

God and the State by Michael Bakunin [1814-1876]

Chapter I, II, III, IV

I

Who are right, the idealists or the materialists? The question once stated in this way hesitation becomes impossible. Undoubtedly the idealists are wrong and the materialists right. Yes, facts are before ideas; yes, the ideal, as Proudhon said, is but a flower, whose root lies in the material conditions of existence. Yes, the whole history of humanity, intellectual and moral, political and social, is but a reflection of its economic history.

All branches of modern science, of true and disinterested science, concur in proclaiming this grand truth, fundamental and decisive: The social world, properly speaking, the human world-in short, humanity-is nothing other than the last and supreme development-at least on our planet and as far as we know-the highest manifestation of animality. But as every development necessarily implies a negation, that of its base or point of departure, humanity is at the same time and essentially the deliberate and gradual negation of the animal element in man; and it is precisely this negation, as rational as it is natural, and rational only because natural-at once historical and logical, as inevitable as the development and realization of all the natural laws in the world-that constitutes and creates the ideal, the world of intellectual and moral convictions, ideas.

Yes, our first ancestors, our Adams and our Eves, were, if not gorillas, very near relatives of gorillas, omnivorous, intelligent and ferocious beasts, endowed in a higher degree than the animals of another species with two precious faculties-*the power to think and the desire to rebel*.

These faculties, combining their progressive action in history, represent the essential factor, the negative power in the positive development of human animality, and create consequently all that constitutes humanity in man.

The Bible, which is a very interesting and here and there very profound book when considered as one of the oldest surviving manifestations of human wisdom and fancy, expresses this truth very naively in its myth of original sin. Jehovah, who of all the good gods adored by men was certainly the most jealous, the most vain, the most ferocious, the most unjust, the most bloodthirsty, the most despotic, and the most hostile to human dignity and liberty-Jehovah had just created Adam and Eve, to

satisfy we know not what caprice; no doubt to while away his time, which must weigh heavy on his hands in his eternal egoistic solitude, or that he might have some new slaves. He generously placed at their disposal the whole earth, with all its fruits and animals, and set but a single limit to this complete enjoyment. He expressly forbade them from touching the fruit of the tree of knowledge. He wished, therefore, that man, destitute of all understanding of himself, should remain an eternal beast, ever on all-fours before the eternal God, his creator and his master. But here steps in Satan, the eternal rebel, the first freethinker and the emancipator of worlds. He makes man ashamed of his bestial ignorance and obedience; he emancipates him, stamps upon his brow the seal of liberty and humanity, in urging him to disobey and eat of the fruit of knowledge.

We know what followed. The good God, whose foresight, which is one of the divine faculties, should have warned him of what would happen, flew into a terrible and ridiculous rage; he cursed Satan, man, and the world created by himself, striking himself so to speak in his own creation, as children do when they get angry; and, not content with smiting our ancestors themselves, he cursed them in all the generations to come, innocent of the crime committed by their forefathers. Our Catholic and Protestant theologians look upon that as very profound and very just, precisely because it is monstrously iniquitous and absurd. Then, remembering that he was not only a God of vengeance and wrath, but also a God of love, after having tormented the existence of a few milliards of poor human beings and condemned them to an eternal hell, he took pity on the rest, and, to save them and reconcile his eternal and divine love with his eternal and divine anger, always greedy for victims and blood, he sent into the world, as an expiatory victim, his only son, that he might be killed by men. That is called the mystery of the Redemption, the basis of all the Christian religions. Still, if the divine Savior had saved the human world! But no; in the paradise promised by Christ, as we know, such being the formal announcement, the elect will number very few. The rest, the immense majority of the generations present and to come, will burn eternally in hell. In the meantime, to console us, God, ever just, ever good, hands over the earth to the government of the Napoleon Thirds, of the William Firsts, of the Ferdinands of Austria, and of the Alexanders of all the Russias.

Such are the absurd tales that are told and the monstrous doctrines that are taught, in the full light of the nineteenth century, in all the public schools of Europe, at the express command of the government. They call this civilizing the people! Is it not plain that all these governments are systematic poisoners, interested stupefies of the masses?

I have wandered from my subject, because anger gets hold of me whenever I think of the base and criminal means which they employ to keep the nations in perpetual slavery, undoubtedly that they may be the better able to fleece them. Of what consequence are the crimes of all the Tropmanns in the world compared with this crime of treason against humanity committed daily, in broad day, over the whole surface of the civilized world, by those who dare to call themselves the guardians and the fathers of the people? I return to the myth of original sin.

God admitted that Satan was right; he recognized that the devil did not deceive Adam and Eve in promising them knowledge and liberty as a reward for the act of disobedience which he had induced them to commit; for, immediately they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, God himself said (see Bible): 'Behold, the man is become as one of the gods, to know good and evil; prevent him, therefore, from eating of the fruit of eternal life, lest he become immortal like Ourselves.'

Let us disregard now the fabulous portion of this myth and consider its true meaning, which is very clear. Man has emancipated himself; he has separated himself from animality and constituted himself a man; he has begun his distinctively human history and development by an act of disobedience and science-that is, by *rebellion* and by *thought*.

Three elements or, if you like, three fundamental principles constitute the essential conditions of all human development, collective or individual, in history: (1) *human animality*; (2) *thought*; and (3) *rebellion*. To the first properly corresponds *social and private economy*; to the second, *science*; to the third, *liberty*.

Idealists of all schools, aristocrats and *bourgeois*, theologians and metaphysicians, politicians and moralists, religionists, philosophers, or poets, not forgetting the liberal economists-unbounded worshippers of the ideal, as we know-are much offended when told that man, with his magnificent intelligence, his sublime ideas, and his boundless aspirations, is, like all else existing in the world, nothing but matter, only a product of *vile matter*.

We may answer that the matter of which materialists speak, matter spontaneously and eternally mobile, active, productive, matter chemically or organically determined and manifested by the properties or forces, mechanical, physical, animal, and intelligent, which necessarily belong to it-that this matter has nothing in common with the *vile matter* of the idealists. The latter, a product of their false abstraction, is indeed a stupid, inanimate, immobile thing, incapable of giving birth to the smallest product, a *caput mortuum*, an *ugly* fancy in contrast to the *beautiful* fancy which they call *God*; as the opposite of this supreme being, matter, their matter, stripped by that constitutes its real nature, necessarily represents supreme nothingness. They have taken away intelligence, life, all its determining qualities, active relations or forces, motion itself, without which matter would not even have weight, leaving it nothing but impenetrability and absolute immobility in space; they have attributed all these natural forces, properties, and manifestations to the imaginary being created by their abstract fancy; then, interchanging *rôles*, they have called this product of their imagination, this phantom, this God who is nothing, "supreme Being" and, as a necessary consequence, have declared that the real being, matter, the world, is nothing. After which they gravely tell us that this matter is incapable of producing anything, not even of setting itself in motion, and consequently must have been created by their God.

At the end of this book I exposed the fallacies and truly revolting absurdities to which one is inevitably led by this imagination of a God, let him be considered as a personal being, the creator and organizer of worlds; or even as impersonal, a kind of divine

soul spread over the whole universe and constituting thus its eternal principle; or let him be an idea, infinite and divine, always present and active in the world, and always manifested by the totality of material and definite beings. Here I shall deal with one point only.

The gradual development of the material world, as well as of organic animal life and of the historically progressive intelligence of man, individually or socially, is perfectly conceivable. It is a wholly natural movement from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher, from the inferior to the superior; a movement in conformity with all our daily experiences, and consequently in conformity also with our natural logic, with the distinctive laws of our mind, which being formed and developed only by the aid of these same experiences; is, so to speak, but the mental, cerebral reproduction or reflected summary thereof.

The system of the idealists is quite the contrary of this. It is the reversal of all human experiences and of that universal and common good sense which is the essential condition of all human understanding, and which, in rising from the simple and unanimously recognized truth that twice two are four to the sublimest and most complex scientific considerations-admitting, moreover, nothing that has not stood the severest tests of experience or observation of things and facts-becomes the only serious basis of human knowledge.

Very far from pursuing the natural order from the lower to the higher, from the inferior to the superior, and from the relatively simple to the more complex; instead of wisely and rationally accompanying the progressive and real movement from the world called inorganic to the world organic, vegetables, animal, and then distinctively human-from chemical matter or chemical being to living matter or living being, and from living being to thinking being-the idealists, obsessed, blinded, and pushed on by the divine phantom which they have inherited from theology, take precisely the opposite course. They go from the higher to the lower, from the superior to the inferior, from the complex to the simple. They begin with God, either as a person or as divine substance or idea, and the first step that they take is a terrible fall from the sublime heights of the eternal ideal into the mire of the material world; from absolute perfection into absolute imperfection; from thought to being, or rather, from supreme being to nothing. When, how, and why the divine being, eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect, probably weary of himself, decided upon this desperate *salto mortale* is something which no idealist, no theologian, no metaphysician, no poet, has ever been able to understand himself or explain to the profane. All religions, past and present, and all the systems of transcendental philosophy hinge on this unique and iniquitous mystery.¹ Holy men, inspired lawgivers, prophets, messiahs, have searched it for life, and found only torment and death. Like the ancient sphinx, it has devoured them, because they could not explain it. Great philosophers from Heraclitus and Plato down to Descartes, Spinoza: Leibnitz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, not to mention the Indian philosophers, have written heaps of volumes and built systems as ingenious as sublime, in which they have said by the way many beautiful and grand things and discovered immortal truths, but they have left this mystery, the principal object of their transcendental investigations, as unfathomable as before. The gigantic

efforts of the most Wonderful geniuses that the world has known, and who, one after another, for at least thirty centuries, have undertaken anew this labor of Sisyphus, have resulted only in rendering this mystery still more incomprehensible. Is it to be hoped that it will be unveiled to us by the routine speculations of some pedantic disciple of an artificially warmed-over metaphysics at a time when all living and serious spirits have abandoned that ambiguous science born of a compromise-historically explicable no doubt-between the unreason of faith and sound scientific reason?

It is evident that this terrible mystery is inexplicable-that is, absurd, because only the absurd admits of no explanation. It is evident that whoever finds it essential to his happiness and life must renounce his reason, and return, if he can, to naive, blind, stupid faith, to repeat with Tertullianus and all sincere believers these words, which sum up the very quintessence of theology: *Credo quia absurdum*. Then all discussion ceases, and nothing remains but the triumphant stupidity of faith. But immediately there arises another question: *How comes an intelligent and well-informed man ever to feel the need of believing in this mystery?*

Nothing is more natural than that the belief in God, the creator, regulator, judge, master, curser, savior, and benefactor of the world, should still prevail among the people, especially in the rural districts, where it is more widespread than among the proletariat of the cities. The people, unfortunately, are still very ignorant, and are kept in ignorance by the systematic efforts of all the governments, who consider this ignorance, not without good reason, as one of the essential conditions of their own power. Weighted down by their daily labor, deprived of leisure, of intellectual intercourse, of reading, in short of all the means and a good portion of the stimulants that develop thought in men, the people generally accept religious traditions without criticism and in a lump. These traditions surround them from infancy in all the situations of life, and artificially sustained in their minds by a multitude of official poisoners of all sorts, priests and laymen, are transformed therein into a sort of mental and moral habit, too often more powerful even than their natural good sense.

There is another reason which explains and in some sort justifies the absurd beliefs of the people-namely, the wretched situation to which they find themselves fatally condemned by the economic organization of society in the most civilized countries of Europe. Reduced, intellectually and morally as well as materially, to the minimum of human existence, confined in their life like a prisoner in his prison, without horizon, without outlet, without even a future if we believe the economists, the people would have the singularly narrow souls and blunted instincts of the bourgeois if they did not feel a desire to escape; but of escape there are but three methods-two chimerical and a third real. The first two are the dram-shop and the church, debauchery of the body or debauchery of the mind; the third is social revolution. Hence I conclude this last will be much more potent than all the theological propagandism of the freethinkers to destroy to their last vestige the religious beliefs and dissolute habits of the people, beliefs and habits much more intimately connected than is generally supposed. In substituting for the at once illusory and brutal enjoyments of bodily and spiritual licentiousness the enjoyments, as refined as they are real, of humanity developed in

each and all, the social revolution alone will have the power to close at the same time all the dram-shops and all the churches.

Till then the people. Taken as a whole, will believe; and, if they have no reason to believe, they will have at least a right.

There is a class of people who, if they do not believe, must at least make a semblance of believing. This class comprising all the tormentors, all the oppressors, and all the exploiters of humanity; priests, monarchs, statesmen, soldiers, public and private financiers, officials of all sorts, policemen, gendarmes, jailers and executioners, monopolists, capitalists, tax-leeches, contractors and landlords, lawyers, economists, politicians of all shades, down to the smallest vendor of sweetmeats, all will repeat in unison those words of Voltaire:

"If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him." For, you understand, "the people must have a religion." That is the safety-valve.

