

RUDOLF ROCKER



HISTORY OF ANARCHIST
PHILOSOPHY

-

MARX AND ANARCHISM

-

THE SOVIET SYSTEM AND
THE PROLETARIAT



**P R I N C I P L E S , P R O P O S I T I O N S &
D I S C U S S I O N S
F O R L A N D & F R E E D O M**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE ‘ANARCHIVE’
“Anarchy is Order!”

*I must Create a System or be enslav'd by
another Man's.
I will not Reason & Compare: my business
is to Create'*
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a ‘new’ kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as ‘Anarchy is order’, ‘Property is theft’,...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The ‘anarchival’ or ‘anarchist archive’ Anarchy is Order (in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the ‘**principles, propositions and discussions**’ of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don't belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the ‘new anarchism’ outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.

Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing from the CD that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts ,...Become your own anarchivist!!!

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and authors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchivist offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*‘demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to
squash us like horseflies;
and the will- ‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance’.*

(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don't mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism, cooperation can be send to
A.O@advalvas.be

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

welcome!!

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HISTORY OF ANARCHIST PHILOSOPHY FROM LAO-TSE TO KROPOTKIN

RUDOLF ROCKER

ANARCHIST IDEAS ARE TO BE FOUND in almost every period of known history. We encounter them in the Chinese sage, Lao-Tse (The Course and The Right Way), and the later Greek philosophers, the Hedonists and Cynics and other advocates of so-called natural right, and particularly, in Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school and opposer of Plato. They found expression in the teachings of the Gnostic Carpocrates in Alexandria, and had an unmistakable influence on certain Christian sects of the Middle Ages in France, Germany, Italy, Holland and England, most of which fell victims to the most savage persecutions. In the history of the Bohemian Reformation they found a powerful champion in Peter Chelcicky, who in his work, The Net of Faith, passed the same judgment on the Church and the State as Tolstoy did centuries later. Among the great Humanists there was Rabelais, who in his description of the happy Abbey of Theleme (Gargantua) presented a picture of life freed from all authoritarian restraints. Of other pioneers of libertarian thinking we will mention here only La Boetie, Sylvain Marechal, and, above all, Diderot, in whose voluminous writings one finds thickly strewn the utterances of a really great mind which had rid itself of every authoritarian prejudice.

Meanwhile, it was reserved for more recent history to give a clear form to the Anarchist conception of life and to connect it with the immediate process of social evolution. This was done for the first time by William Godwin (1756-1836) in his splendidly conceived work, An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence upon General

Virtue and Happiness (London, 1793). Godwin's work was, we might say, the ripened fruit of that long evolution of the concepts of political and social radicalism in England which proceeds from George Buchanan through Richard Hooker, Gerard Winstanley, Algernon Sidney, John Locke, Robert Wallace and John Bellers to Jeremy Bentham, Joseph Priestley, Richard Price and Thomas Paine.

Godwin recognised very clearly that the cause of social evils is to be sought, not in the form of the state, but in its very existence. But he also recognised that human beings can only live together naturally and freely when the proper economic conditions for this are given, and the individual is no longer subject to exploitation by others, a consideration which most of the representatives of mere political radicalism almost wholly overlooked. Hence they were later compelled to make constantly greater concessions to the state which they had wished to restrict to a minimum. Godwin's idea of a stateless society assumed the social ownership of the land and the instruments of labour and the carrying on of economic life by free co-operatives of producers. Godwin's work had a strong influence on advanced circles of the English workers and the more enlightened sections of the liberal intelligentsia. Most important of all, he contributed to the young socialist movement in England, which found its maturest exponents in Robert Owen, John Gray and William Thompson, that unmistakably libertarian character which it had for a long time, and which it never assumed in Germany and many other countries.

Also the French Socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1832), with his theory of attractive labour must be mentioned, here as one of the pioneers of libertarian ideas.

But a far greater influence on the development of Anarchist theory was that of Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865),

one of the most gifted and certainly the most many-sided writer of modern Socialism. Proudhon was completely rooted in the intellectual and social life of his period, and these influenced his attitude upon every question with which he dealt. Therefore he is not to be judged, as he has been even by many of his later followers, by his special practical proposals, which were born of the needs of the hour. Among the numerous socialist thinkers of his time he was the one who understood most profoundly the cause of social maladjustment, and possessed, besides, the greatest breadth of vision. He was the outspoken opponent of all artificial social systems, and saw in social evolution the eternal urge to new and higher forms of intellectual and social life; it was his conviction that this evolution could not be bound by any definite abstract formulas.

Proudhon opposed the influence of the Jacobin tradition, which dominated the thinking of the French democrats and most of the Socialists of that period, with the same determination as the interference of the central state and economic monopoly in the natural progress of social advance. To him ridding society of those two cancerous growths was the great task of the nineteenth century revolution. Proudhon was not a Communist. He condemned property as merely the privilege of exploitation, but he recognised the ownership of the instruments of labour for all, made effective through industrial groups bound to one another by free contract, so long as this right was not made to serve the exploitation of others and as long as the full product of his individual labour was assured to every member of society. This association based on reciprocity (mutuality) guarantees the enjoyment of equal rights by each in exchange for social services. The average working time required for the completion of any product becomes the measure of its value and is the basis of mutual exchange

by labour notes. In this way capital is deprived of its usurious power and is completely bound up with the performance of work. Being made available to all it ceases to be an instrument for exploitation. Such a form of economy makes any political coercive apparatus superfluous. Society becomes a league of free communities which arrange their affairs according to need, by themselves or in association with others, and in which man's freedom is the equal freedom of others not its limitation, but its security and confirmation. "The freer, the more independent and enterprising the individual is the better for society."

This organisation of Federalism in which Proudhon saw the immediate future of mankind sets no definite limitations on future possibilities of development and offers the widest scope to every individual and social activity. Starting out from the point of Federation, Proudhon combated likewise the aspiration for political and national unity of the awakening nationalism of the time which found such strong advocates in Mazzini, Garibaldi, Lelewel and others. In this respect he recognised more clearly the real nature of nationalism than most of his contemporaries. Proudhon exerted a strong influence on the development of Socialism, which made itself felt especially in the Latin countries.

Ideas similar to the economic and political conceptions of Proudhon were propagated by the followers of so-called Individualist Anarchism in America which found able exponents in such men as Josiah Warren, Stephen Pearl Andrews, William B. Greene, Lysander Spooner, Benjamin R. Tucker, Ezra Heywood, Francis D. Tandy and many others, though none of them could approach Proudhon's breadth of view. Characteristic of this school of libertarian thought is the fact that most of its representatives took their political ideas not from Proudhon but from the traditions of

American Liberalism, so that Tucker could assert that "Anarchists are merely consistent Jeffersonian democrats". A unique expression of libertarian ideas is to be found in Max Stirner's (Johann Kaspar Schmidt) (1806-1856) book, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, which, it is true, passed quickly into oblivion and had no influence on the development of the Anarchist movement as such. Stirner's book is predominantly a philosophic work which traces man's dependence on so-called higher powers through all its devious ways, and is not timid about drawing inferences from the knowledge gained by the survey. It is the book of a conscious and deliberate insurgent, which reveals no reverence for any authority, however exalted. and, therefore appeals powerfully to independent thinking.

