlemen to be able to do permanent mischief.

However a category of workers favoured by circumstances may become elated and withdraw from the mass of the proletariat, it cannot permanently get away from the effects of economic development, which are forcing it towards union with the other workers. In proportion to the insight of this category of workers to the stage of the economic development reached by their trade, and the part played by it in the home and international markets, it may take a shorter or longer time for its aristocratic tendencies to be broken down, but sooner or later this is bound to be the case with all the classes of workers under consideration.

No trade is immune from being at some time or other taken hold of by the revolution in technique which substitutes the unskilled for the skilled, and makes the women and children compete with the men. In spite of all limitations in the number of apprentices, etc., the number of unemployed increases in every trade, however high the standard it sets its workers. The number of those skilled workers increases who, on account of the insufficiency of their earnings, have to remain outside the organisations, and are able to be made use of against the organised workers. And even the most compactly organised, with the best filled treasuries, are coming more and more to realise that the opposition to the oppressing effects of capitalism—not to speak of its overthrow—is a task beyond the strength of the individual trade

organisations. They are forced to realise that the weaker the whole proletariat is, the weaker they themselves are; the stronger the former, the stronger they are likewise. They are forced to come to the conclusion that it is bad policy to try to climb up to the heights on the shoulders of persons who are sinking into a morass, and upon whom they cannot stand without pressing them still further down. They are obliged to seek to get solid ground beneath their feet if they would rise to the heights and remain there. But that they can only do by helping those beneath them to rise out of the morass.

Thus one after another of the "aristocratic" categories of workers cease to look upon their struggle against exploitation as apart and as concerning only their special interests, and to consider it as part of the great class struggle fought by the united proletariat. They come to realise that the struggles of the other categories of proletarians are by no means without importance for them also, that their cause, too, is involved, and that it is therefore their duty to take part in them and help as much as possible. They come to realise that they must, whenever they can, stand up for the interests of those categories of proletarians who are not yet able to fight for themselves—who are still outside the general Labour movement.

But, at the same time, one category after another of the unqualified workers rises up. Even the very sight of the great struggles of the qualified workers has a rousing and encouraging effect on many of their "unqualified" brothers. We have already alluded to its similar effect in the case of the struggles for the protection of labour. A number of other circumstances is conducive now and again, when the right moment comes, to cause a category of workers to step into the ranks of the fighting proletariat.

The direct economic results of the struggles of the unskilled proletariat are, as a rule, small. "Their history is a long series of defeats, interrupted by occasional single victories" (Engels). But like the giant Antæus of the Greek myth, the proletarians draw new strength even from their defeats. However it may end, it is the struggle in itself which elevates the worker morally, which brings to the front and makes use of all those qualities in him which are described above as characteristics of the proletariat, which causes his moral and social regeneration, even if it contributes nothing to his economic elevation, or even results in a worsening of his economic position.

Thus from among the ranks of both qualified and unqualified proletarians is gradually formed the advance guard of the working class—the Labour movement. For the proletariat fighting for its interests as a class, this advance guard constitutes its actual church militant. This category increases as much at the cost of the overbearing "aristocrats" of labour, who are sunk in narrow egoism, as at the cost of the dull-headed "mob" of the unorganised unskilled—those lowest categories of the proletariat who vegetate in helpless despair. We have seen that the working proletariat is continually increasing in numbers; we know, further, that it gives the tone more and more to all the other categories of workers, whose conditions of life, whose line of thought and feeling is coming more and more under its influence; now we see that in this growing mass the fighting body is ever becoming larger, not only actually, but relatively. Quickly as the proletariat is increasing, its militant portion is increasing at a still more rapid rate.

But the militant proletariat is also by far the most important and fruitful recruiting ground for Social-Democracy, which is practically nothing but that portion of the fighting proletariat which is conscious of its goal, and becomes more and more identical with the Social-Democracy; in Germany and Austria the two have indeed actually become one.

IX.—THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE.

Just in the same way as the proletariat, in forming its organisations of self-defence, imitated those of the journeymen, so its original weapons in the struggle are, wherever it is compactly organised, the same as those the journeymen made use of: the boycott, and, above all, the strike.

But the proletariat cannot continue to limit itself to these two weapons. The more that the single categories of which it consists become welded together into one united working class, the more must its struggle assume a political character, for, as the "Commonist Manifesto" points out, every class struggle is a political struggle.

Already the needs of the pure trade union movement, as such, force the workers to make demands of a political nature. We have seen how the modern State looks upon it as its principal function, with regard to the workers, to render their organisations impossible. But a secret organisation can never be anything but an insufficient substitute for an open one, and that is all the more the case the greater the masses that have to be united in one body. The more the proletariat develops itself, the more does it require freedom to unite, freedom of coalition.

This freedom alone does not, however, suffice, if the proletariat would be in a position to build its organisations as perfectly, and to use them as serviceably, as possible. It has already been pointed out how easy it was for the journeymen of handicraft to come together. In each town so comparatively few worked in each trade—and they for the most part only occupied a single street—that they were in constant personal touch with each other. One tavern generally sufficed to contain all the journeymen of any one branch of handicraft. Then, also, each town constituted in itself a more or less complete economic whole. The means of communication between one town and another were bad, and that communication, therefore, inconsiderable. The individual journeymen who wandered from one place to another under these circumstances completely sufficed to keep up the connection between the journeymen's organisations of the individual towns.

To-day thousands of workers are employed in the great centres of industry, each of whom is only acquainted with some few of his fellow workers, and quite out of nearer personal touch with the great mass of his comrades. In order to bring these masses into communication with each other, to awaken within them the consciousness of the unity of their interests, and to win them over to the organisations which serve to protect those interests, it is necessary to be able to speak freely to great masses; it is necessary therefore to have the right of free assembly and a free Press. The journeymen had no need of the Press. In the small circle in which they moved, verbal communication was sufficient. But to unite the enormous masses of the present-day wage workers in organisations and in united action is, without the help of the Press, quite impossible.

This applies all the more in proportion as the modern means of communication develop. These constitute a forcible weapon for the capitalists in their struggles with the workers. They enable them, for instance, to procure great numbers of workers quickly from a long distance. If they are embroiled in a conflict with their own workers the latter can easily be replaced by others—always pre-supposing that the two sets are not in communication with each other. The development of communication thus makes it more and more necessary for the single local movements of the workers in the different trades to unite into one single movement, embracing the whole militant working class of the whole country—yes, indeed, of all industrial lands. But this national and international union of the wage-workers needs, still more than the local organising work, the aid of the Press.

Thus, wherever the working class is stirring, where it is making the first attempts to elevate its economic position, we see that besides demands of a purely economic nature, it formulates others of a political nature, especially those concerning freedom of coalition, the right of public meeting, and the freedom of the Press. These liberties are of the greatest importance to the working class; they belong to the conditions of its life which are absolutely necessary for their development. They are to the proletariat as light and air, and whoever deprives the former of them, or tries to hold back the workers from the struggle to win or extend these liberties, belongs to the worst enemies of the proletariat, however great the love he may feel, or pretend to feel, for them. And whether he calls himself Anarchist, Christian-Socialist, or anything else, he injures the workers just as their open enemy does, and whether he does so from malice aforethought, or from mere ignorance, is indifferent—he must be fought just as much as the recognised opponents of the proletariat.

Sometimes the political struggle has been represented as opposed to the economic struggle, and it has been said to be necessary that the proletariat should turn only to the one or the other. The truth is that the two are inseparable from each other. The economic struggle requires the above-mentioned political rights, which, however, do not fall from heaven, but which, to be acquired and retained, demand the most rigorous political action. But the political struggle itself is in the last instance also an economic struggle; often, indeed, it is directly so—for instance, in questions of taxation, protection of labour, and similar matters. The political struggle is only a particular form—the most all-embracing and generally most intense form—of the economic struggle.

Not only those laws which directly concern the working class, but also the great majority of the others, touch their interests more or less. Therefore the working class, like every other class, must aspire to political influence and political power, must seek to get the State power under its control.