There exists, finally, a somewhat numerous class of honest but timid souls who, too intelligent to take the Christian dogmas seriously, reject them in detail, but have neither the courage nor the strength nor the necessary resolution to summarily renounce them altogether. They abandon to your criticism all the special absurdities of religion, they turn up their noses at all the miracles, but they cling desperately to the principal absurdity; the source of all the others, to the miracle that explains and justifies all the other miracles, the existence of God. Their God is not the vigorous and powerful being, the brutally positive God of theology. It is a nebulous, diaphanous, illusory being that vanishes into nothing at the first attempt to grasp it; it is a mirage, an *ignis fatuus* that neither warms nor illuminates. And yet they hold fast to it, and believe that, were it to disappear, all would disappear with it. They are uncertain, sickly souls, who have lost their reckoning in the present civilisation, belonging to neither the present nor the future, pale phantoms eternally suspended between heaven and earth, and occupying exactly the same position between the politics of the bourgeois and the Socialism of the proletariat. They have neither the power nor the wish nor the determination to follow out their thought, and they waste their time and pains in constantly endeavouring to reconcile the irreconcilable. In public life these are known as bourgeois Socialists.

With them, or against them, discussion is out of the question. They are too puny.

But there are a few illustrious men of whom no one will dare to speak without respect, and whose vigorous health, strength of mind, and good intention no one will dream of calling in question. I need only cite the names of Mazzini, Michelet, Quinet, John Stuart Mill.² Generous and strong souls, great hearts, great minds, great writers, and the first the heroic and revolutionary regenerator of a great nation, they are all apostles of idealism and bitter despisers and adversaries of materialism, and consequently of Socialism also, in philosophy as well as in politics.

Against them, then, we must discuss this question.

First, let it be remarked that not one of the illustrious men I have just named nor any other idealistic thinker of any consequence in our day has given any attention to the

logical side of this question properly speaking. Not one has tried to settle philosophically the possibility of the divine *salto mortale* from the pure and eternal regions of spirit into the mire of the material world. Have they feared to approach this irreconcilable contradiction and despaired of solving it after the failures of the greatest geniuses of history, or have they looked upon it as already sufficiently well settled? That is their secret. The fact is that they have neglected the theoretical demonstration of the existence of a God, and have developed only its practical motives and consequences. They have treated it as a fact universally accepted, and, as such, no longer susceptible of any doubt whatever, for sole proof thereof limiting themselves to the establishment of the antiquity and this very universality of the belief in God.

This imposing unanimity, in the eyes of many illustrious men and writers to quote only the most famous of them who eloquently expressed it, Joseph de Maistre and the great Italian patriot, Giuseppe Mazzini -- is of more value than all the demonstrations of science; and if the reasoning of a small number of logical and even very powerful, but isolated, thinkers is against it, so much the worse, they say, for these thinkers and their logic, for universal consent, the general and primitive adoption of an idea, has always been considered the most triumphant testimony to its truth. The sentiment of the whole world, a conviction that is found and maintained always and everywhere, cannot be mistaken; it must have its root in a necessity absolutely inherent in the very nature of man. And since it has been established that all peoples, past and present, have believed and still believe in the existence of God, it is clear that those who have the misfortune to doubt it, whatever the logic that led them to this doubt, are abnormal exceptions, monsters.

Thus, then, the *antiquity* and *universality* of a belief should be regarded, contrary to all science and all logic, as sufficient and unimpeachable proof of its truth. Why?

Until the days of Copernicus and Galileo everybody believed that the sun revolved about the earth. Was not everybody mistaken? What is more ancient and more universal than slavery? Cannibalism perhaps. From the origin of historic society down to the present day there has been always and everywhere exploitation of the compulsory labour of the masses--slaves, serfs, or wage workers -- by some dominant minority; oppression of the people by the Church and by the State. Must it be concluded that this exploitation and this oppression are necessities absolutely inherent in the very existence of human society? These are examples which show that the argument of the champions of God proves nothing.

Nothing, in fact, is as universal or as ancient as the iniquitous and absurd; truth and justice, on the contrary, are the least universal, the youngest features in the development of human society. In this fact, too, lies the explanation of a constant historical phenomenon -- namely, the persecution of which those who first proclaim the truth have been and continue to be the objects at the hands of the official, privileged, and interested representatives of "universal" and "ancient" beliefs, and often also at the hands of the same masses who, after having tortured them, always end by adopting their ideas and rendering them victorious.

To us materialists and Revolutionary Socialists, there is nothing astonishing or terrifying in this historical phenomenon. Strong in our conscience, in our love of truth at all hazards, in that passion for logic which of itself alone constitutes a great power and outside of which there is no thought; strong in our passion for justice and in our unshakeable faith in the triumph of humanity over all theoretical and practical bestialities; strong, finally, in the mutual confidence and support given each other by the few who share our convictions -- we resign ourselves to all the consequences of this historical phenomenon, in which we see the manifestation of a social law as natural, as necessary, and as invariable as all the other laws which govern the world.

This law is a logical, inevitable consequence of the *animal origin* of human society; for in face of all the scientific, physiological, psychological, and historical proofs accumulated at the present day, as well as in face of the exploits of the Germans conquering France, which now furnish so striking a demonstration thereof, it is no longer possible to really doubt this origin. But from the moment that this animal origin of man is accepted, all is explained. History then appears to us as the revolutionary negation, now slow, apathetic, sluggish, now passionate and powerful, of the past. It consists precisely in the progressive negation of the primitive animality of man by the development of his humanity. Man, a wild beast, cousin of the gorilla, has emerged from the profound darkness of animal instinct into the light of the mind, which explains in a wholly natural way all his past mistakes and partially consoles us for his present errors. He has gone out from animal slavery, and passing through divine slavery, a temporary condition between his animality and his humanity, he is now marching on to the conquest and realisation of human liberty. Whence it results that the antiquity of a belief, of an idea, far from proving anything in its favour, ought, on the contrary, to lead us to suspect it. For behind us is our animality and before us our humanity; human light, the only thing that can warm and enlighten us, the only thing that can emancipate us, give us dignity, freedom, and happiness, and realise fraternity among us, is never at the beginning, but, relatively to the epoch in which we live, always at the end of history. Let us, then, never look back, let us look ever forward; for forward is our sunlight, forward our salvation. If it is justifiable, and even useful and necessary, to turn back to study our past, it is only in order to establish what we have been and what we must no longer be, what we have believed and thought and what we must no longer believe or think, what we have done and what we must do nevermore.

So much for *antiquity*. As for the *universality* of an error, it proves but one thing -- the similarity, if not the perfect identity, of human nature in all ages and under all skies. And, since it is established that all peoples, at all periods of their life, have believed and still believe in God, we must simply conclude that the divine idea, an outcome of ourselves, is an error historically necessary in the development of humanity, and ask why and how it was produced in history and why an immense majority of the human race still accept it as a truth.

Until we shall account to ourselves for the manner in which the idea of a supernatural or divine world was developed and had to be developed in the historical evolution of the human conscience, all our scientific conviction of its absurdity will be in vain;

until then we shall never succeed in destroying it in the opinion of the majority, because we shall never be able to attack it in the very depths of the hut man being where it had birth. Condemned to a fruitless struggle, without issue and without end, we should for ever have to content ourselves with fighting it solely on the surface, in its innumerable manifestations, whose absurdity will be scarcely beaten down by the blows of common sense before it will reappear in a new form no less nonsensical. While the root of all the absurdities that torment the world, belief in God, remains intact, it will never fail to bring forth new offspring. Thus, at the present time, in certain sections of the highest society, Spiritualism tends to establish itself upon the ruins of Christianity.

It is not only in the interest of the masses, it is in that of the health of our own minds, that we should strive to understand the historic genesis, the succession of causes which developed and produced the idea of God in the consciousness of men. In vain shall we call and believe ourselves Atheists, until we comprehend these causes, for, until then, we shall always suffer ourselves to be more or less governed by the clamours of this universal conscience whose secret we have not discovered; and, considering the natural weakness of even the strongest individual against the all-powerful influence of the social surroundings that trammel him, we are always in danger of relapsing sooner or later, in one way or another, into the abyss of religious absurdity. Examples of these shameful conversions are frequent in society to-day.

II

I have stated the chief practical reason of the power still exercised to-day over the masses by religious beliefs. These mystical tendencies do not signify in man so much an aberration of mind as a deep discontent at Heart. They are the instinctive and passionate protest of the human being against the narrowness, the platitudes, the sorrows, and the shame of a wretched existence. For this malady, I have already said, there is but one remedy-Social Revolution.

In the meantime I have endeavored to show the causes responsible for the birth and historical development of religious hallucinations in the human conscience. Here it is my purpose to treat this question of the existence of a God, or of the divine origin of the world and of man, solely from the standpoint of its moral and social utility, and I shall say only a few words, to better explain my thought, regarding the theoretical grounds of this belief.

All religions, with their gods, their demigods, and their prophets, their messiahs and their saints, were created by the credulous fancy of men who had not attained the full development and full possession of their faculties. Consequently, the religious heaven is nothing but a mirage in which man, exalted by ignorance and faith, discovers his

own image, but enlarged and reversed—that is, *divinized*. The history of religion, of the birth, grandeur, and decline of the gods who have succeeded one another in human belief, is nothing, therefore, but the development of the collective intelligence and conscience of mankind. As fast as they discovered, in the course of their historically progressive advance, either in themselves or in external nature, a power, a quality, or even any great defect whatever, they attributed them to their gods, after having exaggerated and enlarged them beyond measure, after the manner of children, by an act of their religious fancy. Thanks to this modesty and pious generosity of believing and credulous men, heaven has grown rich with the spoils of the earth, and, by a necessary consequence, the richer heaven became, the more wretched became humanity and the earth. God once installed, he was naturally proclaimed the cause, reason, arbiter and absolute disposer of all things: the world thenceforth was nothing, God was all; and man, his real creator, after having unknowingly extracted him from the void, bowed down before him, worshipped him, and avowed himself his creature and his slave.

Christianity is precisely the religion *par excellence*, because it exhibits and manifests, to the fullest extent, the very nature and essence of every religious system, which is *the impoverishment, enslavement, and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity*.

God being everything, the real world and man are nothing. God being truth, justice, goodness, beauty, power, and life, man is falsehood, iniquity, evil, ugliness, impotence, and death. God being master, man is the slave. Incapable of finding justice, truth, and eternal life by his own effort, he can attain them only through a divine revelation. But whoever says revelation says revealers, messiahs, prophets, priests, and legislators inspired by God himself; and these, once recognized as the representatives of divinity on earth, as the holy instructors of humanity, chosen by God himself to direct it in the path of salvation, necessarily exercise absolute power. All men owe them passive and unlimited obedience; for against the divine reason there is no human reason, and against the justice of God no terrestrial justice holds. Slaves of God, men must also be slaves of Church and State, *in so far as the State is consecrated by the Church*. This truth Christianity, better than all other religions that exist or have existed, understood, not excepting even the old Oriental religions, which included only distinct and privileged nations, while Christianity aspires to embrace entire humanity; and this truth Roman Catholicism, alone among all the Christian sects, has proclaimed and realized with rigorous logic. That is why Christianity is the absolute religion, the final religion; why the Apostolic and Roman Church is the only consistent, legitimate, and divine church.

With all due respect, then, to the metaphysicians and religious idealists, philosophers, politicians, or poets: *The idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice; it is the most decisive negation of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement of mankind, both in theory and practice.*

Unless, then, we desire the enslavement and degradation of mankind, as the Jesuits desire it, as the *mômiers*, pietists, or Protestant Methodists desire it, we may not, must

not make the slightest concession either to the God of theology or to the God of metaphysics. He who, in this mystical alphabet, begins with A will inevitably end with Z; he who desires to worship God must harbor no childish illusions about the matter, but bravely renounce his liberty and humanity.

If God is, man is a slave; now, man can and must be free; then, God does not exist.

I defy anyone whomsoever to avoid this circle; now, therefore, let all choose.

Is it necessary to point out to what extent and in what manner religions debase and corrupt the people? They destroy their reason, the principal instrument of human emancipation, and reduce them to imbecility, the essential condition of their slavery. They dishonor human labor, and make it a sign and source of servitude. They kill the idea and sentiment of human justice, ever tipping the balance to the side of triumphant knaves, privileged objects of divine indulgence. They kill human pride and dignity, protecting only the cringing and humble. They stifle in the heart of nations every feeling of human fraternity, filling it with divine cruelty instead.

All religions are cruel, all founded on blood; for all rest principally on the idea of sacrifice-that is, on the perpetual immolation of humanity to the insatiable vengeance of divinity. In this bloody mystery man is always the victim, and the priest-a man also, but a man privileged by grace- is the divine executioner. That explains why the priests of all religions, the best, the most humane, the gentlest, almost always have at the bottom of their hearts-and, if not in their hearts, in their imaginations, in their minds (and we know the fearful influence of either on the hearts of men)-something cruel and sanguinary.