Anarchism found a virile champion of vigorous revolutionary energy in Michael A. Bakunin (1814-1876), who based his ideas upon the teachings of Proudhon, but extended them on the economic side when he, along with the federalist wing of the First International, advocated collective ownership of the land and all other means of production, and wished to restrict the right of private property only to the product of individual labour. Bakunin also was an opponent of Communism, which in his time had a thoroughly authoritarian character, like that which it has again assumed to-day in Bolshevism. "I am not a Communist, because Communism unites all the forces of society in the state and becomes absorbed in it; because it inevitably leads to the concentration of all property in the hands of the state, while I seek the complete elimination of the principles of authority and governmental guardianship, which under the pretence of making men moral and civilising them, has up to now always enslaved, oppressed, exploited and ruined them."

Bakunin was a determined revolutionary and did not believe in an amicable adjustment of the existing conflicts within society. He recognised that the ruling classes blindly and stubbornly opposed every possibility for larger social reforms, and accordingly saw the only salvation in an international social revolution, which would abolish all institutions of political power and economic exploitation and introduce in their stead a Federation of free Associations of producers and consumers to provide for the requirements of their daily life. Since he, like so many of his contemporaries, believed in the close proximity of the revolution, he directed all his vast energy to combining all the genuinely revolutionary and libertarian elements within and outside the International to safeguard the coming revolution against any dictatorship or any retrogression to the old conditions. Thus he became in a very special sense the creator of the modern Anarchist movement.

Anarchism found a valuable exponent in Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), who set himself the task of making the achievements of modern natural science available for the development of the sociological concept of Anarchism. In his ingenious book, *Mutual Aid- Factor of Evolution*, he entered the lists against so-called Social Darwinism, whose exponents tried to prove the inevitability of the existing social conditions from the Darwinian theory of the Struggle for Existence by raising the struggle of the strong against the weak to the status of an iron law of nature, to which man is also subject. In reality this conception was strongly influenced by the Malthusian doctrine that life's table is not spread for all, and that the unneeded will just have to reconcile themselves to this fact. Kropotkin showed that this conception of nature as a field of unrestricted warfare is only a caricature of real life, and that along with the brutal struggle for existence, which is fought out with tooth and

claw, there exists in nature also another tendency which is expressed in the social combination of the weaker species and the maintenance of races by the evolution of social instincts and mutual aid. In this sense man is not the creator of society, but society the creator of man, for he inherited from the species that preceded him the social instinct which alone enabled him to maintain himself in his first environment against the physical superiority of other species, and to make sure of an undreamed-of height of development. This second as is shown by the steady retrogression of those species whose tendency in the struggle for existence is far superior to the first, have no social life and are dependent merely upon their physical strength. This view, which to-day is meeting with constantly wider acceptance in the natural sciences and in social research, opened wholly new vistas to the prospects concerning human evolution.

According to Kropotkin the fact remains that even under the worst despotism most of man's personal relations with his fellows are arranged by social habits, free agreement and mutual cooperation, without which social life would not be possible at all. If this were not the case, even the strongest coercive machinery of the state would not be able to maintain the social order for any length of time. However, these natural forms of behaviour, which arise from man's innermost nature, are to-day constantly interfered with and crippled by the effects of economic exploitation and governmental tutelage, representing the brutal form of the struggle for existence in human society which has to be overcome by the other form of mutual aid and free co-operation. The consciousness of personal responsibility and the capacity for sympathy with others, which make all social ethics and all ideas of social justice, develop best in freedom.

Like Bakunin, Kropotkin too was a revolutionary. But he, like Elisee Reclus and others, saw in revolution only a special phase of the evolutionary process, which appears when new social aspirations are so restricted in their natural development by authority that they have to shatter the old shell by violence before they can function as new factors in human life.

In contrast to Proudhon's Mutualism and Bakunin's Collectivism, Kropotkin advocated common ownership not only of the means of production but of the products of labour as well, as it was his opinion that in the present state of technology no exact measure of the value of individual labour is possible, but that, on the other hand, by rational direction of our modern methods of labour it will be possible to assure comparative abundance to every human being. Communist Anarchism, which before Kropotkin had already been urged by Joseph Dejacque, Elisee Reclus, Carlo Cafiero and others, and which is recognised by the great majority of Anarchists to-day, found in him its most brilliant exponent. Mention must also be made here of Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), who, from primitive Christianity and on the basis of the ethical principles laid down in the gospels, arrived at the idea of a society without rulership.

Common to all Anarchists is the desire to free society of all political and social coercive institutions which stand in the way of the development of a free humanity. In this sense Mutualism, Collectivism and Communism are not to be regarded as closed economic systems, permitting no further development, but merely as economic assumptions as to the means of safeguarding a free community. There will even probably be in every form of a free society of the future different forms of economic co-operation existing side by side, since any social progress must be associated with free experimentation and practical testing out of new methods

for which in a free society of free communities there will be every opportunity.

The same holds true for the various methods of Anarchism. The work of its adherents is pre-eminently a work of education to prepare the people intellectually and psychologically for the tasks of their social liberation. Every attempt to limit the influence of economic monopolism and the power of the state is a step nearer to the realisation of this goal. Every development of voluntary organisation in the various fields of social activity towards the direction of personal freedom and social justice deepens the awareness of the people and strengthens their social responsibility, without which no changes in social life can be accomplished. Most Anarchists of our time are convinced that such a transformation of society will take years of constructive work and education and cannot be brought about without revolutionary convulsions which till now have always accomplished every progress in social life. The character of these convulsions, of course, depends entirely on the strength of resistance with which the ruling classes will be able to oppose the realisation of the new ideas. The wider the circles which are inspired with the idea of a reorganisation of society in the spirit of freedom and Socialism, the easier will be the birth pains of new social changes in the future. For even revolutions can only develop and mature the ideas which already exist and have made their way into the consciousness of men: but they cannot themselves create new ideas or generate new worlds out of nothing.

Before the appearance of totalitarian states in Russia, Italy, Germany and later in Portugal and Spain, and the outbreak of the second world war, Anarchist organisations and movements existed almost in every country. But like all

other socialist movements of that period, they became the victims of Fascist tyranny and the invasions of the German armies, and could only lead an underground existence. Since the end of the war a resurrection of Anarchist movements in all Western European countries is to be noticed. The Federations of the French and Italian Anarchists already held their first conventions, and so did the Spanish Anarchists of whom many thousands are still living in exile, mostly in France, Belgium and North Africa. Anarchist papers and magazines are published again in many European countries and in North and South America.

MARX AND ANARCHISM

RUDOLF ROCKER

SOME YEARS AGO, shortly after Frederick Engels died, Mr. Eduard Bernstein, one of the most prominent members of the Marxist community, astonished his colleagues with some noteworthy discoveries. Bernstein made public his misgivings about the accuracy of the materialist interpretation of history, and of the Marxist theory of surplus value and the concentration of capital. He went so far as to attack the dialectical method and concluded that talk of a critical socialism was impossible. A cautious man, Bernstein kept his discoveries to himself until after the death of the aged Engels; only then did he make them public, to the consequent horror of the Marxist priesthood. But not even this precaution could save him, for he was assailed from every direction. Kautsky wrote a book against his heresy, and at the Hanover congress poor Eduard was obliged to declare that he was a frail, mortal sinner and that he would submit to the decision of the scientific majority.