In order to do this, in a modern State two roads are open: the first of these is to obtain a personal influence over the head of the State. This was (and still is in those lands which are under absolute rule) the only possibility of influencing the administration of the State. It is in the interest of those classes who have personal access to the head of the State to win his affection, to make him dependent upon them, or to prove themselves of use to him. These classes: the court nobility, the high ecclesiastics, the heads of the army and the bureaucracy, and, finally, the great givers of credit—the large financiers—are, on that account, the natural defenders of the absolute form of government.

All the other classes of the population in a large modern State can only influence the State administration through the medium of their elected Parliament—a Parliament which fixes the conditions on which the classes it represents are willing to vote the contributions of the population necessary for the maintenance of the State. The possibility of refusing supplies and the right to do so is the foundation upon which the right of making or rejecting laws, of overthrowing Ministries, has been built up—a right which belongs to every Parliament worthy of the name, and which is anything more than, as it has been expressed—a fig-leaf of absolutism.

It is necessary here to speak of the direct making of laws by the people. It cannot (at least, not in a large modern State, which is what we are here dealing with) render Parliament superfluous; at the utmost it can only exist alongside of the latter to correct its action in individual cases. To give over to it the whole law-making of the State is impossible, and it is quite as impossible to let it watch over, and when necessary to guide, the administration of the State. As long as the large modern State exists the centre of gravity as regards political action will always be found in Parliament.

The last consequence of Parliamentarism is the Parliamentary republic; whether or not this has a monarchy added to it, as in England, is a matter of comparative indifference.* As a matter of fact, the State administration in a really Parliamentarily governed land is completely dependent upon Parliament, which holds the money-bags, that is, the soul of the modern State, in its hand. And a king without money is to-day still worse off than a king without land.

The aspiration of all classes who develop a strong and independent political life, and who have no expectations of being able to reach their goal sooner by means of bringing personal influence to bear on the head of the State, is in a modern State directed, on the one hand, towards increasing the power of their Parliament, and, on the other, towards increasing their own power in Parliament. The strength of Parliament depends on the strength and courage of the classes behind it, and the strength and courage of the classes which it has to subject to its will. The power of a class in Parliament depends primarily on the constitution of the suffrage. Classes which have not the vote cannot, of course, be represented in Parliament. But the power of a class also depends upon the influence it is able to exercise upon the electors, and, finally, on the talent of the particular class for Parliamentary activity.

The first points need no explanation, but a few words must be devoted to the last. Parliamentary action is not everybody's gift. It pre-supposes a certain ability which can only be acquired by long activity, principally oratorical, in public life. It needs, further, a wide horizon, and a mind able to grasp at a glance questions of general, national and international importance. The present population, and also the great majority of the petty bourgeoisie, are without these essentials of Parliamentary life. We have seen how these classes are entirely taken up by earning their living. Their work, also, isolates them, separates them one from the other, and limits the acquaintance of each to a small circle. Their outlook is an unusually limited one, and they estimate questions of universal importance from the petty standpoint of personal, or, at any rate, local, momentary needs. Their conditions of life not only hinder the development among them of Parliamentary politicians, they also prevent these classes from banding themselves together into compact national parties (national in the sense of such a party including the whole of that class in any given nation). They form masses who are without cohesion, and are carried away by every momentary mood; not only are they not in a condition to be able to send representa-

* We English Social-Democrats do not think so —Translator.

tives of their own class to Parliament, but they are unable to keep the men they do elect under sharp control. A handicrafsman or a real peasant in Parliament is as rare as a white crow. If the peasants and petty bourgeoisie would be represented in Parliament they do not elect one of themselves, but a lawyer or professor, if they are Liberals; a landlord, cleric,* or high official if they are Conservatives. That a member such as this, even if he has honest intentions, is not the right representative of the interests of handicraftsmen and peasants is clear. But very often his intentions are not honest. Once in Parliament he can do as he chooses; his electors have no means of influencing him. The utmost they can do is to defeat the traitor at the next election, only in order to—elect another traitor.

No wonder, then, that peasants and petty bourgeoisie have seldom a good word to say for Parliamentarism. It is quite different with the upper and middle classes. They have at their disposal all the material and intellectual means of protecting their own interests, both in election campaigns and in the Parliamentary struggles, themselves. They not only have the control over sufficient funds, but they find in their midst many men of education, men with knowledge of the world, men accustomed to administrate large social organisations, men who have made knowledge of the laws, indeed, oratory itself, their profession—lawyers and professors. No other class has hitherto rivalled the middle class in this respect; it has, up till quite lately, dominated the Parliaments. Parliamentarism has proved itself to be the most effectual means, and the one best suited to its nature, of insuring to this class the dominion in the State, and of making serviceable to it the political strength also of the lower classes.

The Radical petty bourgeoisie, who would like to destroy capitalism, is on this account inclined to see in Parliamentarism the principal cause which perpetuates and upholds the servitude of the lower classes. He will have none of it, and is convinced that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can only be accomplished by turning altogether away from Parliamentarism. Some demand that Parliament be entirely superseded by direct law-giving; others go still further, as they realise that in a modern State politics and Parliamentarism are inseparably united, they condemn every kind of political action altogether. That may sound very revolutionary, but it is in reality nothing but a declaration of political bankruptcy of the lower classes.

The proletariat is more favourably placed with regard to Parliamentarism than the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie. It has already been pointed out how the modern system of production raises the proletarians above the level of ignorant prejudice in which they are at first plunged; how it awakens in them a thirst for knowledge, and for an understanding of the totality of phenomena, for great questions of general importance. This already elevates them as politicians above the peasant and petty bourgeoisie. It is made easier for them to grasp Party principles; they incline towards a policy based on principles uninfluenced by momentary moods, by personal or local interests. But the conditions of life, too, in which they move force them to unite with their comrades into great masses, and to go forward hand in hand with them. Their conditions of life create in them a strict sense of discipline, which they demand, however, just as much of their leaders as it is expected of themselves. And their action in favour of their own proletariat organisations, as well as the work inside the latter, is an excellent education for Parliamentarians; it accustoms them to Parliamentary forms, and to knowledge of the laws, and educates public speakers, organisers, etc.

The proletariat is thus placed in the position—and it has proved it, as has been demonstrated best in Germany—of forming a party of its own, independently of the other classes, which peasants and small bourgeoisie have hitherto not succeeded, and probably now never will succeed, in doing; it also knows very well how to control its representatives, and keep them serviceable to its interests;† and, lastly, it finds more and more persons within its own ranks capable of representing it successfully as members of Parliament.

Where the proletariat approaches the Parliamentary struggles (especially election campaigns) and takes part as a conscious class in Parliamentary life, the nature of Parliamentarism begins to change. It ceases to be a mere means towards bourgeois rule. It is just these struggles that constitute so effectual a means of arousing

* In Germany there is nothing to prevent the clergy being members of Parliament.—Translator

† Perhaps the English Labour members [Kautsky means the Lib.-Labs.—Translator] who have so often betrayed the workers, will be quoted against this statement; but these gentlemen do not owe their election to the working class as a whole, but to an exclusive, stuck-up aristocracy of workers, who wish to set themselves up above the rest of the proletariat. Mr Broadhurst and his consorts have ever acted in the interests of these their mandate givers.

the still indifferent categories of proletarians, of inspiring them with confidence and enthusiasm; they prove the most powerful means of welding the various categories of proletarians together into a united working class, and, finally, also, the most powerful means which is at present at the disposal of the proletariat of influencing the State force in its favour, and of wresting from it such concessions as it is possible, under present circumstances, to wrest from it; in short, these struggles are among the most powerful levers for raising the proletariat from its economic, social, and moral debasement.

The working class has, then, not only no reason to abstain from Parliamentarism, it has every reason for taking active part in everything that tends to strengthen Parliamentarism as against the administration of the State, and to strengthen its own representation in Parliament. Alongside of the right of coalition and the freedom of the Press, adult suffrage constitutes a necessity of life for the proper development of the proletariat.

X.—THE WORKING-CLASS PARTY.