None know all this better than our illustrious contemporary idealists. They are learned men, who know history by heart; and, as they are at the same time living men, great souls penetrated with a sincere and profound love for the welfare of humanity, they have cursed and branded all these misdeeds, all these crimes of religion with an eloquence unparalleled. They reject with indignation all solidarity with the God of positive religions and with his representatives, past, present, and on earth.

The God whom they adore, or whom they think they adore, is distinguished from the real gods of history precisely in this-that he is not at all a positive god, defined in any way whatever, theologically or even metaphysically. He is neither the supreme being of Robespierre and J. J. Rousseau, nor the pantheistic god of Spinoza, nor even the at once immanent, transcendental, and very equivocal god of Hegel. They take good care not to give him any positive definition whatever, feeling very strongly that any definition would subject him to the dissolving power of criticism. They will not say whether he is a personal or impersonal god, whether he created or did not create the world; they will not even speak of his divine providence. All that might compromise him. They content themselves with saying "God" and nothing more. But, then, what is their God? Not even an idea; it is an aspiration.

It is the generic name of all that seems grand, good, beautiful, noble, human to them. But why, then, do they not say, "Man." Ah! because King William of Prussia and

Napoleon III, and all their compeers are likewise men: which bothers them very much. Real humanity presents a mixture of all I that is most sublime and beautiful with all that is vilest and most monstrous in the world. How do they get over this? Why, they call one *divine* and the other *bestial*, representing divinity and animality as two poles, between which they place humanity. They either will not or cannot understand that these three terms are really but one, and that to separate them is to destroy them.

They are not strong on logic, and one might say that they despise it. That is what distinguishes them from the pantheistical and deistical metaphysicians, and gives their ideas the character of a practical idealism, drawing its inspiration much less from the severe development of a thought than from the experiences, I might almost say the emotions, historical and collective as well as individual, of life. This gives their propaganda an appearance of wealth and vital power, but an appearance only; for life itself becomes sterile when paralyzed by a logical contradiction.

This contradiction lies here: they wish God, and they wish humanity. They persist in connecting two terms which, once separated, can come together again only to destroy each other. They say in a single breath: "God and the liberty of man," "God and the dignity, justice, equality, fraternity, prosperity of men"-regardless of the fatal logic by virtue of which, if God exists, all these things are condemned to non-existence. For, if God is, he is necessarily the eternal, supreme, absolute master, and, if such a master exists, man is a slave; now, if he is a slave, neither justice, nor equality, nor fraternity, nor prosperity are possible for him. In vain, flying in the face of good sense and all the teachings of history, do they represent their God as animated by the tenderest love of human liberty: a master, whoever he may be and however liberal he may desire to show himself, remains none the less always a master. His existence necessarily implies the slavery of all that is beneath him. Therefore, if God existed, only in one way could he serve human liberty-by ceasing to exist.

A jealous lover of human liberty, and deeming it the absolute condition of all that we admire and respect in humanity, I reverse the phrase of Voltaire, and say that, *if God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him.*

The severe logic that dictates these words is far too evident to require a development of this argument. And it seems to me impossible that the illustrious men, whose names so celebrated and so justly respected I have cited, should not have been struck by it themselves, and should not have perceived the contradiction in which they involve themselves in speaking of God and human liberty at once. To have disregarded it, they must have considered this inconsistency or logical license *practically* necessary to humanity's well-being.

Perhaps, too, while speaking of *liberty* as something very respectable and very dear in their eyes, they give the term a meaning quite different from the conception entertained by us, materialists and Revolutionary Socialists. Indeed, they never speak of it without immediately adding another word, *authority*-a word and a thing which we detest with all our heart.

What is authority? Is it the inevitable power of the natural laws which manifest

themselves in the necessary concatenation and succession of phenomena in the physical and social worlds? Indeed, against these laws revolt is not only forbidden-it is even impossible. We may misunderstand them or not know them at all, but we cannot disobey them; because they constitute the basis and fundamental conditions of our existence; they envelop us, penetrate us, regulate all our movements, thoughts, and acts; even when we believe that we disobey them, we only show their omnipotence.

Yes, we are absolutely the slaves of these laws. But in such slavery there is no humiliation, or, rather, it is not slavery at all. For slavery supposes an external master, a legislator outside of him whom he commands, while these laws are not outside of us; they are inherent in us; they constitute our being, our whole being, physically-intellectually, and morally: we live, we breathe, we act, we think, we wish only through these laws. Without them we are nothing, *we are not*. Whence, then, could we derive the power and the wish to rebel against them?

In his relation to natural laws but one liberty is possible to man-that of recognizing and applying them on an ever-extending scale in conformity with the object of collective and individual emancipation or humanization which he pursues. These laws, once recognized, exercise an authority which is never disputed by the mass of men. One must, for instance, be at bottom either a fool or a theologian or at least a metaphysician, jurist, or bourgeois economist to rebel against the law by which twice two make four. One must have faith to imagine that fire will not burn nor water drown, except, indeed, recourse be had to some subterfuge founded in its turn on some other natural law. But these revolts, or, rather, these attempts at or foolish fancies of an impossible revolt, are decidedly, the exception; for, in general, it may be said that the mass of men, in their daily lives, acknowledge the government of common sense-that is, of the sum of the natural laws generally recognized-in an almost absolute fashion.

The great misfortune is that a large number of natural laws, already established as such by science, remain unknown to the masses, thanks to the watchfulness of these tutelary governments that exist, as we know, only for the good of the people. There is another difficulty-namely, that the major portion of the natural laws connected with the development of human society, which are quite as necessary, invariable, fatal, as the laws that govern the physical world, have not been duly established and recognized by science itself.

Once they shall have been recognized by science, and then from science, by means of an extensive system of popular education and instruction, shall have passed into the consciousness of all, the question of liberty will be entirely solved. The most stubborn authorities must admit that then there will be no need either of political organization or direction or legislation, three things which, whether they emanate from the will of the sovereign or from the vote of a parliament elected by universal suffrage, and even should they conform to the system of natural laws-which has never been the case and never will be the case-are always equally fatal and hostile to the liberty of the masses from the very fact that they impose upon them a system of

external and therefore despotic laws.

The liberty of man consists solely in this: that he obeys natural laws because he has *himself* recognized them as such, and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by any extrinsic will whatever, divine or human, collective or individual.

Suppose a learned academy, composed of the most illustrious representatives of science; suppose this academy charged with legislation for and the organization of society, and that, inspired only by the purest love of truth, it frames none but laws in absolute harmony with the latest discoveries of science. Well, I maintain, for my part, that such legislation and such organization would be a monstrosity, and that for two reasons: first, that human science is always and necessarily imperfect, and that, comparing what it has discovered with what remains to be discovered, we may say that it is still in its cradle. So that were we to try to force the practical life of men, collective as well as individual, into strict and exclusive conformity with the latest data of science, we should condemn society as well as individuals to suffer martyrdom on a bed of Procrustes, which would soon end by dislocating and stifling them, life ever remaining an infinitely greater thing than science.

The second reason is this: a society which should obey legislation emanating from a scientific academy, not because it understood itself the rational character of this legislation (in which case the existence of the academy would become useless), but because this legislation, emanating from the academy, was imposed in the name of a science which it venerated without comprehending -such a society would be a society, not of men, but of brutes. It would be a second edition of those missions in Paraguay which submitted so long to the government of the Jesuits. It would surely and rapidly descend to the lowest stage of idiocy.

But there is still a third reason which would render such a government impossible -namely that a scientific academy invested with a sovereignty, so to speak, absolute, even if it were composed of the most illustrious men, would infallibly and soon end in its own moral and intellectual corruption. Even to-day, with the few privileges allowed them, such is the history of all academies. The greatest scientific genius, from the moment that he becomes an academician, an officially licensed *savant*, inevitably lapses into sluggishness. He loses his spontaneity, his revolutionary hardihood, and that troublesome and savage energy characteristic of the grandest geniuses, ever called to destroy old tottering worlds and lay the foundations of new. He undoubtedly gains in politeness, in utilitarian and practical wisdom, what he loses in power of thought. In a word, he becomes corrupted.

It is the characteristic of privilege and of every privileged position to kill the mind and heart of men. The privileged man, whether politically or economically, is a man depraved in mind and heart. That is a social law which admits of no exception, and is as applicable to entire nations as to classes, corporations, and individuals. It is the law of equality, the supreme condition of liberty and humanity. The principal object of this treatise is precisely to demonstrate this truth in all the manifestations of human life.

A scientific body to which had been confided the government of society would soon

end by devoting itself no longer to science at all, but to quite another affair; and that affair, as in the case of all established powers, would be its own eternal perpetuation by rendering the society confided to its care ever more stupid and consequently more in need of its government and direction.

But that which is true of scientific academies is also true of all constituent and legislative assemblies, even those chosen by universal suffrage. In the latter case they may renew their composition, it is true, but this does not prevent the formation in a few years' time of a body of politicians, privileged in fact though not in law, who, devoting themselves exclusively to the direction of the public affairs of a country, finally form a sort of political aristocracy or oligarchy. Witness the United States of America and Switzerland.

Consequently, no external legislation and no authority-one, for that matter, being inseparable from the other, and both tending to the servitude of society and the degradation of the legislators themselves.

Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a *savant*. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the *savant* to impose his authority upon me. I listen to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism censure. I do not content myself with consulting authority in any special branch; I consult several; I compare their opinions, and choose that which seems to me the soundest. But I recognize no infallible authority, even in special questions; consequently, whatever respect I may have for the honesty and the sincerity of such or such an individual, I have no absolute faith in any person. Such a faith would be fatal to my reason, to my liberty, and even to the success of my undertakings; it would immediately transform me into a stupid slave, an instrument of the will and interests of others.

If I bow before the authority of the specialists and avow my readiness to follow, to a certain extent and as long as may seem to me necessary, their indications and even their directions, it is because their authority is imposed upon me by no one, neither by men nor by God. Otherwise I would repel them with horror, and bid the devil take their counsels, their directions, and their services, certain that they would make me pay, by the loss of my liberty and self-respect, for such scraps of truth, wrapped in a multitude of lies, as they might give me.

I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed upon me by my own reason. I am conscious of my inability to grasp, in all its details and positive developments, any very large portion of human knowledge. The greatest intelligence would not be equal to a comprehension of the whole. Thence results, for science as well as for industry, the necessity of the division and association of labor. I receive and I give-such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination.

This same reason forbids me, then, to recognize a fixed, constant, and universal authority, because there is no universal man, no man capable of grasping in that wealth of detail, without which the application of science to life is impossible, all the sciences, all the branches of social life. And if such universality could ever be realized in a single man, and if he wished to take advantage thereof to impose his authority upon us, it would be necessary to drive this man out of society, because his authority would inevitably reduce all the others to slavery and imbecility. I do not think that society ought to maltreat men of genius as it has done hitherto; but neither do I think it should indulge them too far, still less accord them any privileges or exclusive rights whatsoever; and that for three reasons: first, because it would often mistake a charlatan for a man of genius; second, because, through such a system of privileges, it might transform into a charlatan even a real man of genius, demoralize him, and degrade him; and, finally, because it would establish a master over itself.

To sum up. We recognize, then, the absolute authority of science, because the sole object of science is the mental reproduction, as well-considered and systematic as possible, of the natural laws inherent in the material, intellectual, and moral life of both the physical and the social worlds, these two worlds constituting, in fact, but one and the same natural world. Outside of this only legitimate authority, legitimate because rational and in harmony with human liberty, we declare all other authorities false, arbitrary and fatal.

We recognize the absolute authority of science, but we reject the infallibility and universality of the *savant*. In our church-if I may be permitted to use for a moment an expression which I so detest: Church and State are my two *bêtes noires*-in our church, as in the Protestant church, we have a chief, an invisible Christ, science; and, like the Protestants, more logical even than the Protestants, we will suffer neither pope, nor council, nor conclaves of infallible cardinals, nor bishops, nor even priests. Our Christ differs from the Protestant and Christian Christ in this-that the latter is a personal being, ours impersonal; the Christian Christ, already completed in an eternal past, presents himself as a perfect being, while the completion and perfection of our Christ, science, are ever in the future: which is equivalent to saying that they will never be realized. Therefore, in recognizing *absolute science* as the only absolute authority, we in no way compromise our liberty.

I mean by the words "absolute science," the truly universal science which would reproduce ideally, to its fullest extent and in all its infinite detail, the universe, the system or co-ordination of all the natural laws manifested by the incessant development of the world. It is evident that such a science, the sublime object of all the efforts of the human mind, will never be fully and absolutely realized. Our Christ, then, will remain eternally unfinished, which must considerably take down the pride of his licensed representatives among us. Against that God the Son in whose name they assume to impose upon us their insolent and pedantic authority, we appeal to God the Father, who is the real world, real life, of which he (the Son) is only a too imperfect expression, whilst we real beings, living, working, struggling, loving, aspiring, enjoying, and suffering, are its immediate representatives.