For all that, Bernstein had not come up with any new revelations. The reasoning he put up against the foundations of the marxist teaching had already been in existence when he was still a faithful apostle of the marxist church. The arguments in question had been looted from anarchist literature and the only thing worthy of note was that one of the best known social democrats was to employ them for the first time. No sensible person would deny that Bernstein's criticism failed to make an unforgettable impression in the marxist camp: Bernstein had struck at the most important foundations of the metaphysical economics of Karl Marx, and it is not surprising that the most

respectable representatives of orthodox marxism became agitated.

None of this would have been so serious, but for the fact that it was to come in the middle of an even more important crisis. For almost a century the marxists have not ceased to propound the view that Marx and Engels were the discoverers of so called scientific socialism; an artificial distinction was invented between so called utopian socialists and the scientific socialism of the marxists, a distinction that existed only in the imaginations of the latter. In the germanic countries socialist literature has been monopolised by marxist theory, which every social democrat regards as the pure and utterly original product of the scientific discoveries of Marx and Engels.

But this illusion, too, vanished: modern historical research has established beyond all question that scientific socialism only came from the old English and French socialists and that Marx and Engels were adept at picking the brains of others. After the revolutions of 1848 a terrible reaction set in in Europe: the Holy Alliance set about casting its nets in every country with the intention of suffocating socialist thought, which had produced such a very rich literature in France, Belgium, England, Germany, Spain and Italy. This literature was cast into oblivion almost entirely during this era of obscurantism. Many of the most important works were destroyed until they were reduced to a few examples that found a refuge in the tranquillity of certain large public libraries or the collections of some private individuals.

This literature was only rediscovered towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries and nowadays the fertile ideas to be found in the old writings of the schools which followed Fourier and SaintSimon, or the

works of Considerant, Demasi, Mey and many others, are a source of wonder. It was our old friend W. Tcherkesoff who was the first to come up with a systematic pattern for all these facts: he showed that Marx and Engels are not the inventors of the theories which have so long been deemed a part of their intellectual bequest; (1) he even went so far as to prove that some of the most famous marxist works, such as, for instance, the Communist Manifesto, are in fact only free translations from the French by Marx and Engels. And Tcherkesoff scored a victory when his allegations with regard to the Communist Manifesto were conceded by Avanti, the central organ of the Italian social democrats, (2) after the author had had an opportunity to draw comparisons between the Communist manifesto and The Manifesto of Democracy by Victor Considerant, the appearance of which preceded the publication of Marx and Engels' pamphlet by five years.

The Communist Manifesto is regarded as one of the earliest works of scientific socialism, and its contents were drawn from the writings of a "utopian", for marxism categorised Fourier with the utopian socialists. This is one of the most cruel ironies imaginable and certainly is hardly a testimonial to the scientific worth of marxism. Victor Considerant was one of the finest socialist writers with whom Marx was acquainted: he referred to him even in the days before he became a socialist. In 1842 the Allgemeine Zeitung attacked the Rheinische Zeitung of which Marx was the editorin chief, charging it with being favourable to communism. Marx then replied in an editorial in which he stated as follows: "Works like those by Leroux, Considerant and above all the penetrating book by Proudhon cannot be criticised in any superficial sense; they require long and careful study before one begins to criticise them." (3)

Marx's intellectual development was heavily influenced by French socialism; but of all the socialist writers of France, the one with the most powerful influence on his thought was P. J. Proudhon. It is even obvious that Proudhon's book *What is Property?* led Marx to embrace socialism. Its critical observations of the national economy and the various socialist tendencies opened up a whole new world to Marx and Marx's mind was most impressed, above all, by the theory of surplus value as set out by the inspired French socialist. We can find the origins of the doctrine of surplus value, that grand "scientific discovery" of which our marxists are so proud, in the writings of Proudhon. It was thanks to him that Marx became acquainted with that theory to which he added modifications through his later study of the English socialists Bray and Thompson.

Marx even recognised the huge scientific significance of Proudhon publicly, and in a special book, which is today completely out of print, he calls Proudhon's work *What is Property?* "The first scientific manifesto of the French proletariat". This work was not reprinted by the marxists, nor was it translated into other languages, even though the official representatives of marxism have made every effort to distribute the writings of their mentor in every language. This book has been forgotten and this is the reason why: its reprinting would reveal to the world the colossal nonsense and irrelevance of all Marx wrote later about that eminent theoretician of anarchism.

Not only was Marx influenced by the economic ideas of Proudhon, but he also felt the influence of the great French socialist's anarchist theories, and in one of his works from the period he attacks the state the same way Proudhon did.

II

All who have seriously studied Marx's evolution as a socialist will have to concede that Proudhon's work *What is Property?* was what converted him to socialism. To those who do not have an exact knowledge of the details of that evolution and those who have not had the opportunity to read the early socialist works of Marx and Engels, this claim will seem out of place and unlikely. Because in his later writings Marx speaks of Proudhon scathingly and with ridicule and these are the very writings which the social democracy has chosen to publish and republish time after time.

In this way the belief was gradually formed that Marx had been a theoretical opponent of Proudhon from the very outset and that there had never been any common ground between them. And, to tell the truth, it is impossible to believe otherwise whenever one looks at what the former wrote about Proudhon in his famous work *The Poverty of Philosophy* in the *Communist Manifesto*, or in the obituary published in the *Sozialdemokrat* in Berlin, shortly after Proudhon's death.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx attacks Proudhon in the basest way, shrinking from nothing to show that Proudhon's ideas are worthless and that he counts neither as socialist nor as a critic of political economy.

"Monsieur Proudhon, he states, has the misfortune of being peculiarly misunderstood in Europe. In France, he has the right to be a bad economist, because he is reputed to be a good German philosopher. In Germany, he has the right to be a bad philosopher because he is reputed to be one of the

ablest French economists. Being both German and economist at the same time, we desire to protest against this double error." (4)

And Marx went even further: without adducing any proof, he charged Proudhon of having plagiarised the ideas of the English economist Bray. He wrote:

"In Bray's book (5) we believe we have discovered the key to all the past, present and future works of Monsieur Proudhon."

It is interesting to find Marx, who so often used the ideas of others and whose Communist Manifesto is in point of fact only a copy of Victor Considerant's Manifesto of Democracy. charging others with plagiarism.

But let us press on. In the Communist Manifesto Marx depicts Proudhon as a conservative, bourgeois character (6). And in the obituary he wrote for the Sozialdemokrat (1865) we can find the following:

"In a strictly scientific history of political economy, this book (namely What is Property?) would scarcely deserve a mention. For sensationalist works like this play exactly the same role in the sciences as they do in the world of the novel."