It is not in every country that the working class as yet possesses these conditions of life, and nowhere does it possess them to a sufficient extent; everywhere there is the inclination to cut down what it has already won. It needs long, self-sacrificing struggles till the working class can conquer and retain its necessary political rights.

At the beginning of its political struggles the task is at times made somewhat easier for the proletariat by the struggles of the possessing classes with each other. The industrial capitalist, the merchants, the large landowners, the court and aristocracy, etc., often come into serious conflict with each other. Each of them, under these circumstances, seek allies, whom they seek to move, by means of a small concession to join them. After the victory the ally is often done out of his share of the booty; on the other hand, however, a political party has often found itself obliged to grant some considerable political right to the lower classes in order that they may be in a position to come to the assistance of the said party.

The ruling parties have often enough appealed to the proletariat; they themselves have dragged it into the political arena. As long as the working class had not yet arrived at an independent policy, they considered them as mere "voting cattle," which would, like peasants and petty bourgeoisie, let themselves be made use of to strengthen the retinue of their own exploiters. And in point of fact they really have very often rendered them this service.

At the same time the interests of the proletariat and those of the bourgeoisie are of too antagonistic a nature for the political aspirations of the two classes to remain permanently united. Sooner or later the participation of the workers in political life must lead, in every country with the capitalist method of production, to their separation from the bourgeois parties, and the forming of a new independent party of the working class. This is founded in the nature of things, and, after what has been said about the interests, aspirations, and points of view of both classes, needs no further explanation.

When the proletariat in any given country reaches the point of taking this decisive step of more or less severing the umbilical cord which fastens it to the bourgeois society out of which it has sprung, depends principally upon the degree of economic development of that particular country, which principally determines the extension, strength and solidarity of the proletariat. But there are also a number of other circumstances which help to determine the earlier or later political independence of the working class. Two especially may be mentioned: the degree of insight of the working class into the political and economic conditions, and also the attitude taken up towards it by the bourgeois parties. In Germany both circumstances have hitherto been particularly favourable to the political separation of the workers from the bourgeoisie, much more favourable than in any other of the large industrial States; and that is how it has happened that in Germany the Labour movement is, as far as independence of the bourgeois parties is concerned, far ahead of the Labour movements in other countries.

But however much sooner, or later, under the influence of different circumstances, the time may arrive when the working-class movement in the various countries under the capitalist method of production constitutes itself into an independent political party, it is nevertheless bound to come at last in each of these countries, as a necessary result of economic development.

Every political party must have for its goal the attainment of political dominion. It must strive to get the State force under its control, and make it serviceable to itself—that is, to the interests of the class it represents; it must seek to become the

ruling Party in the State. When, therefore, the working class organises itself as an independent party this must necessarily become its object, and, as necessarily, economic development must bring about the realisation of this object. With regard to this latter also, as with the splitting of the workers from the bourgeois parties, the time when this event will take place depends not only upon the degree of industrial development of any given country, but also, in a less degree, upon a number of other national and international conditions. It may also be brought about in many different ways. But what nobody can doubt who has followed up the history of the economic and political development of modern society, especially during the last century, is the certainty of the final victory of the proletariat. While it is ever increasing in numbers, in moral and political force, and in economic indispensability, while the class struggle is educating it to solidarity and discipline and widening its horizon, while its organisations are steadily growing in extent and in compactness, while it is more and more becoming the most important, and will at last be the only, working class, on whose work all society depends—the classes opposed to the proletariat are dwindling in number, losing visibly in moral and political power, and becoming not only superfluous, but even to a certain extent a hindrance to the continuation of production, which, under their administration, is falling into more and more hopeless confusion, and giving rise to more and more impossible conditions.

In the face of these facts there can be no doubt as to which side will have the final victory. Long ago the possessing classes were overtaken by the fear of their approaching end. They will not admit the danger of their situation; they seek to make it untrue by constantly denying it, and to detract themselves from the thought of it by feasting; they shut their eyes to the abyss towards which they are hurrying, and do not see that by this means they are but precipitating their fall.

But the proletariat, as the lowest of the exploited classes (the vagabond class is not explointed—it itself belongs to the parasites) will not be able to use the dominion it gains as the other classes have done before it—that is, in order to shift the burden of exploitation on to other shoulders, and constitute itself an exploiting class. It will have to use it to put an end to its own exploitation, thereby, however, making an end of all exploitation in bourgeois society. But the root of exploitation is the private ownership of the means of production. The proletariat can only prevent the one by destroying the other. If the fact of its being destitute of any property makes it possible to win over the proletariat to the idea of the abolition of private property, the exploitation it suffers forces the proletariat to accomplish this abolition, and to substitute the co-operative for the capitalist method of production.

But we have seen that this cannot become the general form of production as long as the production of commodities continues. In order to set co-operative production universally in the place of capitalist production it is absolutely necessary that at the same time production for the commonwealth, and under the control of the commonwealth, should take the place of production for the market—commodity production. Socialist production is thus the necessary and natural result of the victory of the proletariat. Even should it not consciously make use of its dominion in the State to obtain control, through the State force, over the means of production, and substitute Socialist for capitalist production, even then the logic of events would soon call the latter into life—perhaps, it is true, only after a great many mistakes, false steps and unnecessary sacrifices, and after much useless waste of time and strength. But Socialist production will and must come eventually. Its victory has become just as essential as the victory of the proletariat, for the latter is bound to make use of its victory to put a stop to its own exploitation, and it cannot attain this end by any other means than by that of Socialist production. Economic and political developments themselves offer connecting links between the two methods, in the large undertakings, the cartels, the State institutions, etc.; they will force the workers towards Socialism, and will frustrate any eventual attempt of the victorious proletariat in any country to move in another direction, so that it will, in the end, of its own accord, choose the Socialist solution, even if it begins by being disinclined to do so.

But it is by no means to be expected that the proletariat of any country will take up such an attitude when it once attains to power, for that would mean that it had remained at a child's stage of development in its consciousness and knowledge, while economically, politically and morally it had ripened to manhood, with the strength and capability to overcome its powerful enemies and subject them to its will. And such ill-proportioned development is, specially in the case of the proletariat, highly unlikely. It has often been pointed out here how, thanks to the machine, there has awakened in the proletariat, as soon as it has risen out of its original degradation, a

theoretic sense, a receptiveness for great problems and goals beyond the range of mere momentary interests, a sense which may be sought in vain among the other working and earning classes. But at the same time the economic development of the present day is proceeding so rapidly and manifesting itself in such universal phenomena that it is recognisable even to the untrained as soon as it is pointed out to them. And it is being abundantly pointed out, for at the same time the insight into the course of economic development and into the whole economic structure has become wonderfully deep and extensive, thanks to the continuation of the work of the middle-class classical economists by Karl Marx.

Everything is uniting to make the militant proletariat receptive to the utmost extent for Socialist teachings. Socialism is to them no evil tidings, but glad tidings, a new gospel. The ruling classes cannot accept Socialism without committing moral suicide. The proletariat, on the contrary, draws from it new life, new strength, enthusiasm and joyful hope. Is it to be expected that they should remain indifferent or opposed to such a teaching for any length of time?

Wherever the formation of an independent working-class party has been attained, the latter must of necessity sooner or later assume Socialist tendencies, if, indeed, it is not filled with these from the beginning, and must therefore finally become a Socialist Labour Party, the Social-Democracy.

We now see the principal recruiting ground of the Social-Democracy exactly mapped out before us. To put it shortly, the outcome of these last chapters is as follows: It is the militant sections of the industrial proletariat, ripened to political consciousness, who are the chief pioneers of the Socialist movement. The more the influence of the proletariat on the categories of society nearest to it increases, the more it influences their thought and feeling, the more will these categories be drawn into the Socialist movement.

The class struggle of the proletariat has Socialist production for its natural goal; it cannot come to an end till this is attained. Just as certain, therefore, as the fact that the proletariat will finally be the ruling party in the State, just as certain is the triumph of Socialism.

XI.—THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND SOCIALISM.