But, while rejecting the absolute, universal, and infallible authority of men of science, we willingly bow before the respectable, although relative, quite temporary, and very restricted authority of the representatives of special sciences, asking nothing better than to consult them by turns, and very grateful for such precious information as they may extend to us, on condition of their willingness to receive from us on occasions when, and concerning matters about which, we are more learned than they. In general, we ask nothing better than to see men endowed with great knowledge, great experience, great minds, and, above all, great hearts, exercise over us a natural and legitimate influence, freely accepted, and never imposed in the name of any official authority whatsoever, celestial or terrestrial. We accept all natural authorities and all influences of fact, but none of right; for every authority or every influence of right, officially imposed as such, becoming directly an oppression and a falsehood, would inevitably impose upon us, as I believe I have sufficiently shown, slavery and absurdity.

In a word, we reject all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official, and legal influence, even though arising from universal suffrage, convinced that it can turn only to the advantage of a dominant minority of exploiters against the interests of the immense majority in subjection to them.

This is the sense in which we are really Anarchists.

The modern idealists understand authority in quite a different way. Although free from the traditional superstitions of all the existing positive religions, they nevertheless attach to this idea of authority a divine, an absolute meaning. This authority is not that of a truth miraculously revealed, nor that of a truth rigorously and scientifically demonstrated. They base it to a slight extent upon quasi-philosophical reasoning, and to a large extent also on sentiment, ideally, abstractly poetical. Their religion is, as it were, a last attempt to divinise all that constitutes humanity in men.

This is just the opposite of the work that we are doing. On behalf of human liberty, dignity and prosperity, we believe it our duty to recover from heaven the goods which it has stolen and return them to earth. They, on the contrary, endeavouring to commit a final religiously heroic larceny, would restore to heaven, that divine robber, finally unmasked, the grandest, finest and noblest of humanity's possessions. It is now the freethinker's turn to pillage heaven by their audacious piety and scientific analysis.

The idealists undoubtedly believe that human ideas and deeds, in order to exercise greater authority among men, must be invested with a divine sanction. How is this sanction manifested? Not by a miracle, as in the positive religions, but by the very grandeur of sanctity of the ideas and deeds: whatever is grand, whatever is beautiful, whatever is noble, whatever is just, is considered divine. In this new religious cult every man inspired by these ideas, by these deeds, becomes a priest, directly consecrated by God himself. And the proof? He needs none beyond the very grandeur of the ideas which he expresses and the deeds which he performs. These are so holy that they can have been inspired only by God.

Such, in so few words, is their whole philosophy: a philosophy of sentiments, not of real thoughts, a sort of metaphysical pietism. This seems harmless, but it is not so at

all, and the very precise, very narrow and very barren doctrine hidden under the intangible vagueness of these poetic forms leads to the same disastrous results that all the positive religions lead to--namely, the most complete negation of human liberty and dignity.

To proclaim as divine all that is grand, just, noble, and beautiful in humanity is to tacitly admit that humanity of itself would have been unable to produce it -- that is, that, abandoned to itself, its own nature is miserable, iniquitous, base, and ugly. Thus we come back to the essence of all religion--in other words, to the disparagement of humanity for the greater glory of divinity. And from the moment that the natural inferiority of man and his fundamental incapacity to rise by his own effort, unaided by any divine inspiration, to the comprehension of just and true ideas, are admitted, it becomes necessary to admit also all the theological, political, and social consequences of the positive religions. From the moment that God, the perfect and supreme being, is posited face to face with humanity, divine mediators, the elect, the inspired of God spring from the earth to enlighten, direct, and govern in his name the human race.

May we not suppose that all men are equally inspired by God? Then, surely, there is no further use for mediators. But this supposition is impossible, because it is too clearly contradicted by the facts. It would compel us to attribute to divine inspiration all the absurdities and errors which appear, and all the horrors, follies, base deeds, and cowardly actions which are committed, in the world. But perhaps, then, only a few men are divinely inspired, the great men of history, the *virtuous geniuses*, as the illustrious Italian citizen and prophet, Giuseppe Mazzini, called them. Immediately inspired by God himself and supported upon universal consent expressed by popular suffrage -- *Dio e Popolo* -- such as these should be called to the government of human societies.³

But here we are again fallen back under the yoke of Church and State. It is true that in this new organization, indebted for its existence, like all the old political organisations, to the *grace of God*, but supported this time--at least so far as form is concerned, as a necessary concession to the spirit of modern times, and just as in the preambles of the imperial decrees of Napoleon III. -- on the (pretended) *will of the people*, the Church will no longer call itself Church; it will call itself School. What matters it? On the benches of this School will be seated not children only; there will be found the eternal minor, the pupil confessedly forever incompetent to pass his examinations, rise to the knowledge of his teachers, and dispense with their discipline--the people.⁴ The State will no longer call itself Monarchy; it will call itself Republic: but it will be none the less the State -- that is, a tutelage officially and regularly established by a minority of competent men, *men of virtuous genius or talent*, who will watch and guide the conduct of this great, incorrigible, and terrible child, the people. The professors of the School and the functionaries of the State will call themselves republicans; but they will be none the less tutors, shepherds, and the people will remain what they have been hitherto from all eternity, a flock. Beware of shearers, for where there is a flock there necessarily must be shepherds also to shear and devour it.

The people, in this system, will be the perpetual scholar and pupil. In spite of its sovereignty, wholly fictitious, it will continue to serve as the instrument of thoughts, wills, and consequently interests not its own. Between this situation and what we call liberty, the only real liberty, there is an abyss. It will be the old oppression and old slavery under new forms; and where there is slavery there is misery, brutishness, real social *materialism*, among the privileged classes as well as among the masses.

In defying human things the idealists always end in the triumph of a brutal materialism. And this for a very simple reason: the divine evaporates and rises to its own country, heaven, while the brutal alone remains actually on earth.

Yes, the necessary consequence of theoretical idealism is practically the most brutal materialism; not, undoubtedly, among those who sincerely preach it--the usual result as far as they are concerned being that they are constrained to see all their efforts struck with sterility--but among those who try to realise their precepts in life, and in all society so far as it allows itself to be dominated by idealistic doctrines.

To demonstrate this general fact, which may appear strange at first, but which explains itself naturally enough upon further reflection, historical proofs are not lacking.

Compare the last two civilisations of the ancient world -- the Greek and the Roman. Which is the most materialistic, the most natural, in its point of departure, and the most humanly ideal in its results? Undoubtedly the Greek civilisation. Which on the contrary, is the most abstractly ideal in its point of departure--sacrificing the material liberty of the man to the ideal liberty of the citizen, represented by the abstraction of judicial law, and the natural development of human society to the abstraction of the State -- and which became nevertheless the most brutal in its consequences? The Roman civilisation, certainly. It is true that the Greek civilisation, like all the ancient civilisations, including that of Rome, was exclusively national and based on slavery. But, in spite of these two immense defects, the former none the less conceived and realised the idea of humanity; it ennobled and really idealised the life of men; it transformed human herds into free associations of free men; it created through liberty the sciences, the arts, a poetry, an immortal philosophy, and the primary concepts of human respect. With political and social liberty, it created free thought. At the close of the Middle Ages, during the period of the Renaissance, the fact that some Greek emigrants brought a few of those immortal books into Italy sufficed to resuscitate life, liberty, thought, humanity, buried in the dark dungeon of Catholicism. Human emancipation, that is the name of the Greek civilisation. And the name of the Roman civilisation? Conquest, with all its brutal consequences. And its last word? The omnipotence of the Caesars. Which means the degradation and enslavement of nations and of men.

To-day even, what is it that kills, what is it that crushes brutally, materially, in all European countries, liberty and humanity? It is the triumph of the Caesarian or Roman principle.

Compare now two modern civilisations -- the Italian and the German. The first undoubtedly represents, in its general character, materialism; the second, on the

contrary, represents idealism in its most abstract, most pure, and most transcendental form. Let us see what are the practical fruits of the one and the other.

Italy has already rendered immense services to the cause of human emancipation. She was the first to resuscitate and widely apply the principle of liberty in Europe, and to restore to humanity its titles to nobility: industry, commerce, poetry, the arts, the positive sciences, and free thought. Crushed since by three centuries of imperial and papal despotism, and dragged in the mud by her governing bourgeoisie, she reappears to-day, it is true, in a very degraded condition in comparison with what she once was. And yet how much she differs from Germany! In Italy, in spite of this decline -- temporary let us hope -- one may live and breathe humanly, surrounded by a people which seems to be born for liberty. Italy, even bourgeois Italy, can point with pride to men like Mazzini and Garibaldi. In Germany one breathes the atmosphere of an immense political and social slavery, philosophically explained and accepted by a great people with deliberate resignation and free will. Her heroes -- I speak always of present Germany, not of the Germany of the future; of aristocratic, bureaucratic, political and bourgeoisie Germany, not of the Germany of the *prolétaires* -- her heroes are quite the opposite of Mazzini and Garibaldi: they are William I., that ferocious and ingenuous representative of the Protestant God, Messrs, Bismarck and Moltke, Generals Manteuffel and Werder. In all her international relations Germany, from the beginning of her existence, has been slowly, systematically invading, conquering, ever ready to extend her own voluntary enslavement into the territory of her neighbours; and, since her definitive establishment as a unitary power, she has become a menace, a danger to the liberty of entire Europe. To-day Germany is servility brutal and triumphant.

To show how theoretical idealism incessantly and inevitably changes into practical materialism, one needs only to cite the example of all the Christian Churches, and, naturally, first of all, that of the Apostolic and Roman Church. What is there more sublime, in the ideal sense, more disinterested, more separate from all the interests of this earth, than the doctrine of Christ preached by that Church? And what is there more brutally materialistic than the constant practice of that same Church since the eighth century, from which dates her definitive establishment as a power? What has been and still is the principal object of all her contests with the sovereigns of Europe? Her temporal goods, her revenues first, and then her temporal power, her political privileges. We must do her the justice to acknowledge that she was the first to discover, in modern history, this incontestable but scarcely Christian truth that wealth and power, the economic exploitation and the political oppression of the masses, are the two inseparable terms of the reign of divine ideality on earth: wealth consolidating and augmenting power, power ever discovering and creating new sources of wealth, and both assuring, better than the martyrdom and faith of the apostles, better than divine grace, the success of the Christian propagandism. This is a historical truth, and the Protestant Churches do not fail to recognise it either. I speak, of course, of the independent churches of England, America, and Switzerland, not of the subjected churches of Germany. The latter have no initiative of their own; they do what their masters, their temporal sovereigns, who are at the same time their spiritual

chieftains, order them to do, It is well known that the Protestant propagandism, especially in England and America, is very intimately connected with the propagandism of the material, commercial interests of those two great nations; and it is known also that the objects of the latter propagandism is not at all the enrichment and material prosperity of the countries into which it penetrates in company with the Word of God, but rather the exploitation of those countries with a view to the enrichment and material prosperity of certain classes, which in their own country are very covetous and very pious at the same time.

In a word, it is not at all difficult to prove, history in hand, that the Church, that all the Churches, Christian and non-Christian, by the side of their spiritualistic propagandism, and probably to accelerate and consolidate the success thereof, have never neglected to organise themselves into great corporations for the economic exploitation of the masses under the protection and with the direct and special blessing of some divinity or other; that all the States, which originally, as we know, with all their political and judicial institutions and their dominant and privileged classes have been only temporal branches of these various Churches have likewise had principally in view this same exploitation for the benefit of lay minorities indirectly sanctioned by the Church; finally and in general, that the action of the good God and of all the divine idealities on earth has ended at last, always and everywhere, in founding the prosperous materialism of the few over the fanatical and constantly famishing idealism of the masses.

We have a new proof of this in what we see to-day. With the exception of the great hearts and great minds whom I have before referred to as misled, who are to-day the most obstinate defenders of idealism? In the first places all the sovereign courts. In France, until lately, Napoleon III. and his wife, Madame Eugénie; all their former ministers, courtiers, and ex-marshals, from Rouher and Bazaine to Fleury and Piétri; the men and women of this imperial world, who have so completely idealised and saved France; their journalists and their *savants* -- the Cossignacs, the Girardins, the Duvernois, the Veuillots, the Leverriers, the Dumas; the black phalanx of Jesuits and Jesuitesses in every garb; the whole upper and middle bourgeoisie of France; the doctrinaire liberals, and the liberals without doctrine -- the Guizots, the Thiers, the Jules Favres, the Pelletans, and the Jules Simons, all obstinate defenders of the bourgeoisie exploitation. In Prussia, in Germany, William I., the present royal demonstrator of the good God on earth; all his generals, all his officers, Pomeranian and other; all his army, which, strong in its religious faith, has just conquered France in that ideal way we know so well. In Russia, the Czar and his court; the Mouravieffs and the Bergs, all the butchers and pious proselyters of Poland. Everywhere, in short, religious or philosophical idealism, the one being but the more or less free translation of the other, serves to-day as the flag of material, bloody, and brutal force, of shameless material exploitation; while, on the contrary, the flag of theoretical materialism, the red flag of economic equality and social justice, is raised by the practical idealism of the oppressed and famishing masses, tending to realise the greatest liberty and the human right of each in the fraternity of all men on the earth.