And in this obituary Marx reiterates the claim that Proudhon is worthless as a socialist and economist, an opinion which he had already voiced in The Poverty of Philosophy.

It is not hard to understand that allegations like this, directed against Proudhon by Marx, could only spread the

belief, or rather the conviction, that absolutely no common ground had ever existed between him and that great French writer. In Germany, Proudhon is almost unknown. German editions of his works, issued around 1840, are out of print. The only one of his books republished in German is *What is Property ?* and even it had only a restricted circulation. This accounts for Marx being able to wipe out all traces of his early development as a socialist. We have already seen above how his attitude to Proudhon was quite different at the beginning, and the conclusions which follow will endorse our claims.

As editor in chief of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, one of the leading newspapers of German democracy, Marx came to make the acquaintance of France's most important socialist writers, even though he himself had not yet espoused the socialist cause. We have already mentioned a quote from him in which he refers to Victor Considerant, Pierre Leroux and Proudhon and there can be no doubt that Considerant and Proudhon were the mentors who attracted him to socialism. Without any doubt, *What is Property?* was a major influence over Marx's development as a socialist; thus, in the periodical mentioned, he calls the inspired Proudhon "the most consistent and wisest of socialist writers" (7). In 1843, the Prussian censor silenced the *Reinische Zeitung*; Marx left the country and it was during this period that he moved towards socialism. This shift is quite noticeable in his letters to the famous writer Arnold Ruge and even more so in his work *The Holy Family, or a Critique of Critical Criticism*, which he published jointly with Frederick Engels. The book appeared in 1845 with the object of arguing against the tendency headed by the German thinker Bruno Bauer (8). In addition to philosophical matters, the book also dealt with political

economy and socialism, and it is especially these parts which concern us here.

Of all the works published by Marx and Engels *The Holy Family* is the only one that has not been translated into other languages and which the German socialists have not reprinted. True, Franz Mehring, Marx and Engels' literary executor, did, on the prompting of the German socialist party, publish *The Holy Family* along with other writings from their early years as active socialists, but this was done sixty years after it was first issued, and, for another thing, their publication was intended for specialists, since they were too expensive for the working man. Apart from that, so little known in Germany is Proudhon, that only a very few have realised that there is a huge gulf between the first opinions which Marx expressed of him and that which he was to have later on.

And yet the book clearly demonstrates the development of Marx's socialism and the powerful influence which Proudhon wielded over that development. In *The Holy Family* Marx conceded that Proudhon had all the merits that Marxists were later to credit their mentor with.

Let us see what he says in this connection on page 36:

"All treatises on political economy take private property for granted. This base premise is for them an incontestable fact to which they devote no further investigation, indeed a fact which is spoken about only "ACCIDELLEMENT", as Say naively admits (9). But Proudhon makes a critical investigation the first resolute, ruthless, and at the same time scientific investigation of the basis of political economy PRIVATE PROPERTY. This is the great scientific advance he made, an advance which

revolutionises political economy and for the first time makes a real science of political economy possible. Proudhon's *What is Property?* is as important for modern political economy as Sieyès' work *What Is The Third Estate?* for modern politics."

It is interesting to compare these words with what Marx had to say later about the great anarchist theorist. In *The Holy Family* he says that *What is Property?* is the first scientific analysis of private property and that it had opened up a possibility of making a real science out of national economy; but in his well known obituary for the *Sozialdemokrat* the same Marx alleges that in a strictly scientific history of economy that work would scarcely rate a mention.

What lies behind this sort of contradiction? That is something the representatives of so called scientific socialism have yet to make clear. In real terms there is only one answer: Marx wanted to conceal the source he had dipped into. All who have made a study of the question and do not feel overwhelmed by partisan loyalties must concede that this explanation is not fanciful.

But let us hearken again to what Marx has to say about the historical significance of Proudhon. On page 52 of the same work we can read:

"Not only does Proudhon write in the interest of the proletarians he is himself a proletarian, an *ouvrier*. His work is a scientific manifesto of the French proletariat."

Here, as one can see, Marx states quite specifically that Proudhon is an exponent of proletarian socialism and that his work represents a scientific manifesto from the French

proletariat. On the other hand, in the Communist Manifesto he assures us that Proudhon is the incarnation of conservative, bourgeois socialism. Could there be a sharper contrast? Whom are we to believe the Marx of The Holy Family or the author of the Communist Manifesto ? And how come the discrepancy? That is a question we ask ourselves again, and naturally the reply is the same as before: Marx wanted to conceal from everyone just what he owed to Proudhon and any means to that end was admissible. There can be no other possible explanation; the means Marx later used in his contest with Bakunin are evidence that he was not very scrupulous in his choice.

"The contradiction between the purpose and goodwill of the administration, on the one hand, and its means and possibilities, on the other hand, cannot be abolished by the state without the latter abolishing itself, for it is based on this contradiction. The state is based on the contradiction between public and private life, on the contradiction between general interests and private interests. Hence the administration has to confine itself to a formal and negative activity, for where civil life and its labour begin, there the power of the administration ends. Indeed, confronted by the consequences which arise from the unsocial nature of this civil life, this private ownership, this trade, this industry, this mutual plundering of the various circles of citizens, confronted by all these consequences, impotence is the law of nature of the administration. For this fragmentation, this baseness, this slavery of civil society is the natural foundation on which the modern state rests, just as the civil society of slavery was the natural foundation on which the ancient society state rested. The existence of the state and the existence of slavery are inseparable. The ancient state and ancient slavery these straightforward classic opposites were not more intimately riveted to each other than are the

modern state and the modern commercial world, these hypocritical Christian opposites."

This essentially anarchist interpretation of the nature of the state, which seems so odd in the context of Marx's later teachings, is clear proof of the anarchistic roots of his early socialist evolution. The article in question reflects the concepts of Proudhon's critique of the state, a critique first set down in his famous book *What is Property ?* That immortal work had decisive influence on the evolution of the German communist, regardless of which fact he makes every effort and not by the noblest methods to deny the early days of its socialist activity. Of course, in this the marxists support their master and in this way the mistaken historical view of the early relations between Marx and Proudhon is gradually built up.

In Germany especially, since Proudhon is almost unknown there, the most complete misrepresentations in this regard are able to circulate. But the more one gets to know the important works of the old socialist writers, the more one realises just how much so called scientific socialism owes to the "utopians" who were, for so long, forgotten on account of the colossal "renown" of the marxist school and of other factors which relegated to oblivion the socialist literature from the earliest period. One of Marx's most important teachers and the one who laid the foundations for his subsequent development was none other than Proudhon, the anarchist so libelled and misunderstood by the legalistic socialists.

III

Marx's political writings from this period for instance, the article he published in *Vorwaerts* of Paris show how he had been influenced by Proudhon's thinking and even by his anarchist ideas.

Vorwaerts was a periodical which appeared in the French capital during the year 1844 under the direction of Heinrich Bernstein. Initially it was merely liberal in outlook. But later on, after the disappearance of the *Anales GermanoFrancaises*, Bernstein contacted the old contributors to the latter who won him over to the socialist cause. From then on *Vorwaerts* became the official mouthpiece of socialism and the numerous contributors to A. Ruge's late publication among them Bakunin, Marx, Engels, Heinrich Heine, Georg Herwegh, etc. sent in their contributions to it.