The Socialists did not always, from the beginning, recognise the part which the militant proletariat is called upon to play in the Socialist movement. They could, obviously, not do so as long as there was no such thing as a militant proletariat, for Socialism is older than the proletarian class struggle. It dates back to the first appearance of the proletariat in the mass. But the latter existed a long time without its showing the slightest stirring of independent thought within it. The first, and at that time the only, root of Socialism was the pity which the philanthropists of the higher classes felt for the poor and miserable. The Socialists were the most intrepid and far-seeing of these friends of humanity, those who recognised most clearly that the proletariat was rooted in the private ownership of the means of production, and who did not hesitate to draw the fullest conclusions from this realisation. Socialism was, of all the expressions of middle-class philanthropy, the one most full of character, most far-seeing and magnificent. There was no class interest to spur on the Socialists of that time in the struggle towards their goal; they could only appeal to the enthusiasm and sympathy of the idealists among the upper classes. These they sought to win by means of, on the one side, seductive pictures of a Socialist Commonwealth, and, on the other, by forcible representations of the existing misery. Not by fighting, but by peaceful persuasion, were the rich and mighty to be moved to provide the means towards a thorough amelioration of this misery, towards the formation of an ideal state of society. The Socialists of this period, as is well known, waited in vain for the princes and millionaires, whose generosity was to deliver mankind.

In the first decades of last century the proletariat began to show some signs of independent life. We find in the thirties, in France, and especially in England, a strong Labour movement.

But the Socialists did not understand this movement. They did not think it possible that the poor, ignorant, crude proletarians could ever reach that moral elevation and social power which would be needed in order to realise the Socialist aspirations. But it was not mistrust alone that they felt towards the working-class movement. They began to find it awkward, as it threatened to deprive them of a forcible argument, for the middle-class Socialists could only hope to make the sensitive bourgeoisie see the necessity for Socialism if they could prove that it was the only

hope of even keeping the distress within bounds, that any attempt to mitigate the misery or to elevate the propertyless class under existing conditions would prove futile, and that it was impossible for the proletarians to help themselves. The Labour movement, on the other hand, was based on assumptions which contradicted this train of thought. There was also another circumstance. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie naturally embittered the latter against the rising proletariat, who, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, instead of pitiable unfortunates who must be assisted, became vicious, dangerous miscreants who must be beaten and kept down. The chief root of Socialism in bourgeois circles, pity for the poor and miserable, began to wither. The Socialist doctrine itself no longer appeared to the frightened bourgeoisie as a harmless plaything, but as a highly dangerous weapon which might get into the hands of the mob, thereby causing unspeakable disaster. In short, the stronger the Labour movement became, the more difficult became the propagation of Socialism among the ruling classes, and the more antagonistic they became towards it. As long as the Socialists were of opinion that the means of reaching the Socialist goal could only come from among the upper classes, they naturally viewed the Labour movement not only with distrust, but sometimes, even with decided animosity, as they inclined to the idea that nothing was more injurious to the cause of Socialism than the class struggle.

This unsympathetic attitude of the middle-class Socialists towards the Labour movement naturally did not fail to react on the attitude of the latter towards Socialism. If the rising portion of the proletariat not only met with no support from Socialists, but even with opposition, if the teachings of the latter threatened to discourage them, it was all too easy for mistrust and dislike of the whole Socialist doctrine itself, not only of its application to the struggles of the times, to arise among them. The mistrust was increased by the thoughtlessness and want of education which, in the early days of the Labour movement, were rife even among the masses of militant proletarians. The narrowness of their horizon made it very difficult for them to understand the ultimate objects of Socialism, and they had as yet no clear and far-seeing consciousness of the social position and function of their class; they only felt a dim class instinct, which taught them distrust of everyone who came from the bourgeoisie, thus also of the middle-class Socialism, just as of middle-class philanthropy in general.

Among many categories of workers, especially in England, this mistrust of Socialism at that time took deep root. To the after-effects of this—combined with many other causes—it is partially to be ascribed that until about twenty-five years ago England was practically impregnable to Socialist aspirations, even though the newer Socialism takes up a completely different attitude towards the Labour movement from that of the middle-class Utopians.

All the same, however great the gulf between Socialism and the militant proletariat might at times become, the former is nevertheless so perfectly adapted to the needs of those proletarians who think for the future that even when the masses were in opposition to Socialism the best intellects among the working class soon turned towards it in so far as they had the opportunity of getting acquainted with its teachings. And it was through their agency that the views of the Utopian Socialists underwent an important metamorphosis. They were not like the latter, obliged to respect the ideas of the bourgeoisie, whom they hated and bitterly opposed. The peaceful Socialism of the bourgeois Utopians, who wanted to bring about the deliverance of mankind by means of the action of the best elements among the upper classes, changed among the workers into a forcible, revolutionary Socialism, which was to be carried out by the efforts of the proletarians themselves.

But even this primitive working-class Socialism had no comprehension of the Labour movement; it also was opposed to the class struggle—at least, to its highest form, the political form—from other reasons, it is true, than the middle-class Utopians. In a scientific sense it was impossible for it to get beyond them. At the best, the proletarian can but appropriate a part of the knowledge which the learning of the middle classes has brought to light and adapt it to his desires and needs. As long as he remains a proletarian he has no leisure nor means to carry on science independently, beyond the point attained by the bourgeois thinkers. Therefore the primitive working-class Socialism bore all the characteristic marks of Utopianism; it had no idea of economic development, which creates the material elements of Socialist production, and nurtures and ripens, by means of the class struggle, that class which is called to take possession of those elements and build up out of them the new state of society. Like the bourgeois Utopians, these prole-

tarians also believed a form of society to be a structure which could be voluntarily erected according to a previously worked-out plan once one had the means and site for it. The proletarian Utopians, who were as bold and as energetic as they were naive, credited themselves with the strength to manage the building up; it was only a question of procuring the necessary site and means. They did not, of course, expect these to be placed at their disposal by a prince or a millionaire; the Revolution was to procure the necessary, was to demolish the old structure, break up the old powers, and give the dictatorship to the little group who had discovered the new plan of building, which would enable the new Messiah to erect the structure of Socialist society.

In this train of thought the class struggle found no place. The proletarian Utopians were feeling too keenly the misery in which they lived not to wish impatiently for its immediate abolition. Even if they had considered it possible for the class struggle to elevate the proletariat and make it capable of assisting in the further development of society, this process would have appeared to them far too complicated. But they had no faith in such an elevation. They were only at the beginning of the Labour movement, the categories of proletarians taking part in it were but few and small, and even among these militant proletarians there were very few individuals who had more in view than the protection of their immediate interests. To educate the mass of the population in Socialist thought appeared hopeless. The only thing this mass was capable of was an outbreak of despair, in which everything existing might be destroyed, thereby clearing the path for the Socialists. The worse the condition of the masses, the nearer—so thought the primitive working-class Socialist—must the moment be when their lot would become so unendurable to them that they would demolish the upper part of the social structure which was crushing them. A struggle for the gradual elevation of the working class was, in the opinion of these Socialists, not only hopeless, but decidedly injurious, because the trivial improvements which such a struggle might temporarily attain would make the existing order more tolerable to the masses, thereby putting off the moment of their rising and of the destruction of their order, and therewith also the moment of the thorough abolition of their misery. Every form of the class struggle which had not the immediate and complete overthrow of the existing order as its goal—that is, every effectual form which is to be taken seriously—was, in the eyes of these Socialists, nothing less than treason to the cause of humanity.

It is more than half a century ago that this line of thought, which probably found its most brilliant exponent in Weitling, appeared among the working class. It has not yet died out. The inclination towards it is apparent in every category of the working class who are about to enter the ranks of the militant proletariat; it shows itself in every country the proletariat of which is beginning to be conscious of its unworthy and unbearable position, and to become filled with Socialist tendencies, without having yet gained a clear insight into the social conditions and without crediting itself with the strength of the prolonged class struggle; and as new categories of proletarians are ever lifting themselves up from the quagmire into which economic development has pressed them down, and new lands are ever becoming invaded by the capitalist method of production, and the resulting proletarisation of the masses, this train of thought of the primitive Utopian workmen-Socialist may yet re-appear many times. It is a disease of childhood, which threatens every young proletarian Socialist movement that has not yet advanced beyond Utopianism.