Who are the real idealists -- the idealists not of abstraction, but of life, not of heaven,

but of earth -- and who are the materialists?

It is evident that the essential condition of theoretical or divine idealism is the sacrifice of logic, of human reason, the renunciation of science. We see, further, that in defending the doctrines of idealism one finds himself enlisted perforce in the ranks of the oppressors and exploiters of the masses. These are two great reasons which, it would seem, should be sufficient to drive every great mind, every great heart, from idealism. How does it happen that our illustrious contemporary idealists, who certainly lack neither mind, nor heart, nor good will, and who have devoted their entire existence to the service of humanity -- how does it happen that they persist in remaining among the representatives of a doctrine henceforth condemned and dishonoured?

They must be influenced by a very powerful motive. It cannot be logic or science, since logic and science have pronounced their verdict against the idealistic doctrine. No more can it be personal interests, since these men are infinitely above everything of that sort. It must, then, be a powerful moral motive. Which? There can be but one. These illustrious men think, no doubt, that idealistic theories or beliefs are essentially necessary to the moral dignity and grandeur of man, and that materialistic theories, on the contrary, reduce him to the level of the beasts.

And if the truth were just the opposite!

Every development, I have said, implies the negation of its point of departure. The basis or point of departure, according to the materialistic school, being material, the negation must be necessarily ideal. Starting from the totality of the real world, or from what is abstractly called matter, it logically arrives at the real idealisation -- that is, at the humanisation, at the full and complete emancipation of society. *Per contra* and for the same reason, the basis and point of departure of the idealistic school being ideal, it arrives necessarily at the materialisation of society, at the organization of a brutal despotism and an iniquitous and ignoble exploitation, under the form of Church and State. The historical development of man according to the materialistic school, is a progressive ascension; in the idealistic system it can be nothing but a continuous fall.

Whatever human question we may desire to consider, we always find this same essential contradiction between the two schools. Thus, as I have already observed, materialism starts from animality to establish humanity; idealism starts from divinity to establish slavery and condemn the masses to an endless animality. Materialism denies free will and ends in the establishment of liberty; idealism, in the name of human dignity, proclaims free will, and on the ruins of every liberty founds authority. Materialism rejects the principle of authority, because it rightly considers it as the corollary of animality, and because, on the contrary, the triumph of humanity, the object and chief significance of history, can be realised only through liberty. In a word, you will always find the idealists in the very act of practical materialism, while you will see the materialists pursuing and realising the most grandly ideal aspirations and thoughts.

History, in the system of the idealists, as I have said, can be nothing but a continuous

fall. They begin by a terrible fall, from which they never recover -- by the *salto mortale* from the sublime regions of pure and absolute idea into matter. And into what kind of matter ! Not into the matter which is eternally active and mobile, full of properties and forces, of life and intelligence, as we see it in the real world; but into abstract matter, impoverished and reduced to absolute misery by the regular looting of these Prussians of thought, the theologians and metaphysicians, who have stripped it of everything to give everything to their emperor, to their God; into the matter which, deprived of all action and movement of its own, represents, in opposition to the divine idea, nothing but absolute stupidity, impenetrability, inertia and immobility.

The fall is so terrible that divinity, the divine person or idea, is flattened out, loses consciousness of itself, and never more recovers it. And in this desperate situation it is still forced to work miracles ! For from the moment that matter becomes inert, every movement that takes place in the world, even the most material, is a miracle, can result only from a providential intervention, from the action of God upon matter. And there this poor Divinity, degraded and half annihilated by its fall, lies some thousands of centuries in this swoon, then awakens slowly, in vain endeavouring to grasp some vague memory of itself, and every move that it makes in this direction upon matter becomes a creation, a new formation, a new miracle. In this way it passes through all degrees of materiality and bestiality -- first, gas, simple or compound chemical substance, mineral, it then spreads over the earth as vegetable and animal organization till it concentrates itself in man. Here it would seem as if it must become itself again, for it lights in every human being an angelic spark, a particle of its own divine being, the immortal soul.

How did it manage to lodge a thing absolutely immaterial in a thing absolutely material; how can the body contain, enclose, limit, paralyse pure spirit? This, again, is one of those questions which faith alone, that passionate and stupid affirmation of the absurd, can solve. It is the greatest of miracles. Here, however, we have only to establish the effects, the practical consequences of this miracle.

After thousands of centuries of vain efforts to come back to itself, Divinity, lost and scattered in the matter which it animates and sets in motion, finds a point of support, a sort of focus for self-concentration. This focus is man his immortal soul singularly imprisoned in a mortal body. But each man considered individually is infinitely too limited, too small, to enclose the divine immensity; it can contain only a very small particle, immortal like the whole, but infinitely smaller than the whole. It follows that the divine being, the absolutely immaterial being, mind, is divisible like matter. Another mystery whose solution must be left to faith.

If God entire could find lodgment in each man, then each man would be God. We should have an immense quantity of Gods, each limited by all the others and yet none the less infinite -- a contradiction which would imply a mutual destruction of men, an impossibility of the existence of more than one. As for the particles, that is another matter; nothing more rational, indeed, than that one particle should be limited by another and be smaller than the whole. Only, here another contradiction confronts us.

To be limited, to be greater and smaller are attributes of matter, not of mind. According to the materialists, it is true, mind is only the working of the wholly material organism of man, and the greatness or smallness of mind depends absolutely on the greater or less material perfection of the human organism. But these same attributes of relative limitation and grandeur cannot be attributed to mind as the idealists conceive it, absolutely immaterial mind, mind existing independent of matter. There can be neither greater nor smaller nor any limit among minds, for there is only one mind -- God. To add that the infinitely small and limited particles which constitute human souls are at the same time immortal is to carry the contradiction to a climax. But this is a question of faith. Let us pass on.

Here then we have Divinity torn up and lodged, in infinitely small particles, in an immense number of beings of all sexes, ages, races, and colours. This is an excessively inconvenient and unhappy situation, for the divine particles are so little acquainted with each other at the outset of their human existence that they begin by devouring each other. Moreover, in the midst of this state of barbarism and wholly animal brutality, these divine particles, human souls, retain as it were a vague remembrance of their primitive divinity, and are irresistibly drawn towards their whole; they seek each other, they seek their whole. It is Divinity itself, scattered and lost in the natural world, which looks for itself in men, and it is so demolished by this multitude of human prisons in which it finds itself strewn, that, in looking for itself, it commits folly after folly.

Beginning with fetishism, it searches for and adores itself, now in a stone, now in a piece of wood, now in a rag. It is quite likely that it would never have succeeded in getting out of the rag, if *the other* divinity which was not allowed to fall into matter and which is kept in a state of pure spirit in the sublime heights of the absolute ideal, or in the celestial regions, had not had pity on it.

Here is a new mystery -- that of Divinity dividing itself into two halves, both equally infinite, of which one -- God the Father -- stays in the purely immaterial regions, and the other -- God the Son--falls into matter. We shall see directly, between these two Divinities separated from each other, continuous relations established, from above to below and from below to above; and these relations, considered as a single eternal and constant act, will constitute the Holy Ghost. Such, in its veritable theological and metaphysical meaning, is the great, the terrible mystery of the Christian Trinity.

But let us lose no time in abandoning these heights to see what is going on upon earth.

God the Father, seeing from the height of his eternal splendour that the poor God the Son, flattened out and astounded by his fall, is so plunged and lost in matter that even having reached human state he has not yet recovered himself, decides to come to his aid. From this immense number of particles at once immortal, divine, and infinitely small, in which God the Son has disseminated himself so thoroughly that he does not know himself, God the Father chooses those most pleasing to him, picks his inspired persons, his prophets, his "men of virtuous genius," the great benefactors and legislators of humanity: Zoroaster, Buddha, Moses, Confucius, Lycurgus, Solon,

Socrates, the divine Plato, and above all Jesus Christ, the complete realisation of God the Son, at last collected and concentrated in a single human person; all the apostles, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint John before all, Constantine the Great, Mahomet, then Charlemagne, Gregory VII Dante, and, according to some, Luther also, Voltaire and Rousseau, Robespierre and Danton, and many other great and holy historical personages, all of whose names it is impossible to recapitulate, but among whom I, as a Russian, beg that Saint Nicholas may not be forgotten.

Then we have reached at last the manifestation of God upon earth. But immediately God appears, man is reduced to nothing. It will be said that he is not reduced to nothing, since he is himself a particle of God. Pardon me! I admit that a particle of a definite, limited whole, however small it be, is a quantity, a positive greatness. But a particle of the infinitely great, compared with it, is necessarily infinitely small, Multiply milliards of milliards by milliards of milliards -- their product compared to the infinitely great, will be infinitely small, and the infinitely small is equal to zero. God is everything; therefore man and all the real world with him, the universe, are nothing. You will not escape this conclusion.

God appears, man is reduced to nothing; and the greater Divinity becomes, the more miserable becomes humanity. That is the history of all religions; that is the effect of all the divine inspirations and legislations. In history the name of God is the terrible club with which all divinely inspired men, the great "virtuous geniuses," have beaten down the liberty, dignity, reason, and prosperity of man.

We had first the fall of God. Now we have a fall which interests us more--that of man, caused solely by the apparition of God manifested on earth.

See in how profound an error our dear and illustrious idealists find themselves. In talking to us of God they purpose, they desire, to elevate us, emancipate us, ennoble us, and, on the contrary, they crush and degrade us. With the name of God they imagine that they can establish fraternity among men, and, on the contrary, they create pride, contempt; they sow discord, hatred, war; they establish slavery. For with God come the different degrees of divine inspiration; humanity is divided into men highly inspired, less inspired, uninspired. All are equally insignificant before God, it is true; but, compared with each other, some are greater than others; not only in fact--which would be of no consequence, because inequality in fact is lost in the collectivity when it cannot cling to some legal fiction or institution--but by the divine right of inspiration, which immediately establishes a fixed, constant, petrifying inequality. The highly inspired must be listened to and obeyed by the less inspired, and the less inspired by the uninspired. Thus we have the principle of authority well established, and with it the two fundamental institutions of slavery: Church and State.

Of all despotisms that of the *doctrinaires* or inspired religionists is the worst. They are so jealous of the glory of their God and of the triumph of their idea that they have no heart left for the liberty or the dignity or even the sufferings of living men, of real men. Divine zeal, preoccupation with the idea, finally dry up the tenderest souls, the most compassionate hearts, the sources of human love. Considering all that is, all that happens in the world from the point of view of eternity or of the abstract idea, they

treat passing matters with disdain; but the whole life of real men, of men of flesh and bone, is composed only of passing matters; they themselves are only passing beings, who, once passed, are replaced by others likewise passing, but never to return in person. Alone permanent or relatively eternal in men is humanity, which steadily developing, grows richer in passing from one generation to another. I say *relatively* eternal, because, our planet once destroyed -- it cannot fail to perish sooner or later, since everything which has begun must necessarily end -- our planet once decomposed, to serve undoubtedly as an element of some new formation in the system of the universe, which alone is really eternal, who knows what will become of our whole human development? Nevertheless, the moment of this dissolution being an enormous distance in the future, we may properly consider humanity, relatively to the short duration of human life, as eternal. But this very fact of progressive humanity is real and living only through its manifestations at definite times, in definite places, in really living men, and not through its general idea.

The general idea is always an abstraction and, for that very reason, in some sort a negation of real life. I have stated in the Appendix that human thought and, in consequence of this, science can grasp and name only the general significance of real facts, their relations, their laws--in short, that which is permanent in their continual transformations--but never their material, individual side, palpitating, so to speak, with reality and life, and therefore fugitive and intangible. Science comprehends the thought of the reality, not reality itself; the thought of life, not life. That is its limit, its only really insuperable limit, because it is founded on the very nature of thought, which is the only organ of science.

Upon this nature are based the indisputable rights and grand mission of science, but also its vital impotence and even its mischievous action whenever, through its official licensed representatives, it arrogantly claims the right to govern life. The mission of science is, by observation of the general relations of passing and real facts, to establish the general laws inherent in the development of the phenomena of the physical and social world; it fixes, so to speak, the unchangeable landmarks of humanity's progressive march by indicating the general conditions which it is necessary to rigorously observe and always fatal to ignore or forget. In a word, science is the compass of life; but it is not life. Science is unchangeable, impersonal, general, abstract, insensible, like the laws of which it is but the ideal reproduction, reflected or mental -- that is cerebral (using this word to remind us that science itself is but a material product of a material organ, the *brain*). Life is wholly fugitive and temporary, but also wholly palpitating with reality and individuality, sensibility, sufferings, joys, aspirations, needs, and passions. It alone spontaneously creates real things and; beings. Science creates nothing; it establishes and recognises only the creations of life. And every time that scientific men, emerging from their abstract world, mingle with living creation in the real world, all that they propose or create is poor, ridiculously abstract, bloodless and lifeless, still-born, like the homunculus created by Wagner, the pedantic disciple of the immortal Doctor Faust. It follows that the only mission of science is to enlighten life, not to govern it.