In issue number 63 (7 August 1844) Marx published a polemical work "Critical Notes on the Article 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform'." In it, he made a study of the nature of the state and demonstrated its utter inability to reduce social misery and wipe out poverty. The ideas which the writer sets out in the course of his article are wholly anarchist ones in perfect accord with the thinking that Proudhon, Bakunin and other theorists of anarchism have set out in this connection. The readers can judge for themselves from the following extract from Marx's study:

"The state will never see in 'the state and the system of society' the source of social maladies. Where political parties exist, each party sees the root of every evil in the fact that instead of itself an opposing party stands at the helm of the state. Even radical and revolutionary politicians seek the root of the evil not in the essential nature of the

state but in a definite state form, which they wish to replace with a different state form.

"From the political point of view, the state and the system of society are not two different things. The state is the system of society. Insofar as the state admits the existence of social defects, it sees their cause either in the laws of nature, which no human power can command, or in private life which does not depend on the state, or in the inexpedient activity of the administration, which does not depend on it. Thus England sees the cause of poverty in the law of nature by which the population must always be in excess of the means of subsistence. On the other hand, England explains pauperism as due to the bad will of the poor, just as the King of Prussia explains it by the unchristian feelings of the rich, and just as the convention explained it by the suspect counterrevolutionary mentality of the property owners. Therefore England punishes the poor, the King of Prussia admonishes the rich, and the convention cuts off the heads of the property owners.

"Finally, every state seeks the cause in accidental or deliberate shortcomings of the administration, and therefore it seeks the remedy of its ills in measures of the administration. Why? Precisely because administration is the organising activity of the state.

On 20 July 1870, Karl Marx wrote to Frederick Engels: "The French need a thrashing. If the Prussians are victorious the centralisation of state power will be helpful for the centralisation of the German working class; furthermore, German predominance will shift the centre of gravity of West European labour movements from France to Germany. And one has but to compare the movement from 1866 to today to see that the German working class is

in theory and organisation superior to the French. Its domination over the French on the world stage would mean likewise the dominance of our theory over that of Proudhon, etc."

Marx was right: Germany's victory over France meant a new course for the history of the European labour movement. The revolutionary and liberal socialism of the Latin countries was cast aside leaving the stage to the statist, antianarchist theories of marxism. The development of that lively, creative socialism was disrupted by a new iron dogmatism which claimed full knowledge of social reality, when it was scarcely more than a hotchpotch of theological phraseology and fatalistic sophisms and turned out to be the tomb of all genuinely socialist thought.

Along with the ideas, the methods of the socialist movement changed too. Instead of revolutionary groups for propaganda and for the organisation of economic struggles, in which the internationalists saw the embryo of the future society and organs suited to the socialisation of the means of production and exchange, came the era of the socialist parties and parliamentary representation of the proletariat. Little by little the old socialist education which was leading the workers to the conquest of the land and the workshops was forgotten, replaced with a new party discipline which looked on the conquest of political power as its highest ideal.

Marx's great opponent, Michael Bakunin, clearly saw the shift in the position and with a heavy heart predicted that a new chapter in the history of Europe was beginning with the German victory and the fall of the Commune. Physically exhausted and staring death in the face he

penned these important lines to Ogarev on 11 November 1874:

"Bismarskism, which is militarism, police rule and a finance monopoly fused into one system under the name of the New State, is conquering everywhere. But in maybe ten or fifteen years the unstable evolution of the human species will once again shed light on the paths of victory. " On this occasion, Bakunin was mistaken, failing to calculate that it would take a halfcentury until Bismarckism was toppled amid a terrible world cataclysm.

Just as German victory in 1871 and the fall of the Paris Commune were the signals for the disappearance of the old International, so the Great War of 1914 was the exposure of the bankruptcy of political socialism.

And then something odd and sometimes truly grotesque happened, which can only be explained in terms of complete ignorance of the old socialist movement.

Bolsheviks independents, communists and so on, endlessly charged the heirs of the old social democrats with a shameful adulteration of the principles of marxism. They accused them of having bogged the socialist movement down in the quagmire of bourgeois parliamentarism, having misinterpreted the attitudes of Marx and Engels to the State, etc., etc. Nikolai Lenin, the spiritual leader of the Bolsheviks, tried to give his charges a solid basis in his famous book *The State and Revolution* which is, according to his disciples, a genuine and pure interpretation of marxism. By means of a perfectly ordered selection of quotations Lenin claims to show that "the founders of scientific socialism" were at all times declared enemies of

democracy and the parliamentary morass and that the target of all their efforts was the disappearance of the state.

One must remember that Lenin discovered this only recently when his party, against all expectations, found itself in the minority after the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Up to then the Bolsheviks, just like the other parties, had participated in elections and had been careful not to conflict with the principles of democracy. They took part in the last elections for the Constituent Assembly of 1917, with a grandiose programme, hoping to win an overwhelming majority. But when they found that, in spite of all that, they were left in a minority they declared war on democracy and dissolved the Constituent Assembly, with Lenin issuing *The State and Revolution* as a personal self-justification.

VI

To be sure, Lenin's task was no easy one: on the one hand, he was forced to make daring concessions to the antistatist tendencies of the anarchists, while on the other hand he had to show that his attitude was by no means anarchist, but purely marxist. As an inevitable consequence of this, his work is full of mistakes against all the logic of sound human thought. One example will show this to be so in his desire to emphasise, as far as possible, a supposed antistate tendency in Marx, Lenin quotes the famous passage from *The Civil War in France* where Marx gives his approval to the Commune for having begun to uproot the parasitic state. But Lenin did not bother to remember that Marx in so saying it was in open conflict with all he had said earlier was being forced to make concessions to Bakunin's

supporters against whom he was then engaged in a very bitter struggle.

Even Franz Mehring who cannot be suspected of sympathy with the majority socialists was forced to grant that this was a concession in his last book, *Karl Marx*, where he says: "However truthful all the details in this work may be, it is beyond question that the thinking it contains contradicts all the opinions Marx and Engels had been proclaiming since the *Communist Manifesto* a quarter century earlier."

Bakunin was right when he said at the time: "The picture of a Commune in armed insurrection was so imposing that even the marxists, whose ideas the Paris revolution had utterly upset, had to bow before the actions of the Commune. They went further than that; in defiance of all logic and their known convictions they had to associate themselves with the Commune and identify with its principles and aspirations. It was a comic carnival game, but a necessary one. For such was the enthusiasm awakened by the Revolution that they would have been rejected and repudiated everywhere had they tried to retreat into the ivory tower of their dogma."