It is usual to-day to describe these kind of Socialist views as "Anarchism," but they are on no account necessarily akin to the latter. As they do not arise from clear insight into things, but only from an instinct of revolt, they are compatible with very diverse theoretical standpoints. But it is true that lately the rough and violent Socialism of the primitive proletarian and the often very sensitive, high-strung and peaceful anarchism of the over-refined petty bourgeoisie are often in alliance with each other, because, in spite of all the far-reaching differences between them, there is one thing that they have in common, the disinclination for, indeed the hatred of, the prolonged class struggle, especially in its highest form—the political struggle.

The Utopian Socialism of the proletarians was quite as unable as that of the middle classes to overcome the antagonism between Socialism and the Labour movement. It is true the proletarian Utopians were at times forced by circumstances to take part in the class struggle, but, owing to their instability on the theoretical side, the participation did not tend towards a final union between Socialism and the Labour movement, but towards the crowding-out of the former by the latter. It is well known that the anarchist movement (the word is used here in the sense of this

proletarian Utopianism) wherever it has become a mass movement, a real class struggle, has, in spite of its apparent Radicalism, sooner or later ended either in narrow trade unionism "pure and simple," or in an equally narrow exclusive co-operative movement.

XII.—SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY—THE UNION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND SOCIALISM.

In order for the Socialist and Labour movements to be reconciled and welded into one united movement, it was necessary for Socialism to rise above the Utopian line of thought. The accomplishment of this is the historic work of Marx and Engels who, in 1847, in their "Communist Manifesto," laid the scientific foundations of the new, modern Socialism, or, as it is called to-day, Social-Democracy. They thereby gave a backbone to Socialism, which had until then been but a beautiful dream of a few well-meaning enthusiasts, and converted it into a serious goal to be fought for, and proved it to be the necessary result of economic development. To the militant proletariat they gave a clear consciousness of its historic mission, and placed it in the position to proceed towards its great goal as quickly and with as little sacrifice as possible. The function of the Socialist is no longer to invent a new state of society according to desire, but to discover its composite elements within present-day society. They no longer have to bring the proletariat deliverance out of their misery from above, but to support their class struggle by increasing their insight and assisting their economic and political organisations, so that they may ripen faster and less painfully towards the time when they will be able to deliver themselves. To make the class struggle of the proletariat as conscious and as practical as possible, that is the function of the Social-Democracy.

A further exposition of the line of thought in the teaching of Marx and Engels is unnecessary, for all that we have already said is founded upon it, and is nothing more or less than an exposition and working-out of this teaching.

The class-struggle of the proletariat receives, through this teaching, a new character. As long as it has not Socialist production for its goal, as long as the aspirations of the militant proletariat do not extend beyond the frame-work of the present method of production, the class struggle appears only to move in a circle without leaving the spot, and the struggles of the proletariat for a satisfactory existence seem to be Sisyphean labour. For the degrading tendencies of the capitalist method of production are not destroyel, but, at the utmost, only held somewhat in check by the class struggle and its achievements. The proletarising of the middle classes of society continues unbrokenly; fresh members and whole categories of the working clesses are ceaselessly being forced into the ranks of the outcast class, while the capitalist' greed of gain is ever threatening the destruction of even the little that the better-situated workers have already attained. Each shortening of the working day, whether attained through economic or political struggles, is made the occasion for the introduction of labour-saving machines, for intensifying the labour of the workers; every improvement in the proletarian organisations is answered by an improvement in the capitalist organisations, etc., and at the same time unemployment is increasing, the crises are becoming extended both in dimensions and intensity, the precariousness of existence is becoming even greater and more tormenting. The elevation of the working class, which the class struggle brings about, is less an economic than a moral one. The economic conditions of the proletarians in general only improve slightly and slowly—if at all—as a result of the class struggle. But the self-respect of the proletarians increases, and also the respect that other classes of society give them; they are beginning to feel themselves equal to those who are better situated than they are, and to compare their circumstances with their own; they are beginning to expect more from themselves, from their housing and clothing, their knowledge, the education of their children, etc., and to demand participation in the acquisitions of culture. And they are ever becoming more sensitive towards every slight and every oppression.

This moral elevation of the proletariat is synonymous with the awakening and steady growth of their demands. This is growing much too rapidly for those improvements in their economic position, which are compatible with the present-day method of exploitation, to keep pace with it. All these improvements, which some hope and others fear will make the workers contented, must always be less than the demands of the latter, which are the natural result of their moral elevation. The result of the class struggle then can only be to increase the discontent of the prole-

tarian with his lot, a discontent which naturally makes itself specially felt wherever the economic elevation of the proletariat remains farthest behind its moral elevation, the increase of which, however, is nowhere, in the long run, to be hindered. And so the class struggle appears, after all, objectless and fruitless if its aspirations do not extend beyond the existing method of production. The higher it elevates the proletarian, the further he finds himself from the goal of his aspirations—namely, a contented existence, answering to his ideas of human dignity.

Only Socialist production can put an end to the want of proportion between the demands of the worker and the means of satisfying them, by abolishing all exploitation and class differences; it will, by this means, abolish that powerful incentive to the worker to discontent with his lot, which is to-day aroused in him by the sight of luxury. Once this incentive is removed, the workers will, of their own accord, limit their demands to bounds of possibility—that is, of the available means for satisfying the wants of all. How these means themselves will be increased under Socialist production we have already seen.

This gnawing discontent, these "exactions," are unknown in Communist communities, but must of necessity arise from the class contrasts and the exploitation wherever the explointed feel themselves morally equal to or even superior to the exploiters. Once an exploited class has reached this point, its demands will not be satisfied until its exploitation has been put an end to.

So long, therefore, as the proletarian class struggle stood opposed to Socialism, so long as it only aimed at obtaining concessions which would procure a satisfactory position for the proletariat within the limits of the present system of society, it was impossible for it to attain its end. It was like an endless screw; but since the Socialist and Labour movements have become merged into one, it is quite another thing. The latter has now a goal which it is visibly approaching, all sides of the struggle are now assuming importance, even those which do not lead to immediate practical results, if they only strengthen the self-confidence of the proletariat and its social standing as well as its solidarity and discipline. Many an apparently lost battle now becomes a victory; each lost strike, each Bill which might have served the interests of the proletariat and which fails to pass, becomes a step forward towards the goal, the attainment of an existence worthy of humanity. From this time onward it becomes evident that all economic and political regulations which are put into force on account of the proletariat, whether their tendencies be antagonistic or friendly, whether they succeed or fail, turn out to its advantage in so far as they contribute to its rousing and moral elevation. From this time onward the militant proletariat no longer resembles an army which simply marks time and only with great difficulty retains what it has conquered in the past, it becomes gradually clear even to the dimmest eyes that it is an irresistible conqueror, whose triumphant progress nothing can hinder.

XIII.—THE INTERNATIONALITY OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY.

The new Socialism founded by Marx and Engels had its origin in Germany. Both its founders were Germans, and Germans were their first disciples; the first writings which expounded their teaching appeared in the German language. This alone would suffice to explain, although it is by no means the only reason, that it was in Germany that the union between Socialism and the Labour movement first took place, that it was there the Social-Democracy first took root. (By Germany is meant here not only the German Empire, but every territory inhabited by a large number of German-speaking workers.)

But the spread of Social-Democracy did not long remain confined to Germany. The founders of modern Socialism realised from the beginning the international character that the present-day Labour movement everywhere seeks to assume, and tried, therefore, from the beginning, to give an international basis to their propaganda.

International communication is obviously bound up with the capitalist method of production. The development of the latter from simple commodity production is connected as closely as possible with the development of the trade of the world. But this development is not possible without friendly relations between the various nations; it is necessary for its unfolding that the foreign merchant should be as much protected in the land in which he trades as in his own. But through the development of the world's trade the merchant becomes very much elevated also on the social plane. His mode of thought begins greatly to influence that of society in general. The merchant has ever been a very mobile element, his motto has ever

been "ubi bene, ibi patria"—where I get on well, where there is profit, there is my fatherland.