The government of science and of men of science, even be they positivists, disciples

of Auguste Comte, or, again, disciples of the *doctrinaire* school of German Communism, cannot fail to be impotent, ridiculous, inhuman, cruel, oppressive, exploiting, maleficent. We may say of men of science, *as such*, what I have said of theologians and metaphysicians: they have neither sense nor heart for individual and living beings. We cannot even blame them for this, for it is the natural consequence of their profession. In so far as they are men of science, they have to deal with and can take interest in nothing except generalities; that do the laws ⁵. they are not exclusively men of science, but are also more or less men of life. ⁶



III

Nevertheless, we must not rely too much on this. Though we may be well nigh certain that a *savant* would not dare to treat a man today as he treats a rabbit, it remains always to be feared that the *savants* as a body, if not interfered with, may submit living men to scientific experiments, undoubtedly less cruel but none the less disagreeable to their victims. If they cannot perform experiments upon the bodies of individuals, they will ask nothing better than to perform them on the social body, and that what must be absolutely prevented.

In their existing organisation, monopolising science and remaining thus outside of social life, the *savants* form a separate caste, in many respects analogous to the priesthood. Scientific abstractions is their God, living and real individuals are their victims, and they are the consecrated and licensed sacrificers.

Science cannot go outside of the sphere of abstractions. In this respect it is infinitely inferior to art, which, in its turn, is peculiarly concerned also with general types and general situations, but which incarnates them by an artifice of its own in forms which, if they are not living in the sense of real life none the less excite in our imagination the memory and sentiment of life; art in a certain sense individualizes the types and situations which it conceives; by means of the individualities without flesh and bone, and consequently permanent and immortal, which it has the power to create, it recalls to our minds the living, real individualities which appear and disappear under our eyes. Art, then, is as it were the return of abstraction to life; science, on the contrary, is the perpetual immolation of life, fugitive, temporary, but real, on the altar of eternal abstractions.

Science is as incapable of grasping the individuality of a man as that of a rabbit, being equally indifferent to both. Not that it is ignorant of the principle of individuality: it conceives it perfectly as a principle, but not as a fact. It knows very well that all the animal species, including the human species, have no real existence outside of an indefinite number of individuals, born and dying to make room for new individuals equally fugitive. It knows that in rising from the animal species to the superior species the principle of individuality becomes more pronounced; the individuals appear freer and more complete. It knows that man, the last and most

perfect animal of earth, presents the most complete and most remarkable individuality, because of his power to conceive, concrete, personify, as it were, in his social and private existence, the universal law. It knows, finally, when it is not vitiated by theological or metaphysical, political or judicial *doctrinairisme*, or even by a narrow scientific pride, when it is not deaf to the instincts and spontaneous aspirations of life-- it knows (and this is its last word) that respect for man is the supreme law of Humanity, and that the great, the real object of history, its only legitimate object is the humanization and emancipation, the real liberty, the prosperity and happiness of each individual living in society. For, if we would not fall back into the liberticidal fiction of the public welfare represented by the State, a fiction always founded on the systematic sacrifice of the people, we must clearly recognize that collective liberty and prosperity exist only so far as they represent the sum of individual liberties and prosperities.

Science knows all these things, but it does not and cannot go beyond them. Abstraction being its very nature, it can well enough conceive the principle of real and living individuality, but it can have no dealings with real and living individuals; it concerns itself with individuals in general, but not with Peter or James, not with such or such a one, who, so far as it is concerned, do not, cannot, have any existence. Its individuals, I repeat, are only abstractions.

Now, history is made, not by abstract individuals, but by acting, living and passing individuals. Abstractions advance only when borne forward by real men. For these beings made, not in idea only, but in reality of flesh and blood, science has no heart: it considers them at most as *material for intellectual and social development*. What does it care for the particular conditions and chance fate of Peter or James? It would make itself ridiculous, it would abdicate, it would annihilate itself, if it wished to concern itself with them otherwise than as examples in support of its eternal theories. And it would be ridiculous to wish it to do so, for its mission lies not there. It cannot grasp the concrete; it can move only in abstractions. Its mission is to busy itself with the situation and the *general* conditions of the existence and development, either of the human species in general, or of such a race, such a people, such a class or category of individuals; the *general* causes of their prosperity, their decline, and the best *general* methods of securing, their progress in all ways. Provided it accomplishes this task broadly and rationally, it will do its whole duty, and it would be really unjust to expect more of it.

But it would be equally ridiculous, it would be disastrous to entrust it with a mission which it is incapable of fulfilling. Since its own nature forces it to ignore the existence of Peter and James, it must never be permitted, nor must anybody be permitted in its name, to govern Peter and James. For it were capable of treating them almost as it treats rabbits. Or rather, it would continue to ignore them; but its licensed representatives, men not at all abstract, but on the contrary in very active life and having very substantial interests, yielding to the pernicious influence which privilege inevitably exercises upon men, would finally fleece other men in the name of science, just as they have been fleeced hitherto by priests, politicians of all shades, and lawyers, in the name of God, of the State, of judicial Right.

What I preach then is, to a certain extent, *the revolt of life against science*, or rather against the *government* of science, not to destroy science-that would be high treason to humanity-but to remand it to its place so that it can never leave it again. Until now all human history has been only a perpetual and bloody immolation of millions of poor human beings in honor of some pitiless abstraction-God, country, power of State, national honor, historical rights, judicial rights, political liberty, public welfare. Such has been up to today the natural, spontaneous, and inevitable movement of human societies. We cannot undo it; we must submit to it so far as the past is concerned, as we submit to all natural fatalities. We must believe that that was the only possible way, to educate the human race. For we must not deceive ourselves: even in attributing the larger part to the Machiavellian wiles of the governing classes, we have to recognize that no minority would have been powerful enough to impose all these horrible sacrifices upon the masses if there had not been in the masses themselves a dizzy spontaneous movement which pushed them on to continual self-sacrifice, now to one, now to another of these devouring abstractions the vampires of history ever nourished upon human blood.

We readily understand that this is very gratifying, to the theologians, politicians, and jurists. Priests of these abstractions, they live only by the continual immolation of the people. Nor is it more surprising that metaphysics too, should give its consent. Its only mission is to justify and rationalize as far as possible the iniquitous and absurd. But that positive science itself should have shown the same tendencies is a fact which we must deplore while we establish it. That it has done so is due to two reasons: in the first place, because, constituted outside of life, it is represented by a privileged body; and in the second place, because thus far it has posited itself as an absolute and final object of all human development. By a judicious criticism, which it can and finally will be forced to pass upon itself, it would understand, on the contrary, that it is only a means for the realization of a much higher object-that of the complete humanization of the *real* situation of all the *real* individuals who are born, who live, and who die, on earth.

The immense advantage of positive science over theology, metaphysics, politics, and judicial right consists in this-that, in place of the false and fatal abstractions set up by these doctrines, it posits true abstractions which express the general nature and logic of things, their general relations, and the general laws of their development. This separates it profoundly from all preceding doctrines, and will assure it for ever a great position in society: it will constitute in a certain sense society's collective consciousness. But there is one aspect in which it resembles all these doctrines: its only possible object being abstractions, it is forced by its very nature to ignore real men, outside of whom the truest abstractions have no existence. To remedy this radical defect positive science will have to proceed by a different method from that followed by the doctrines of the past. The latter have taken advantage of the ignorance of the masses to sacrifice them with delight to their abstractions, which by the way, are always very lucrative to those who represent them in flesh and bone. Positive science, recognizing its absolute inability to conceive real individuals and interest itself in their lot, must definitely and absolutely renounce all claim to the

government of societies; for if it should meddle therein, it would only sacrifice continually the living men whom it ignores to the abstractions which constitute the sole object of its legitimate preoccupations.

The true science of history, for instance, does not yet exist; scarcely do we begin today to catch a glimpse of its extremely complicated conditions. But suppose it were definitely developed, what could it give us? It would exhibit a faithful and rational picture of the natural development of the general conditions-material and ideal, economical, political and social, religious, philosophical, aesthetic, and scientific-of the societies which have a history. But this universal picture of human civilization, however detailed it might be, would never show anything beyond general and consequently *abstract* estimates. The milliards of individuals who have furnished the *living and suffering materials* of this history at once triumphant and dismal-triumphant by its general results, dismal by the immense hecatomb of human victims "crushed under its car"-those milliards of obscure individuals without whom none of the great abstract results of history would have been obtained-and who, bear in mind, have never benefited by any of these results-will find no place, not even the slightest in our annals. They have lived and been sacrificed, crushed for the good of abstract humanity, that is all.

Shall we blame the science of history. That would be unjust and ridiculous. Individuals cannot be grasped by thought, by reflection, or even by human speech, which is capable of expressing abstractions only; they cannot be grasped in the present day any more than in the past. Therefore social science itself, the science of the future, will necessarily continue to ignore them. All that, we have a right to demand of it is that it shall point us with faithful and sure hand to the *general causes of individual suffering*- among these causes it will not forget the immolation and subordination (still too frequent, alas!) of living individuals to abstract generalities-at the same time showing us the *general conditions necessary to the real emancipation of the individuals living in society*. That is its mission; those are its limits, beyond which the action of social science can be only impotent and fatal. Beyond those limits being the *doctrinaire* and governmental pretentious of its licensed representatives, its priests. It is time to have done with all popes and priests; we want them no longer, even if they call themselves Social Democrats.

Once more, the sole mission of science is to light the road. Only Life, delivered from all its governmental and *doctrinaire* barriers, and given full liberty of action, can create.

How solve this antinomy?

On the one hand, science is indispensable to the rational organization of society; on the other, being incapable of interesting itself in that which is real and living, it must not interfere with the real or practical organization of society.

This contradiction can be solved only in one way: by the liquidation of science as a moral being existing outside the life of all, and represented by a body of breveted *savants*; it must spread among the masses. Science, being called upon to henceforth represent society's collective consciousness, must really become the property of

everybody. Thereby, without losing anything of its universal character, of which it can never divest itself without ceasing to be science, and while continuing to concern itself exclusively with general causes, the conditions and fixed relations of individuals and things, it will become one in fact with the immediate and real life of all individuals. That will be a movement analogous to that which said to the Protestants at the beginning of the Reformation that there was no further need of priests for man, who would henceforth be his own priest, every man, thanks to the invisible intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, having at last succeeded in swallowing his good God. But here the question is not of Jesus Christ, nor good God, nor of political liberty, nor of judicial right-things all theologically or metaphysically revealed, and all alike indigestible. The world of scientific abstractions is not revealed; it is inherent in the real world, of which it is only the general or abstract expression and representation. As long as it forms a separate region, specially represented by the *savants* as a body, this ideal world threatens to take the place of a good God to the real world, reserving for its licensed representatives the office of priests. That is the reason why it is necessary to dissolve the special social organization of the *savants* by general instruction, equal for all in all things, in order that the masses, ceasing to be flocks led and shorn by privileged priests, may take into their own hands the direction of their destinies.⁷

But until the masses shall have reached this degree of instruction, will it be necessary to leave them to the government of scientific men? Certainly not. It would be better for them to dispense with science than allow themselves to be governed by *savants*. The first consequence of the government of these men would be to render science inaccessible to the people, and such a government would necessarily be aristocratic because the existing scientific institutions are essentially aristocratic. An aristocracy of learning! from the practical point of view the most implacable, and from the social point of view the most haughty and insulting--such would be the power established in the name of science. This *régime* would be capable of paralyzing the life and movement of society. The *savants* always presumptuous, ever self-sufficient and ever impotent, would desire to meddle with everything, and the sources of life would dry up under the breath of their abstractions.

Once more, Life, not science, creates life; the spontaneous action of the people themselves alone can create liberty. Undoubtedly it would be a very fortunate thing if science could, from this day forth, illuminate the spontaneous march of the people towards their emancipation. But better an absence of light than a false and feeble light, kindled only to mislead those who follow it. After all, the people will not lack light. Not in vain have they traversed a long historic career, and paid for their errors by centuries of misery. The practical summary of their painful experiences constitutes a sort of traditional science, which in certain respects is worth as much as theoretical science. Last of all, a portion of the youth-- those of the bourgeois students who feel hatred enough for the falsehood, hypocrisy, injustice, and cowardice of the bourgeoisie to find courage to turn their backs upon it, and passion enough to unreservedly embrace the just and human cause of the proletariat--those will be, as I have already said, fraternal instructors of the people; thanks to them, there will be no

occasion for the government of the *savants*.