VII

Lenin forgot something else, something that is certainly of primary importance in the matter. It is this: that it was precisely Marx and Engels who tried to force the organisations of the old International to go in for parliamentary activity, thereby making themselves directly responsible for the wholesale bogging down of the socialist labour movement in bourgeois parliamentarism. The International was the first attempt to bring the organised

workers of every country together into one big union, the ultimate goal of which would be the economic liberation of the workers. With the various sections differing in their thinking and tactics, it was imperative to lay down the conditions for their working together and recognise the full autonomy and independent authority of each of the various sections. While this was done the International grew powerfully and flourished in every country. But this all changed completely the moment Marx and Engels began to push the different national federations towards parliamentary activity; that happened for the first time at the lamentable London conference of 1871, where they won approval for a resolution that closed in the following terms:

"Considering, that against this collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes; that this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to assure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end the abolition of classes; that the combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists the Conference recalls to the members of the International: that in the militant state of the working class, its economical movement and its political action are indissolubly united."

That a single section or federation in the International should adopt such a resolution was quite possible, for it would only be incumbent on its members to act upon it; but that the Executive Council should impose it on member groups of the International, especially an issue that was not

submitted to a General Congress, was an arbitrary act in open contravention of the spirit of the International and necessarily had to bring energetic protests from all the individualist and revolutionary elements.

The shameful congress at The Hague in 1872 crowned the labours undertaken by Marx and Engels by turning the International into an electoral machine, including a clause to the effect of obliging the various sections to fight for the seizure of political power. So Marx and Engels were guilty of splitting the International with all its noxious consequences for the labour movement and it was they who brought about the stagnation and degeneration of Socialism through political action.

VIII

When revolution broke out in Spain in 1873, the members of the International almost all of them anarchists ignored the petitions of the bourgeois parties and followed their own course towards the expropriation of the land, the means of production in a spirit of social revolution. General strikes and rebellions broke out in Alcoy, San Lucar de Barrameda, Seville, Cartagena and elsewhere, which had to be stifled with bloodshed. The port of Cartagena held out longer, remaining in the hands of revolutionaries until it finally fell under the fire of Prussian and English warships. At the time, Engels launched a harsh attack on the Spanish Bakuninists in the Volksstaat, taking them to task for their unwillingness to join forces with the Republicans. Had he lived long enough, how Engels would have criticised his communist disciples from Russia and Germany!

After the celebrated 1891 Congress when the leaders of the so-called "Youth" were expelled from the German social democratic party, for levelling the same charges as Lenin was to do, against "opportunists" and "kautskyists", they founded a separate party with its own paper, *Der Sozialist*, in Berlin. Initially, the movement was extremely dogmatic and its thinking was almost identical to the thinking of the communist party of today. If, for instance, one reads Teistler's book *Parliamentarism and the Working Class*, one comes across the same ideas as in Lenin's *The State and Revolution*. Like the Russian bolsheviks and the members of the German communist party, the independent socialists of that time repudiated the principles of democracy, and refused to take any part in bourgeois parliaments on the basis of the reformist principles of marxism.

So what had Engels to say of these "Youth" who, like the communists, delighted in accusing the leaders of the Social Democrat Party of betraying marxism? In a letter to Sorge in October 1891, the aged Engels passed the following kindly comments: "The nauseating Berliners have become the accused instead of staying the accusers and having behaved like miserable cowards were forced to work outside the party if they want to do anything. Without doubt there are police spies and cryptoanarchists among their number who want to work among our people. Along with them, there are a number of dullards, deluded students and an assortment of insolent mountebanks. All in all, some two hundred people." It would be really interesting to know what fond descriptions Engels would have honoured our "communists" of today with, they who claim to be "the guardians of marxist principles".

IX It is impossible to characterise the methods of the old social democracy. On that issue Lenin has not one word to

say and his German friends have even less. The majority socialists ought to remember this telling detail to show that they are the real representatives of marxism; anyone with a knowledge of history will agree with them. It was marxism that imposed parliamentary action on the working class and marked out the path followed by the German social democratic Party. Only when this is understood will one realise that **THE PATH OF SOCIAL LIBERATION BRINGS US TO THE HAPPY LAND OF ANARCHISM DESPITE THE OPPOSITION OF MARXISM.**

Notes

- (1) W. Tcherkesoff: Pages d'Histoire socialiste; les precurseurs de l'Internationale.
- (2) The article, entitled "Il Manifesto della Democrazia", was first published in *Avanti!* (Year 6; number 1901, of 1902).
- (3) *Rheinische Zeitung*, number 289, 16 October 1842.
- (4) Marx: *The Poverty of Philosophy*, foreword.
- (5) Bray: *Labour's Wronszs and Labour's Remedy*, Leeds, 1839.
- (6) Marx and Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*, page 21.
- (7) *Rheinische Zeitung*, 7 January 1843.
- (8) B. Bauer was one of the most assiduous members of the Berlin circle "The Free", where outstanding figures from the world of German freethought (of the first half of the nineteenth century) could be seen; figures like Feuerbach, author of *The Essence of Christianity*, a profoundly atheist work, or Max Stirner, author of *The Ego and His Own*. The authoritarian thought of Karl Marx was fated to clash with the free thinking of B. Bauer and his friends, among whom we must not forget E. Bauer. whose book *Der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat [A Critique of Church and State]* was completely confiscated by the authorities and burned (first edition, 1843). The second printing (Berne, 1844) had better luck. But not the author, who was sentenced and imprisoned for his antistate, antichurch ideas. (Editor's Note.)
- (9) J. B. Say, an English economist of the day whose complete works Max Stirner translated into German. Karl Marx's phobia for French anarchist thought (as we know, his *Poverty of Philosophy* is a continuous criticism of Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty*) or for German freethought (his massive

book Documents of Socialism is a vain, laughable attempt to make little of and dismiss The Ego and His Own), also rose up against this sociologist, much discussed at the time by anyone critical of the state and trying to escape its tyranny. (Editor's Note.)

THE SOVIET SYSTEM OR THE Dictatorship of the Proletariat

RUDOLF ROCKER

Perhaps the reader thinks he has found a flaw in the above title and that the soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat are one and the same thing? No. They are two radically different ideas which, far from being mutually complementary, are mutually opposed. Only an unhealthy party logic could accept a fusion when what really exists is an irreconcilable opposition.

The idea of "soviets" is a well defined expression of what we take to be social revolution, being an element belonging entirely to the constructive side of socialism. The origin of the notion of dictatorship is wholly bourgeois and as such, has nothing to do with socialism. It is possible to harness the two terms together artificially, if it is so desired, but all one would get would be a very poor caricature of the original idea of soviets, amounting, as such, to a subversion of the basic notion of socialism.

The idea of soviets is not a new one, nor is it one thrown up, as is frequently believed, by the Russian Revolution. It arose in the most advanced wing of the European labour movement at a time when the working class emerged from the chrysalis of bourgeois radicalism to become independent. That was in the days when the International Workingmen's Association achieved its grandiose plan to gather together workers from various countries into a single huge union, so as to open up to them a direct route towards their real emancipation.

Although the International has been thought of as a broad based organisation composed of professional bodies, its statutes were drafted in such a way as to allow all the socialist tendencies of the day to join with the sole proviso that they agree with the ultimate objective of the organisation: the complete emancipation of the workers.

Naturally enough, at the time of its foundation, the ideas of this great Association were far from being as clearly defined as they were at the Geneva Congress in 1866 or the Lausanne in 1867. The more experienced the International became the more it matured and spread throughout the world as a fighting organisation, the clearer and more objective the thinking of its adepts appeared. The practical activity arising out of the day to day battle between capital and labour led, of itself, to a deeper understanding of basic principles.