This in proportion to the spread of the trade of the world and capitalist production, cosmopolitan tendencies, and the desire for permanent and eternal peace between the nations for a universal brotherhood of the peoples, spreads in bourgeois society.

But the capitalist method of production creates the strangest contradictions. Just as, for instance, the tendencies towards the simultaneous increase of equality and inequality towards the pressing down of the proletariat into the deepest degradation and its elevation to the dominating class, towards the complete freedom of the individual and his absolute slavery, may be seen side by side, so there goes hand in hand with the tendency towards international peace a tendency towards the aggravation of the national antagonisms. Communication requires peace, but competition engenders war. If in every country there is an eternal warfare between the individual capitalists and the different classes among themselves, so it is also between the capitalists and capitalist classes of the different nations. Each nation seeks to extend the market for its own products and to force others out from that market. The more developed universal communication is, and the more necessary it is that the world should be at peace, the wilder is the struggle of competition, and the greater the danger of conflicts between the nations. The closer the international communication, the louder the cry for national exclusiveness. The more urgent the need for peace, the more threatening the danger of war. These apparently insane contrasts are entirely in keeping with the character of the capitalist method of production. They are hidden even in simple commodity production, but it requires capitalist production to develop them to a gigantic and unendurable extent. The fact that it increases the tendencies towards war in proportion as it renders peace indispensable is only one of the many contradictions which must result in its destruction.

The proletariat does not take part in the contradictory attitude which results from this for all other classes of society. The more it develops and becomes an independent class in itself, the more distinctly the phenomenon becomes apparent in many domains, that out of each two of the antagonistic tendencies of capitalist production only one touches the proletariat, while the other affects it less and less. Thus, for instance, the present-day method of production increases simultaneously the tendencies towards the drawing together of the producers in large bodies for co-operative activity, and towards the embittered struggle of all (producers) against all. Among the proletariat the second tendency has ceased to act. Instead of the antagonism between monopoly and competition, which wears out and splits up the bourgeoisie, we find here only the first tendency at work in the direction of strengthening and extending proletarian solidarity. It is the natural result of this "one-sidedness" that the proletariat of the different civilised lands is more and more influenced by the tendency towards closer international relations, while the tendency towards the exclusiveness of the nations from each other and towards international conflicts is losing all influence in proletarian circles.

The capitalist method of production has, by taking all prosperity from the workers, set him free from all ties of home and country. He has no longer an abiding home, and, therefore, also no abiding country. Like the merchant, he also takes for his own motto: "ubi bene, ibi patria"—where the best conditions of labour are to be found, there is my fatherland. The journeyman had already begun to extend their wanderings to foreign countries, with the result, as already pointed out, of the beginnings of an international combination. But what are these wanderings compared with those of modern times, rendered possible by the present-day development of means of communication! And then the journeyman travelled with the intention of returning once more to his native place, whereas the modern proletarian wanders with his wife and children to settle down wherever the best conditions of work are to be found. He is not a tourist but a nomad.

Like the proletarian, so also the merchant—at least, if he is engaged in world-wide commerce—seeks to make himself independent of his native place, and to settle down where he thinks he can best serve his business interests. But he does not on that account lose touch with his fatherland, for his reputation abroad, his position, the possibility of doing business unhindered and cutting out his foreign colleagues, depend to a great extent on the importance and strength of the State to which he belongs, and which protects him. Thus the merchant in foreign parts retains his national sentiments; as a rule these gentlemen are the greatest jingoes, they feel, more directly than others, how the greatness of their fatherland affects their pockets.

With the proletarian it is different. He has not been pampered in his fatherland

by the official protection of his interests; he does not, as a rule, need the protection of his fatherland very much abroad; at least, not in civilised countries. On the contrary, when he seeks a strange land, it is generally one where the laws and constitutions are more favourable to the workers than in his own country. And his new fellow workers have no interest in denying him legal protection in the case in which he needs it most urgently—namely, against his exploiter. On the contrary, it is in their own interest to take care that this power of resistance towards his exploiter should increase.

Far more, then, than the wandering journeyman of former times, and far more than the merchant, is the modern proletarian set free from all his home ties. He becomes a true cosmopolitan; the whole world is his home.

It is true that for the workers of those countries in which the higher standard of life and better conditions of labour obtain, in which, therefore, the immigration is greater than the emigration, this cosmopolitanism brings many disadvantages, sometimes even dangers, in its train, for it is undeniable that these better-placed workers are hindered in their class struggle by the competition of these immigrants, who are more frugal and who have little power of resistance.

Under certain circumstances this competition may—like that among capitalists of different nations—lead to an intensification of national antagonisms, to national hatred on the part of the workers of the country for the foreigners. But the struggle of nationalities, which in bourgeois circles is a permanent phenomenon, can, among proletarians, only be of a temporary nature, for sooner or later the latter must attain to the realisation—if in no other way, then by bitter experience—that the immigration of cheap labour from backward into economically advanced districts is quite as necessarily bound up with the capitalist method of production as is the introduction of the machine and of women's labour into industry, and that it is quite as impossible to prevent it as either of these latter.

The Labour movement of an advanced country is also injured in another way by the backwardness of the workers in other countries. The degree of exploitation that these put up with is a good excuse, or sometimes even a good reason, for the capitalists of the former countries to oppose the aspirations of their own workers towards improving their conditions of labour, be it by law or by "free" contract.

In some way or another it becomes clear also to the workers who remain in the country, how dependent the progress of their own class struggle is on the progress of the working class of other lands. Though this may, for a time, irritate them against the foreign workers, they finally come to realise that there is but one effectual means of abolishing the bad effects of the backwardness of the workers in other countries—namely, the abolition of this backwardness itself. The German workers have good reason to wish for, as far as possible, to use their influence towards higher wages and shorter hours for the Slav and Italian workers both at home and abroad; the English workers have the same interest with regard to the Germans and others, and the American workers towards all the European workers.

The close dependence of the proletarian class struggle in each land on its progress in other lands, must of necessity lead eventually to the close union of the militant categories of proletarians in the different countries.

The remains of national exclusiveness and hatred which the proletariat had taken over from the bourgeoisie are disappearing more and more; it is freeing itself more and more from national prejudices, and the worker is learning more and more to see in foreign fellow workers, whatever language they may speak, fellow fighters and comrades, and to value them accordingly.

But the closest international solidarity of all must naturally be between those categories of proletarians of different nations who have set themselves the same goal and are striving with the same means to reach it.

The authors of the "Communist Manifesto" realised from the beginning how indispensable it was for the proletarian class struggle to be internationally connected if its aspirations, strength and size are to exceed certain narrow limits. They call upon the proletarians of all lands, and the manifesto closes with the urgent appeal to them to "unite"! And the organisation that they had won over to the principles of the manifesto, and in whose name it appeared, was an international one, the Federation of Communists.

The overthrow of the revolutionary movements of 1848 and 1849 made an end of this federation, but with the re-awakening of the Labour movement at the beginning of the sixties, it arose again under the name of the "International Working-

men's Association" (founded in 1864), the moving spirit of which was again Marx. Its function was not only to awaken the feeling of international solidarity in the proletarians of the various countries, but also to give them a common aim, and cause them to take the same road towards it. It fulfilled the first of these functions abundantly, but the other was partially the cause of it going to pieces. The "International" was to bring about the union of the militant proletariat in all countries with modern Socialism. It declared that the emancipation of the working classes could only be accomplished by themselves, that the political movement was merely a help towards this end, and that the emancipation of the proletariat was an impossibility as long as it remained dependent upon the monopolists of the means of production, of the springs of life. Some oppoosition arose in the ranks of the "International" against the principles, and grew all the stronger as it became more evident that the consequences involved Social-Democracy. All the supporters of the bourgeoisie, small bourgeoisie, and primitive proletarian Utopianism, who 30 or 40 years ago were still comparately numerous, as well as the representatives of the "pure and simple" trade union school of the aristocracy of labour, crumbled away from the "International" when they realised what it was aiming at. The fall of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the persecutions that the "International" suffered at the hands of the State force of the different countries, hastened its downfall.