If the people should beware of the government of the *savants*, all the more should they provide against that of the inspired idealists. The more sincere these believers and poets of heaven, the more dangerous they become. The scientific abstraction, I have said, is a rational abstraction, true in its essence, necessary to life, of which it is the theoretical representation, or, if one prefers, the conscience. It may, it must be, absorbed and digested by life. The idealistic abstraction, God, is a corrosive poison, which destroys and decomposes life, falsifies and kills it. The pride of the idealists, not being personal but divine, is invincible and inexorable: it may, it must, die, but it will never yield, and while it has a breath left it will try to subject men to its God, just as the lieutenants of Prussia, these practical idealists of Germany, would like to see the people crushed under the spurred boot of their emperor. The faith is the same, the end but little different, and the result, as that of faith, is slavery.

It is at the same time the triumph of the ugliest and most brutal materialism. There is no need to demonstrate this in the case of Germany; one would have to be blind to avoid seeing it at the present hour. But I think it is still necessary to demonstrate it in the case of divine idealism.

Man, like all the rest of nature, is an entirely material being. The mind, the faculty of thinking, of receiving and reflecting upon different external and internal sensations, of remembering them when they have passed and reproducing them by the imagination, of comparing and distinguishing them, of abstracting determinations common to them and thus creating general concepts, and finally of forming ideas by grouping and combining concepts according to different methods -- intelligence, in a word, sole creator of our whole, ideal world, is a property of the animal body and especially of the quite material organism of the brain.

We know this certainly, by the experience of all, which no fact has ever contradicted and which any man can verify at any moment of his life. In all animals, without excepting the wholly inferior species, we find a certain degree of intelligence, and we see that, in the series of species, animal intelligence develops in proportion as the organization of a species approaches that of man, but that in man alone it attains to that power of abstraction which properly constitutes thought.

Universal experience,⁸ which is the sole origin, the source of all our knowledge, shows us, therefore, that all intelligence is always attached to some animal body, and that the intensity, the power, of this animal function depends on the relative perfection of the organism. The latter of these results of universal experience is not applicable only to the different animal species; we establish it likewise in men, whose intellectual and moral power depends so clearly upon the greater or less perfection of their organism as a race, as a nation, as a class, and as individuals, that it is not necessary to insist upon this point.²

On the other hand, it is certain that no man has ever seen or can see pure mind, detached from all material form existing separately from any animal body whatsoever. But if no person has seen it, how is it that men have come to believe in its existence? The fact of this belief is certain and if not universal, as all the idealists

pretend, at least very general, and as such it is entirely worthy of our closest attention, for a general belief, however foolish it may be, exercises too potent a sway over the destiny of men to warrant us in ignoring it or putting it aside.

The explanation of this belief, moreover, is rational enough. The example afforded us by children and young people, and even by many men long past the age of majority, shows us that man may use his mental faculties for a long time before accounting to himself for the way in which he uses them, before becoming clearly conscious of it. During this working of the mind unconscious of itself, during this action of innocent or believing intelligence, man, obsessed by the external world, pushed on by that internal goad called life and its manifold necessities, creates a quantity of imaginations, concepts, and ideas necessarily very imperfect at first and conforming but slightly to the reality of the things and facts which they endeavour to express. Not having yet the consciousness of his own intelligent action, not knowing yet that he himself has produced and continues to produce these imaginations, these concepts, these ideas, ignoring their wholly *subjective* -- that is, human--origin, he must naturally consider them as *objective* beings, as real beings, wholly independent of him, existing by themselves and in themselves.

It was thus that primitive peoples, emerging slowly from their animal innocence, created their gods. Having created them, not suspecting that they themselves were the real creators, they worshipped them; considering them as real beings infinitely superior to themselves, they attributed omnipotence to them, and recognised themselves as their creatures, their slaves. As fast as human ideas develop, the gods, who, as I have already stated, were never anything more than a fantastic, ideal, poetical reverberation of an inverted image, become idealised also. At first gross fetishes, they gradually become pure spirits, existing outside of the visible world, and at last, in the course of a long historic evolution, are confounded in a single Divine Being, pure, eternal, absolute Spirit, creator and master of the worlds.

In every development, just or false, real or imaginary collective or individual, it is always the first step, the first act that is the most difficult. That step once taken, the rest follows naturally as a necessary consequence. The difficult step in the historical development of this terrible religious insanity which continues to obsess and crush us was to posit a divine world as such, outside the world. This first act of madness, so natural from the physiological point of view and consequently necessary in the history of humanity, was not accomplished at a single stroke. I know not how many centuries were needed to develop this belief and make it a governing influence upon the mental customs of men. But, once established, it became omnipotent, as each insane notion necessarily becomes when it takes possession of man's brain. Take a madman, whatever the object of his madness--you will find that obscure and fixed idea which obsesses him seems to him the most natural thing in the world, and that, on the contrary, the real things which contradict this idea seem to him ridiculous and odious follies. Well religion is a collective insanity, the more powerful because it is traditional folly, and because its origin is lost in the most remote antiquity. As collective insanity it has penetrated to the very depths of the public and private existence of the peoples; it is incarnate in society; it has become, so to speak, the

collective soul and thought. Every man is enveloped in it from his birth; he sucks it in with his mother's milk, absorbs it with all that he touches, all that he sees. He is so exclusive]y fed upon it, so poisoned and penetrated by it in all his being that later, however powerful his natural mind, he has to make unheard-of efforts to deliver himself from it, and then never completely succeeds. We have one proof of this in our modern idealists, and another in our *doctrinaire* materialists--the German Communists. They have found no way to shake off the religion of the State.

The supernatural world, the divine world, once well established in the imagination of the peoples, the development of the various religious systems has followed its natural and logical course, conforming, moreover, in all things to the contemporary development of economical and political relations of which it has been in all ages, in the world of religious fancy, the faithful reproduction and divine consecration. Thus has the collective and historical insanity which calls itself religion been developed since fetishism, passing through all the stages from polytheism to Christian monotheism.

The second step in the development of religious beliefs, undoubtedly the most difficult next to the establishment of a separate divine world, was precisely this transition from polytheism to monotheism, from the religious materialism of the pagans to the spiritualistic faith of the Christians. The pagan gods--and this was their principal characteristic--were first of all exclusively national gods. Very numerous, they necessarily retained a more or less material character, or, rather, they were so numerous because they were material, diversity being one of the principal attributes of the real world. The pagan gods were not yet strictly the negation of real things; they were only a fantastic exaggeration of them.

We have seen how much this transition cost the Jewish people, constituting, so to speak, its entire history. In vain did Moses and the prophets preach the one god; the people always relapsed into their primitive idolatry, into the ancient and comparatively much more natural and convenient faith in many good gods, more material, more human, and more palpable. Jehovah himself, their sole God, the God of Moses and the prophets, was still an extremely national God, who, to reward and punish his faithful followers, his chosen people, used material arguments, often stupid, always gross and cruel. It does not even appear that faith in his existence implied a negation of the existence of earlier gods. The Jewish God did not deny the existence of these rivals; he simply did not want his people to worship them side by side with him, because before all Jehovah was a very Jealous God. His first commandment was this:

"I am the Lord thy God, and thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Jehovah, then, was only a first draft, very material and very rough, of the supreme deity of modern idealism. Moreover, he was only a national God, like the Russian God worshipped by the German generals, subjects of the Czar and patriots of the empire of all the Russias; like the German God, whom the pietists and the German generals, subjects of William I. at Berlin, will no doubt soon proclaim. The supreme being cannot be a national God; he must be the God of entire Humanity. Nor can the

supreme being be a material being; he must be the negation of all matter-- pure spirit. Two things have proved necessary to the realisation of the worship of the supreme being: (1) a realisation, such as it is, of Humanity by the negation of nationalities and national forms of worship; (2) a development, already far advanced, of metaphysical ideas in order to spiritualise the gross Jehovah of the Jews.

The first condition was fulfilled by the Romans, though in a very negative way no doubt, by the conquest of most of the countries known to the ancients and by the destruction of their national institutions. The gods of all the conquered nations, gathered in the Pantheon, mutually cancelled each other. This was the first draft of humanity, very gross and quite negative.

As for the second condition, the spiritualisation of Jehovah, that was realised by the Greeks long before the conquest of their country by the Romans. They were the creators of metaphysics. Greece, in the cradle of her history, had already found from the Orient a divine world which had been definitely established in the traditional faith of her peoples; this world had been left and handed over to her by the Orient. In her instinctive period, prior to her political history, she had developed and prodigiously humanised this divine world through her poets; and when she actually began her history, she already had a religion readymade, the most sympathetic and noble of all the religions which have existed, so far at least as a religion--that is, a lie--can be noble and sympathetic. Her great thinkers--and no nation has had greater than Greece--found the divine world established, not only outside of themselves in the people, but also in themselves as a habit of feeling and thought, and naturally they took it as a point of departure. That they made no theology--that is, that they did not wait in vain to reconcile dawning reason with the absurdities of such a god, as did the scholastics of the Middle Ages--was already much in their favour. They left the gods out of their speculations and attached themselves directly to the divine idea, one, invisible, omnipotent, eternal, and absolutely spiritualistic but impersonal. As concerns Spiritualism, then, the Greek metaphysicians, much more than the Jews, were the creators of the Christian god. The Jews only added to it the brutal personality of their Jehovah.

That a sublime genius like the divine Plato could have been absolutely convinced of the reality of the divine idea shows us how contagious, how omnipotent, is the tradition of the religious mania even on the greatest minds. Besides, we should not be surprised at it, since, even in our day, the greatest philosophical genius which has existed since Aristotle and Plato, Hegel--in spite even of Kant's criticism, imperfect and too metaphysical though it be, which had demolished the objectivity or reality of the divine ideas--tried to replace these divine ideas upon their transcendental or celestial throne. It is true that Hegel went about his work of restoration in so impolite a manner that he killed the good God for ever. He took away from these ideas their divine halo, by showing to whoever will read him that they were never anything more than a creation of the human mind running through history in search of itself. To put an end to all religious insanities and the divine *mirage*, he left nothing lacking but the utterance of those grand words which were said after him, almost at the same time, by two great minds who had never heard of each other--Ludwig Feuerbach, the disciple

and demolisher of Hegel, in Germany, and Auguste Comte, the founder of positive philosophy, in France. These words were as follows:

"Metaphysics are reduced to psychology." All the metaphysical systems have been nothing else than human psychology developing itself in history.

To-day it is no longer difficult to understand how the divine ideas were born, how they were created in succession by the abstractive faculty of man. Man made the gods. But in the time of Plato this knowledge was impossible. The collective mind, and consequently the individual mind as well, even that of the greatest genius, was not ripe for that. Scarcely had it said with Socrates: "Know thyself!" This self-knowledge existed only in a state of intuition; in fact, it amounted to nothing. Hence it was impossible for the human mind to suspect that it was itself the sole creator of the divine world. It found the divine world before it; it found it as history, as tradition, as a sentiment, as a habit of thought; and it necessarily made it the object of its loftiest speculations. Thus was born metaphysics, and thus were developed and perfected the divine ideas, the basis of Spiritualism.

It is true that after Plato there was a sort of inverse movement in the development of the mind. Aristotle, the true father of science and positive philosophy, did not deny the divine world, but concerned himself with it as little as possible. He was the first to study, like the analyst and experimenter that he was, logic, the laws of human thought, and at the same time the physical world, not in its ideal, illusory essence, but in its real aspect. After him the Greeks of Alexandria established the first school of the positive scientists. They were atheists. But their atheism left no mark on their contemporaries. Science tended more and more to separate itself from life. After Plato, divine ideas were rejected in metaphysics themselves; this was done by the Epicureans and Sceptics, two sects who contributed much to the degradation of human aristocracy, but they had no effect upon the masses.

Another school, infinitely more influential, was formed at Alexandria. This was the school of neo-Platonists. These, confounding in an impure mixture the monstrous imaginations of the Orient with the ideas of Plato, were the true originators, and later the elaborators, of the Christian dogmas.

Thus the personal and gross egoism of Jehovah, the not less brutal and gross Roman conquest, and the metaphysical ideal speculation of the Greeks, materialised by contact with the Orient, were the three historical elements which made up the spiritualistic religion of the Christians.