After the Brussels congress of 1868 the International had come out in favour of collective ownership of the soil, the subsoil and the instruments of labour, and the groundwork had been laid down for the further development of the International.

At the Basel congress of 1869 the internal evolution of the great workers' association reached its zenith. Apart from the issue of the soil and subsoil, freshly considered by the congress, the chief issue was how workers' unions were to be set up, run and used. A report on this issue, presented by the Belgian Hins and his friends, excited a lively interest at the congress. On this occasion, for the first time, the tasks which the workers' unions were to tackle as well as the importance of those unions was set out in an utterly unmistakable way, reminiscent, to a degree, of the thinking of Robert Owen. Thus it was

announced at Basel in clear and unmistakable terms that the trades union, the local federation was more than a merely trades, ordinary and temporary body whose only reason to exist was capitalist society, and which was fated to disappear when it did. According to what Hins set out, the state socialist view that the workers' unions ought to confine their activities to improving the living conditions of the workers in terms of wages, no more and no less, was radically amended.

The report by Hins and his friends shows how the workers' organisations for the economic struggle can be regarded as cells of the socialist society of the future, and that the International's task is to educate these local organisations to equip them to carry out their historic mission. Indeed, the congress did adopt the Belgian view; but we know today that many delegates, especially those from the German labour organisations, never had any wish to put the resolution into practice within the bound of their influence.

After the Basel congress, and especially after the war of 1870, which thrust the European social movement along quite a different route, it became obvious that there were two tendencies inside the International, tendencies so irreconcilably opposed to one another that this opposition went as far as a split. Later an attempt was made to reduce their disagreements to the level of a personal squabble between Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx, the latter with his General Council in London. There could not be a more mistaken, groundless account than this one, which is based on utter ignorance of the facts. Of course, personal considerations did have a role to play in these clashes, as they usually do in such situations. In any event, it was Marx and Engels who

resorted to every conceivable impropriety in their attacks on Bakunin. As a matter of fact, Karl Marx's biographer, the author Franz Mehring, was unable to keep silent on this fact, since, basically, it was not a question of vain silly squabbling, but of a clash between two ideological outlooks which did and do have a certain natural importance.

In the Latin countries, where the International found its principal support, the workers were active through their organisations of economic struggle. To their eyes, the state was the political agent and defender of the possessing classes, and, this being the case, the seizure of political power was not to be pursued in any guise for it was nothing other than a prelude to a new tyranny and a survival of exploitation. For that reason, they avoided imitating the bourgeoisie by setting up yet another political party that would spawn a new ruling class captained by professional politicians. Their objective was to get control of machines, industry, the soil and the subsoil; and they foresaw correctly that this approach divided them radically from the Jacobin politicians of the bourgeoisie who sacrificed everything for the sake of political power. The Latin internationalists realised that monopoly of ownership had to go, as well as monopoly of power; that the whole life of the society to come had to be founded upon wholly new bases. Taking as their starting point the fact that "man's domination over his fellow man" was a thing of the past, these comrades tried to get to grips with the idea of "the administration of things". They replaced the politics of parties inside the state with the economic politics of labour. Furthermore, they realised that the reorganisation of society in a socialist sense had to be undertaken inside industry itself,

this being the root idea behind the notion of the councils (or soviets).

In an extremely clear and precise way, the congresses of the Spanish Regional Federation went more deeply into these ideas of the anti-authoritarian wing of the International, and developed them. That is where the terms "juntas" and "workers' councils" (meaning the same thing as soviets) came from.

The libertarian socialists of the First International realised full well that socialism cannot be decreed by a government, but has to grow, organically, from the bottom up. They understood, also, that it was for the workers alone to undertake the organisation of labour and production and, similarly, distribution for equal consumption. This was the overriding idea which they have opposed to the state socialism of parliamentary politicians.

As the years have passed, and even today, the labour movements of these Latin countries have undergone savage persecutions. This bloody policy can be traced back to the repression of the Paris Commune in 1871. Later, reactionary excesses of that sort spread to Spain and Italy. As a result, the idea of "councils" has receded into the background, since all open propaganda was suppressed and in the clandestine movements the workers' organisation had to set up militants were constrained to deploy all their energies, all their resources, to fighting the reaction and defending its victims.

REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM AND THE IDEA OF COUNCILS

The development of revolutionary syndicalism has unearthed this idea and breathed new life into it. During the most active period of French revolutionary syndicalism between 1900 and 1907 - the councils idea was pursued in its most comprehensive, well defined form.

A glance at the writings of Pouget, Griffuelhes, Monatte, Yvetot and some others, especially Pelloutier, is enough to persuade one that neither in Russia nor anywhere else has an iota been added to what the propagandists of revolutionary syndicalism formulated fifteen or twenty years before the Russian events of 1917.

Throughout those years the socialist workers' parties rejected the idea of councils out of hand. Most of those who today are advocates (2) of the idea of soviets (especially in Germany) scorned it yesterday as some "new utopia". Lenin, no less, stated to the president of the St. Petersburg delegates' council in 1905 that the councils system was an outmoded institution with which the party had nothing in common.

And so this notion of councils, the credit for which is due to the revolutionary syndicalists, marks the most important point and constitutes the keystone of the international labour movement, thanks to which we shall be permitted to add that the councils system is the only institution likely to lead to socialism becoming a reality, since any other path will be a mistaken one. "Utopia" has won over "scientificism".

Equally, it is beyond question that the council idea arises naturally out of a libertarian socialist vision which has so taken root in a large part of the international labour movement. as opposed to the state idea with its wake of bourgeois ideological traditions.

THE "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT". AN INHERITANCE FROM THE BOURGEOISIE

That is all that can be said of dictatorship, since it is not a product of socialist thinking. Dictatorship is no child of the labour movement, but a regrettable inheritance from the bourgeoisie. passed into the proletarian camp to guarantee its "happiness". Dictatorship is closely linked with the lust for political power, which is likewise bourgeois in its origin.

Dictatorship is one of the forms which the state, ever greedy for Power, is apt to assume. It is the state on a war footing. Like other advocates of state idea, the supporters of dictatorship would - provisionally (?) - impose their will upon the people. This concept alone is an impediment to social revolution, the very life's blood of which is precisely the constructive participation and direct initiative of the masses.

Dictatorship is the denial, the destruction of the organic being, of the natural form of organisation, which is from the bottom upwards. Some claim that the people are not yet sufficiently mature to take charge of their own destiny. So there has to be a ruler over the masses, tutelage by an "expert" minority. The supporters of dictatorship could have the best intentions in the world,

but the logic of Power will oblige them always to take the path of the most extreme despotism.

Our state socialists adopted the notion of dictatorship from that pre-bourgeois party, the Jacobins. That party damned striking as a crime and banned workers' organisations under pain of death. The most active spokesmen for this overbearing conduct were Saint-Just and Couthon, while Robespierre operated under the same influence.