But the consciousness of international solidarity which it had spread abroad was not to be stamped out.

Since that time the ideas expressed in the "Communist Manifesto" of the militant proletariat have taken hold of all Europe (and of many categories of proletarians outside Europe); everywhere the union between the class struggle and modern Socialism is either accomplished already or on the high road towards its accomplishment. The basis, objects and methods of the proletarian class struggle are becoming more similar everywhere. This resulted automatically in the Socialist and Labour movements in the various countries coming into closer touch with one another; the international consciousness in them became ever stronger and only needed some impetus from without to give to this fact an outward and visible form.

This happened, as we all know, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, at the International Congress in Paris (1889). The subsequent international congresses have provided opportunities of further strengthening the international connection of the militant proletariat, which besides expresses iself visibly every year in the 1st of May celebrations. Those who come together at these congresses are not, as at the peace congress of the bourgeoisie, detached individuals, considered by the rest of their class as eccentric "cranks" and dreamers, but the representatives and spokesmen of hundreds of thousands—indeed, millions—of working men and women. Each May-day demonstration shows most forcibly that it is the masses of the working population who, in all centres of economic and political life in all modern civilised countries, are conscious of the international solidarity of the proletariat who protest against war and declare that the so-called national antagonisms are, in point of fact, no longer antagonisms between the peoples, but only between their exploiters.

Such a bridging-over of the gulf between the individual nations, such an international drawing together of the largest circles of population, has never before been seen in the world's history. These events are all the more imposing in that they are taking place under the shadow of armaments which on their side also present a spectacle such as has not yet been known in the world's history, armaments unspeakably oppressive to Europe.

In view of these armaments, it is doubly the duty of the Social-Democracy decidedly to accentuate its international position. This it has done in the most forcible manner in the Erfurt programme.

XIV.—THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY AND THE PEOPLE.

The Social-Democracy is from the start in its very essence an international party, but it has at the same time the tendency to become more and more a national—that is, a people's—party, in the sense of being the representative, not only of the industrial wage workers, but of the whole of the working and exploited classes—that is, of the great majority of the total population who are generally understood by "the people." We have already seen that the industrial proletariat has the tendency towards becoming the only working class. It has also been pointed out that the other working classes are coming more and more to resemble the proletariat in their way

of living and in the conditions of their work; and, finally, we already know also that the working proletariat, alone of all the working classes, is ever growing in strength, intelligence and consciousness of its goal, that it is more and more becoming the central point around which the steadily decreasing remains of the other working classes are grouping themselves. Its feeling and thought sets the pace more and more for the total mass of "small men."

In the same measure as the wage workers become the leaders of the people, the Labour Party becomes a people's party. In point of fact, as soon as the independent worker in small industry feels himself a proletarian, as soon as he realises that he, or, at any rate, his children, are bound to sink into the ranks of the proletariat, that for him salvation is no longer possible save by the liberation of the proletariat—from that moment forward he must find in the Social-Democracy the natural representative of his interests.

In a former pamphlet, "The Socialist Commonwealth," it was pointed out that the independent worker has nothing to fear from the victory of the Social-Democratic movement, that, on the contrary, it would be quite in his interest, as it will bring about a state of society which ensures to all workers—not the wage workers alone, but also the independent workers in small industry—liberation from exploitation and oppression, and guarantee to them security and well-being.

But the Social-Democracy represents the interests of the "little man," not only in the future, but also in the present state of society. The proletariat, as the lowest of the exploited classes, cannot free itself from exploitation and oppression without putting an end to these altogether. It is therefore their sworn enemy in whatever form they may arise; it is the defender of all the exploited and oppressed.

We have already spoken of the "International." It is characteristic that the occasion for its formation was a proletarian demonstration in favour of the Poles who were rising against the yoke of Czarism; that the first address published by the "International" after its formation was one of good wishes to Lincoln, the President of the United States, in which the society of workers expressed its sympathy with the Anti-Slavery cause, and, finally, that the "International" was the first organisation, existing in England and numbering Englishmen among its members, to take sides, and that in the most active and forcible way, for the Irish, who were being ill-treated by the ruling classes of England. Neither the Irish nor the Polish movements, nor the liberation of the slaves, had any direct connection with the class interests of the wage workers.

Similiar examples might be enumerated by the dozen in the history of the Socialist working-class movement.

It is said, certainly, that Social-Democracy builds upon the continuation of economic development; that Socialist production pre-supposes the ousting of small production everywhere to the utmost extent by large production, that it is therefore in the interests of Social-Democracy that the small independent artisan, small shopkeeper, and peasant should disappear; that it must seek to bring about the ruin of these, and, therefore, cannot possibly promote their interests.

To this we would reply as follows: Social-Democracy does not create economic development; the substitution of large for small production is being managed thoroughly by the capitalist class without the aid of the Socialists. It is true that they have no reason for trying to stem the tide of this development, but to attempt to hold back economic development is by no means to represent the true interests of the small peasants and petty bourgeoisie, for all such attempts are doomed to failure—as far as they have any effect at all it will be injurious rather than beneficial. To portray to the peasants and artisans regulations by means of which their small institutions shall once more be paved with gold is not maintaining their interests, but only awakening illusions in them which can never be realised and which only serve to lead them aside from the furtherance of their interests.

But if the downfall of small production is inevitable, it is not necessary that this downfall should be accompanied by the terrible sufferings under which it generally takes place to-day. We have seen that the disappearance of a small concern is but the final act of a long drama, the earlier acts of which contain nothing but the lingering and torturing decay of the independent small producer. But not only is it not in the interests of the Social-Democracy that the petty bourgeoisie and peasant should be crushed; on the contrary, it is in its interests that this should not be done, for the more those circles out of which the proletariat is recruited are crushed down, the more difficult it will be to elevate these recruits sufficiently to make them capable

and strong-willed enough to enter the ranks of the militant proletariat. But it is on the development of these, and not on that of the proletariat as a whole, that the development and strength of the Social-Democracy depends. The lower the standard of comfort of the peasant and artisan, and the more accustomed they are to constant toil, the more submissive they prove as soon as they have sunk into the ranks of the proletariat, the more they let themselves be exploited, the more they injure by their competition the better situated workers. The same reasons which lead to the international solidarity of the proletariat itself lead also, to a certain extent, to the solidarity of the proletariat with the classes from which it is recruited; a solidarity, it is true, which has hitherto only been felt and acted upon by the one side—that of the proletarians.

Of course, when the decaying peasants and petty bourgeoisie try to keep their heads above water at the expense of the proletariat, as, for instance, by excessive exploitation of apprentices or by hindering the organisation of their wage workers, they will always meet with energetic resistance on the part of the proletariat and of the Social-Democracy. On the other hand, these latter decidedly support any measures by means of which, without injury to the proletariat, the lot of the small peasants and petty bourgeoisie could be improved and their burden lightened.

This is distinctly expressed in the list of immediate reforms which the Social-Democracy demands from the present-day State. The enumeration of these demands forms the second part of the Erfurt Programme, and reads as follows:—

"Based upon these principles, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany demands at the present time:

"1. General, equal, direct suffrage (passive and active), with secret ballot, for all citizens of the Empire who have reached their 20th year, without reference to sex, for all elections and ballots. Proportional system of election, and until this is introduced, legal new divisions of the constituencies after each census. Biennial Parliaments; all elections to take place on a legal holiday; payment of members; no disfranchisement on account of poor relief; no disfranchisement on any ground except that of idiocy or lunacy.

"2. Direct legislation by the people by means of the initiative and referendum; self-government and autonomy of the people in Empire, State, province and borough. Election of the administrators by the people to whom they are to be responsible. Taxes to be levied annually.

"3. Universal military training. The armed people (Citizen Army) to take the place of standing armies. Parliament to decide on peace or war. Settlement of all international differences by means of arbitration.

"4. Abolition of all laws which limit or prevent free expression of opinion and the right of coalition and of public meeting.

"5. Abolition of all laws which put women at a legal disadvantage compared with men in a public or private capacity.

"6. Religion to be declared a private matter. Public money not to be employed for ecclesiastical or religious purposes. The ecclesiastical and religious bodies to be looked upon as private societies who manage their affairs quite independently.

"7. Education to be secular, with obligatory attendance at the common public schools. Instruction, school books, etc., and maintenance to be free in the public schools, and in the higher educational institutions, also of those scholars who, on account of their capacities, are considered suitable for further traning.

"8. Free justice with free legal assistance to the accused. Judges to be elected by the people. Right of appeal. Compensation of those accused, arrested or condemned innocently. Abolition of capital punishment.

"9. Medical assistance, including aid in childbirth, and medicines to be free. Free burial of the dead.

"10. A progressive income-tax to meet all public expenses in so far as these have to be covered by taxes. Death duties, progressively rising according to the amount inherited and the degree of relationship. Abolition of all indirect taxation and customs duties, and abrogation of any other economic-political regulations which sacrifice the general interests to those of a privileged minority.

"For the protection of the working class, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany demands as immediate reforms:

"1. Effectual national and international protection of labour on the following basis:—

(a) Institution of a normal working day not exceeding eight hours.

(b) Prohibition of the industrial labour of children under 14 years of age.

(c) Prohibition of night work except in such industries the nature of which, for technical reasons, or in the public interest, demands night work.

(d) An unbroken rest of at least 36 hours every week for every worker.

(e) Prohibition of the truck system.

"2. Inspection of all industrial institutions, examinations into and regulation of the conditions of labour in town and country by means of an imperial Ministry of Labour, district labour offices, and chambers of labour. Thorough industrial sanitation.

"3. The country workers and servants to be placed on a legal equality with the industrial workers; abolition of the special laws to which servants are subjected.*

"4. The rights of coalition to be secured.

"5. The Imperial State to take over all branches of workers' insurance (accident, old age, etc.), workers to have an influential share in the management of same."

To go in detail into these points is not within the scope of these pamphlets, which only deal with the principles of Social-Democracy, and not with its practical outcome. They only concern us here in so far as they serve to elucidate those principles. From this point of view a few short remarks may be appended to them in conclusion, as the remarks dealing with the theoretical part of the Erfurt Programme are now completed.

Above all, it is evident that only a portion of the demands of Social-Democracy are purely "labour" demands, exclusively dealing with the interests of the wage-earning proletariat. By far the greater part of the demands deal with fields of interest common to the proletariat and the other categories of the working population. Some of these demands are also included in the programmes of bourgeois democrats, but the rest can only be voiced by the Social-Democracy, as the only anti-capitalist party, and even the bourgeois democratic demands are not so hotly fought for by any other party. The Social-Democracy seeks to raise the standard of life of the small producers, and to relieve them by the abolition of indirect taxation, by removing the great burden of taxation from their shoulders to those of the rich, by introducing a progressive income-tax, by the abolition of standing armies, and that which is so clearly bound up with the latter—the existence of national debts, etc. While relieving the small producer economically, it also seeks to raise him intellectually by demanding not only free† instruction in the popular schools, which shall come up to the standard of modern culture, but also free school books, and other implements, and free maintenance of the school children by the State. The Social-Democracy is also the only Party which would give to the "small man" sufficient free medical advice and care in sickness as well as free advice and administration of justice.

By means of regulations in the direction of these demands the position of the independent workers of the small industry would be improved as far as any improvement is possible in present-day society. For to assist artisans and peasants as producers, while their backward method of production remain, contradicts the course of economic development and is unworkable. It is equally impossible to raise them all, or even any considerable portion of them, to the position of capitalists. The only direction in which any possible assistance can be given these small producers now is in their capacity as consumers; but it is just those parties which apparently are the most friendly towards artisans and peasants which lay the heaviest burdens upon them as consumers. These burdens are very real and press heavily upon them. The raising of small industry, which is supposed to go hand in hand with them, is, on the other hand, becoming more and more illusory.

Not only is the assistance rendered to petty bourgeoisie and small peasants as consumers not in contradiction to economic development, but it is a means of accelerating it. It is therefore not only possible but already for this reason desirable—not to speak of the many other reasons based partly upon intellectual considerations and

* This refers to a special code existing in the German States.

† In Germany free education is not universal, each municipality settles this question independently. School fees are, however, being abolished more and more in the various localities.—Translator.

partly upon sympathy with the poor perishing peasants and petty bourgeoisie. The better their position as consumers, the higher their standard of life; the greater their physical and intellectual requirements, the keener their insight, the sooner they will cease trying to fight against large industry by means of cutting competition, sweating, etc., the sooner they will abandon the hopeless struggle and swell the ranks of the proletariat. But not the ranks of the meek, unresisting, frugal, lowest category of the proletariat; they will come direct into the ranks of the militant, clamorous, goal-conscious proletarians, thereby accelerating their victory.

The victory will not be the outcome of debasement, as many have expected, but quite as little from the degradation of the small producer as from that of the proletariat. The Social-Democracy, then, has every reason to fight against debasement in this class quite as decidedly as in the other, and does so as far as it is in its power. To strengthen this power is thus not alone in the interest of the wage worker, but also in that of all other members of the population who live by their labour and not by exploitation.

The petty bourgeoisie and peasantry have never, since the existence of the modern State, been really capable of holding their own, alone, against the other classes, and to-day they are less able to do so than ever. In order to represent their interests they are obliged to combine with one or more of the other classes. Their instincts, which have been nurtured by private property, drive them into the arms of the bourgeois parties—that is, towards combining with one of the various groups of the upper, possessing classes. The bourgeois parties on their side seek such alliances, partly from purely Party motives, because they look upon these small producers as "voting cattle," who are useful to them, but partly also for considerations which go deeper, for they know very well that the private property of the peasantry and petty bourgeoise constitutes to-day the strongest support of all private property, and therefore also of the exploitation that they themselves are carrying on. The welfare of the small producer is a matter of indifference to them. In his capacity of consumer they are always ready to oppress him. They do not mind how low he sinks, provided that his small business, which holds him to the propertied classes, does not entirely disappear. At the same time, all these parties are interested in the extension of capitalist exploitation, and thus in the progress of economic development. They may, indeed, wish to retain the peasant and artisan, and they may promise him that they will do so, but, in point of fact, they are doing all in their power to extend the dominion of large industry, thereby crushing peasant and artisan production.

Quite different are the relations between the independent workers in small industry and the Social-Democracy. It is true that the latter cannot profess to be the champion of small production, which, however, in point of fact, has nothing to fear from it. It is the capitalist and large land owners, and not the proletarians, who expropriate artisans and peasants. The victory of the proletariat is (as pointed out in the "Socialist Commonwealth"), on the contrary, the only means of making an end of this expropriation, but as consumers, the independent workers in the small industry have common interests with the proletarians. They therefore have every reason by making common cause with the latter—that is, by joining the Social-Democracy, to seek to further these interests.

It is, naturally, not to be expected that the realisation of this will spread very rapidly among them, but the desertion of petty bourgeoisie and peasants from among the ranks of the capitalist parties has already begun, a desertion of a quite peculiar type, for it is just the most capable and the most belligerent elements who are the first to throw down their arms, not, indeed, to escape the thick of the fight, but to fly from the small and petty struggle for the prolongation of a pitiable existence into the gigantic world-wide struggle for the creation of a new order of society which will enable all its members to share in the great conquests of modern civilisation, into the struggle for the liberation of all civilised humanity, indeed, of the whole human race, from the curse of a state of society which is threatening to crush humanity completely.

The more unbearable the present-day method of production becomes, the more visibly it hurries towards bankruptcy, and the more incapable the ruling parties show themselves of coping with the growing social evils, the more destitute the principle these parties—which are shrinking more and more into cliques of self-seeking politicians—become, the greater will be the number of the members of non-proletarian classes who will swell the stream of Social-Democracy, and who, hand in hand with the irresistibly advancing army of the proletariat, will follow their banner to complete and triumphant victory.

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