The false, onesided way that bourgeois historians usually depict the Great Revolution has heavily influenced most socialists, and contributed mightily to giving the Jacobin dictatorship an ill deserved prestige, while the martyrdom of its chief leaders seems to have increased. Generally, folk are easy prey for the cult of martyrs, which disables them from studied criticism of ideas and deeds.

The creative labour of the French Revolution is well known - it abolished feudalism and the monarchy. Historians have glorified this as the work of the Jacobins and revolutionaries of the Convention, but nonetheless, with the passage of time that picture has turned out to be an absolute falsification of the whole history of the Revolution.

Today we know that this mistaken interpretation is based on the wilful ignorance of historical fact, especially the truth that the bona fide creative work of the Revolution was carried out by the peasants and the proletariat from the towns in defiance of the National Assembly and the Convention. The Jacobins and the Convention were always rather vigorously opposed to radical changes, up

until they were a fait accompli, that is, until popular actions imposed such changes upon them. Consequently, the convention's proclamation that the feudal system was abolished was nothing more than an official recognition of inroads made directly by the revolutionary peasants into the old oppressive system, in spite of the fierce opposition they had had to face from the political parties of the day.

As late as 1792, the National Assembly had not touched the feudal system. It was only the following year that the said revolutionary Assembly condescended to prove "the mob of the countryside" right by sanctioning the abolition of feudal rights, something the people had already accomplished by popular decision. The same thing, or almost, goes for the official abolition of the monarchy.

JACOBIN TRADITIONS AND SOCIALISM

The first founders of a popular socialist movement in France came from the Jacobin camp, so it is natural that the political inheritance of 1792 should weigh heavily upon them.

When Babeuf and Darthey set up the conspiracy of "The Equals", they aimed to turn France, by means of dictatorship, into an agrarian communist state and, as communists, they appreciated that they would have to set about solving the economic question if they were ever to attain the ideal of the Great Revolution. But, as Jacobins, "The Equals" believed they could attain their objective by reinforcing the state, conferring vast powers on it. With the Jacobins, belief in the omnipotence of the state

reached its acme and so thoroughly permeated them that they were incapable of conceiving any alternative scheme to follow.

Half-dead, Babeuf and Darthey were dragged to the guillotine, but their ideas lived on among the people, taking refuge in secret societies, like the "Egalitarians" during the reign of Louis Philippe. Men like Barbes and Blanqui worked along the same lines, fighting for a dictatorship of the proletariat designed to make the aims of the communists a reality.

It was from these men that Marx and Engels inherited the notion of a dictatorship of the proletariat, which they set out in their Communist Manifesto. By that means they were to arrive at a central power with uncontested capabilities, the task of which it would be to crush the potential of the bourgeoisie through radical coercive laws and, when the time was ripe, reorganise society in the spirit of state socialism.

Marx and Engels abandoned bourgeois democracy for the socialist camp, their thinking profoundly shaped by Jacobin influence. What is more, the socialist movement was, at that time, insufficiently developed to come up with an authentic path of its own. The socialism of both of the two leaders was more or less subject to bourgeois traditions going back to the French Revolution.

EVERYTHING FOR THE COUNCILS

Thanks to the growth of the labour movement in the days of the international, socialism found itself in a position to shrug off the last remnants of bourgeois traditions and to

become entirely independent. The concept of councils abandoned the notion of the state and of power politics under any guise whatever. Similarly, it was diametrically opposed to any suggestion of dictatorship. In fact, it not only attempted to strip away the instruments of power from the forces that possessed them and from the state, but it also tended to increase its own sway as far as possible.

The forerunners of the council system appreciated well that along with the exploitation of man by man would have to vanish also the domination of man by man. They realised that the state, being the organised power of the ruling classes, cannot be transformed into an instrument for the emancipation of labour. Likewise, it was their view that the primary task of the social revolution has to be the demolition of the old power structure, to remove the possibility of any new form of exploitation and retreat.

Let no one object that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" cannot be compared to run of the mill dictatorship because it is the dictatorship of a class. Dictatorship of a class cannot exist as such, for it ends up, in the last analysis, as being the dictatorship of a given party which arrogates to itself the right to speak for that class. Thus, the liberal bourgeoisie, in their fight against despotism, used to speak in the name of the "people". In parties which have never enjoyed the use of power, the lust for power or the desire to wield it assume an extremely dangerous form.

Those who have recently won power are even more obnoxious than those who possessed it. The example of Germany is illuminating in this respect: the Germans are

currently (3) living under the powerful dictatorship of the professional politicians of the social democracy and the centralistic functionaries of the trade unions. They find no measure too base or brutal to apply and subdue the members of their "own" class who dare to take issue with them. When these gentlemen, reneging on socialism, "went under" they tossed away even those gains made by bourgeois revolutions guaranteeing a certain degree of freedom and personal inviolability. What's more they have also fathered the most horrendous police system, going so far as to arrest anyone who is ungrateful to the authorities and rendering him harmless for a time at least. The celebrated "lettres de cachet" of the French despots and the administrative deportation of the Russian tsarist system have been exhumed and applied by these unique champions of democracy.

Needless to say, these new despots prate on insistently about support for a constitution that guarantees every possible right to good Germans; but that constitution exists only on paper. Even the French republican constitution of 1793 suffered from the same flaw - it was never put into effect. Robespierre and his henchmen tried to explain themselves by stating that the fatherland was in danger. Consequently, the "Incorruptible" and his men maintained a dictatorship which led to Thermidor, the disgraceful rule of the Directory, and, ultimately, the dictatorship of the sword under Napoleon. At the present time we in Germany have reached our Directory: the only thing missing is the man who will play the role of Napoleon. (4)

We already know that a revolution cannot be made with rosewater. And we know, too, that the owning classes

will never yield up their privileges spontaneously. On the day of victorious revolution the workers will have to impose their will on the present owners of the soil, of the subsoil and of the means of production, which cannot be done - let us be clear on this - without the workers taking the capital of society into their own hands, and, above all, without their having demolished the authoritarian structure which is, and will continue to be, the fortress keeping the masses of the people under dominion. Such an action is, without doubt, an act of liberation; a proclamation of social justice; the very essence of social revolution, which has nothing in common with the utterly bourgeois principle of dictatorship.

The fact that a large number of socialist parties have rallied to the idea of councils, which is the proper mark of libertarian socialist and revolutionary syndicalists, is a confession, recognition that the tack they have taken up until now has been the product of a falsification, a distortion, and that with the councils the labour movement must create for itself a single organ capable of carrying into effect the unmitigated socialism that the conscious proletariat longs for. On the other hand, it ought not to be forgotten that this abrupt conversion runs the risk of introducing many alien features into the councils concept, features, that is, with no relation to the original tasks of socialism, and which have to be eliminated because they pose a threat to the further development of the councils. These alien elements are able only to conceive things from the dictatorial viewpoint. It must be our task to face up to this risk and warn our class comrades against experiments which cannot bring the dawn of social emancipation any nearer (which indeed, to the contrary, positively postpone it.

Consequently, our advice is as follows: Everything for the councils or soviets! No power above them! A slogan which at the same time will be that of the social revolutionary.

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