Before the altar of a unique and supreme God was raised on the ruins of the numerous altars of the pagan gods, the autonomy of the various nations composing the pagan or ancient world had to be destroyed first. This was very brutally done by the Romans who, by conquering the greatest part of the globe known to the ancients, laid the first foundations, quite gross and negative ones no doubt, of humanity. A God thus raised above the national differences, material and social, of all countries, and in a certain sense the direct negation of them, must necessarily be an immaterial and abstract being. But faith in the existence of such a being, so difficult a matter, could not spring into existence suddenly. Consequently, as I have demonstrated in the

Appendix, it went through a long course of preparation and development at the hands of Greek metaphysics, which were the first to establish in a philosophical manner the notion of *the divine idea*, a model eternally creative and always reproduced by the visible world. But the divinity conceived and created by Greek philosophy was an impersonal divinity. No logical and serious metaphysics being able to rise, or, rather, to descend, to the idea of a personal God, it became necessary, therefore, to imagine a God who was one and very personal at once. He was found in the very brutal, selfish, and cruel person of Jehovah, the national God of the Jews. But the Jews, in spite of that exclusive national spirit which distinguishes them even to-day, had become in fact, long before the birth of Christ, the most international people of the world. Some of them carried away as captives, but many more even urged on by that mercantile passion which constitutes one of the principal traits of their character, they had spread through all countries, carrying everywhere the worship of their Jehovah, to whom they remained all the more faithful the more he abandoned them.

In Alexandria this terrible god of the Jews made the personal acquaintance of the metaphysical divinity of Plato, already much corrupted by Oriental contact, and corrupted her still more by his own. In spite of his national, jealous, and ferocious exclusivism, he could not long resist the graces of this ideal and impersonal divinity of the Greeks. He married her, and from this marriage was born the spiritualistic--but not spirited--God of the Christians. The neoplatonists of Alexandria are known to have been the principal creators of the Christian theology.

Nevertheless theology alone does not make a religion, any more than historical elements suffice to create history. By historical elements I mean the general conditions of any real development whatsoever--for example in this case the conquest of the world by the Romans and the meeting of the God of the Jews with the ideal of divinity of the Greeks. To impregnate the historical elements, to cause them to run through a series of new historical transformations, a living, spontaneous fact was needed, without which they might have remained many centuries longer in the state of unproductive elements. This fact was not lacking in Christianity: it was the propagandism, martyrdom, and death of Jesus Christ.

We know almost nothing of this great and saintly personage, all that the gospels tell us being contradictory, and so fabulous that we can scarcely seize upon a few real and vital traits. But it is certain that he was the preacher of the poor, the friend and consoler of the wretched, of the ignorant, of the slaves, and of the women, and that by these last he was much loved. He promised eternal life to all who are oppressed, to all who suffer here below; and the number is immense. He was hanged, as a matter of course, by the representatives of the official morality and public order of that period. His disciples and the disciples of his disciples succeeded in spreading, thanks to the destruction of the national barriers by the Roman conquest, and propagated the Gospel in all the countries known to the ancients. Everywhere they were received with open arms by the slaves and the women, the two most oppressed, most suffering, and naturally also the most ignorant classes of the ancient world. For even such few proselytes as they made in the privileged and learned world they were indebted in great part to the influence of women. Their most extensive propagandism was

directed almost exclusively among the people, unfortunate and degraded by slavery. This was the first awakening, the first intellectual revolt of the proletariat.

The great honour of Christianity, its incontestable merit, and the whole secret of its unprecedented and yet thoroughly legitimate triumph, lay in the fact that it appealed to that suffering and immense public to which the ancient world, a strict and cruel intellectual and political aristocracy, denied even the simplest rights of humanity. Otherwise it never could have spread. The doctrine taught by the apostles of Christ, wholly consoling as it may have seemed to the unfortunate, was too revolting, too absurd from the standpoint of human reason, ever to have been accepted by enlightened men. According with what joy the apostle Paul speaks of the *scandale de la foi* and of the triumph of that *divine folie* rejected by the powerful and wise of the century, but all the more passionately accepted by the simple, the ignorant, and the weak-minded!

Indeed there must have been a very deep-seated dissatisfaction with life, a very intense thirst of heart, and an almost absolute poverty of thought, to secure the acceptance of the Christian absurdity, the most audacious and monstrous of all religious absurdities.

This was not only the negation of all the political, social, and religious institutions of antiquity: it was the absolute overturn of common sense, of all human reason. The living being, the real world, were considered thereafter as nothing; whereas the product of man's abstractive faculty, the last and supreme abstraction in which this faculty, far beyond existing things, even beyond the most general determinations of the living being, the ideas of space and time. having nothing left to advance beyond, rests in contemplation of his emptiness and absolute immobility.

That abstraction, that *caput mortuum*, absolutely void of all contents the true nothing, God, is proclaimed the only real, eternal, all-powerful being. The real All is declared nothing and the absolute nothing the All. The shadow becomes the substance and the substance vanishes like a shadow.¹⁰

All this was audacity and absurdity unspeakable, the true *scandale de la foi*, the triumph of credulous stupidity over the mind for the masses; and--for a few--the triumphant irony of a mind wearied, corrupted, disillusioned, and disgusted in honest and serious search for truth; it was that necessity of shaking off thought and becoming brutally stupid so frequently felt by surfeited minds:



Credo quod absurdum.

I believe in the absurd; I believe in it, precisely and mainly, because it is absurd. In the same way many distinguished and enlightened minds in our day believe in animal magnetism, spiritualism, tipping tables, and--why go so far?--believe still in Christianity, in idealism, in God.

The belief of the ancient proletariat, like that of the modern, was more robust and simple, less *haut goût*. The Christian propagandism appealed to its heart, not to its

mind; to its eternal aspirations, its necessities, its sufferings, its slavery, not to its reason, which still slept and therefore could know nothing about logical contradictions and the evidence of the absurd. It was interested solely in knowing when the hour of promised deliverance would strike, when the kingdom of God would come. As for theological dogmas, it did not trouble itself about them because it understood nothing about them. The proletariat converted to Christianity constituted its growing material but not its intellectual strength.

As for the Christian dogmas, it is known that they were elaborated in a series of theological and literary works and in the Councils, principally by the converted neo-Platonists of the Orient. The Greek mind had fallen so low that, in the fourth century of the Christian era, the period of the first Council, the idea of a personal God, pure, eternal, absolute mind, creator and supreme master, existing outside of the world, was unanimously accepted by the Church Fathers; as a logical consequence of this absolute absurdity, it then became natural and necessary to believe in the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, lodged and imprisoned in a body only partially mortal, there being in this body itself a portion which, while material is immortal like the soul, and must be resurrected with it. We see how difficult it was, even for the Church Fathers; to conceive pure minds outside of any material form. It should be added that, in general, it is the character of every metaphysical and theological argument to seek to explain one absurdity by another.

It was very fortunate for Christianity that it met a world of slaves. It had another piece of good luck in the invasion of the Barbarians. The latter were worthy people, full of natural force, and, above all, urged on by a great necessity of life and a great capacity for it; brigands who had stood every test, capable of devastating and gobbling up anything, like their successors, the Germans of today; but they were much less systematic and pedantic than these last, much less moralistic, less learned, and on the other hand much more independent and proud, capable of science and not incapable of liberty, as are the bourgeois of modern Germany. But, in spite of all their great qualities, they were nothing but barbarians--that is, as indifferent to all questions of theology and metaphysics as the ancient slaves, a great number of whom, moreover, belonged to their race. So that, their practical repugnance once overcome, it was not difficult to convert them theoretically to Christianity.

For ten centuries Christianity, armed with the omnipotence of Church and State and opposed by no competition, was able to deprave, debase, and falsify the mind of Europe. It had no competitors, because outside of the Church there were neither thinkers nor educated persons. It alone thought, it alone spoke and wrote, it alone taught. Though heresies arose in its bosom, they affected only the theological or practical developments of the fundamental dogma never that dogma itself. The belief in God, pure spirit and creator of the world, and the belief in the immateriality of the soul remained untouched. This double belief became the ideal basis of the whole Occidental and Oriental civilization of Europe; it penetrated and became incarnate in all the institutions, all the details of the public and private life of all classes, and the masses as well.

After that, is it surprising that this belief has lived until the present day, continuing to exercise its disastrous influence even upon select minds, such as those of Mazzini, Michelet, Quinet, and so many others? We have seen that the first attack upon it came from the *renaissance* of the free mind in the fifteenth century, which produced heroes and martyrs like Vanini, Giordano Bruno, and Galileo. Although drowned in the noise, tumult, and passions of the Reformation, it noiselessly continued its invisible work, bequeathing to the noblest minds of each generation its task of human emancipation by the destruction of the absurd, until at last, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, it again reappeared in broad day, boldly waving the flag of atheism and materialism.

The human mind, then, one might have supposed, was at last about to deliver itself from all the divine obsessions. Not at all. The divine falsehood upon which humanity had been feeding for eighteen centuries (speaking of Christianity only) was once more to show itself more powerful than human truth. No longer able to make use of the black robe, of the ravens consecrated by the Church, of the Catholic or Protestant priests, all confidence in whom had been lost, it made use of lay priests, short-robed liars and sophists. among whom the principal rôles devolved upon two fatal men, one the falsest mind, the other the most doctrinally despotic will, of the last century--J. J. Rousseau and Robespierre.

The first is the perfect type of narrowness and suspicious meanness, of exaltation without other object than his own person, of cold enthusiasm and hypocrisy at once sentimental and implacable, of the falsehood of modern idealism. He may be considered as the real creator of modern reaction. To all appearance the most democratic writer of the eighteenth century, he bred within himself the pitiless despotism of the statesman. He was the prophet of the doctrinaire State, as Robespierre, his worthy and faithful disciple, tried to become its high priest. Having heard the saying of Voltaire that, if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him, J. J. Rousseau invented the Supreme Being, the abstract and sterile God of the deists. And It was in the name of the Supreme Being, and of the hypocritical virtue commanded by this Supreme Being, that Robespierre guillotined first the Hébertists and then the very genius of the Revolution, Danton, in whose person he assassinated the Republic, thus preparing the way for the thenceforth necessary triumph of the dictatorship of Bonaparte I. After this great triumph, the idealistic reaction sought and found servants less fanatical, less terrible nearer to the diminished stature of the actual bourgeoisie. In France, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, and--shall I say it? Why not? All must be said if it is truth--Victor Hugo himself, the democrat, the republican, the quasi-socialist of today! and after them the whole melancholy and sentimental company of poor and pallid minds who, under the leadership of these masters, established the modern romantic school in Germany, the Schlegels, the Tiecks, the Novalis, the Werners, the Schellings, and so many others besides, whose names do not even deserve to be recalled.

The literature created by this school was the very reign of ghosts and phantoms. It could not stand the sunlight; the twilight alone permitted it to live. No more could it stand the brutal contact of the masses. It was the literature of the tender, delicate,

distinguished souls, aspiring to heaven, and living on earth as if in spite of themselves. It had a horror and contempt for the politics and questions of the day; but when perchance it referred to them, it showed itself frankly reactionary, took the side of the Church against the insolence of the freethinkers, of the kings against the peoples, and of all the aristocrats against the vile rabble of the streets. For the rest, as I have just said, the dominant feature of the school of romanticism was a quasi-complete indifference to politics. Amid the clouds in which it lived could be distinguished two real points-- the rapid development of bourgeois materialism and the ungovernable outburst of individual vanities.

To understand this romantic literature, the reason for its existence must be sought in the transformation which had been effected in the bosom of the bourgeois class since the revolution of 1793.

From the Renaissance and the Reformation down to the Revolution, the bourgeoisie, if not in Germany, at least in Italy, in France, in Switzerland, in England, in Holland, was the hero and representative of the revolutionary genius of history. From its bosom sprang most of the freethinkers of the fifteenth century, the religious reformers of the two following centuries, and the apostles of human emancipation, including this time those of Germany, of the past century. It alone, naturally supported by the powerful arm of the people, who had faith in it, made the revolution of 1789 and '93. It proclaimed the downfall of royalty and of the Church, the fraternity of the peoples, the rights of man and of the citizen. Those are its titles to glory; they are immortal!

Soon it split. A considerable portion of the purchasers of national property having become rich, and supporting themselves no longer on the proletariat of the cities, but on the major portion of the peasants of France, these also having become landed proprietors, had no aspiration left but for peace, the re-establishment of public order, and the foundation of a strong and regular government. It therefore welcomed with joy the dictatorship of the first Bonaparte, and, although always Voltairian, did not view with displeasure the Concordat with the Pope and the re-establishment of the official Church in France: "*Religion is so necessary to the people!*" Which means that, satiated themselves, this portion of the bourgeoisie then began to see that it was needful to the maintenance of their situation and the preservation of their newly-acquired estates to appease the unsatisfied hunger of the people by promises of heavenly manna. Then it was that Chateaubriand began to preach.¹¹

Napoleon fell and the Restoration brought back into France the legitimate monarchy, and with it the power of the Church and of the nobles, who regained, if not the whole, at least a considerable portion of their former influence. This reaction threw the bourgeoisie back into the Revolution, and with the revolutionary spirit that of scepticism also was re-awakened in it. It set Chateaubriand aside and began to read Voltaire again; but it did not go so far as Diderot: its debilitated nerves could not stand nourishment so strong. Voltaire, on the contrary, at once a freethinker and a deist, suited it very well. Béranger and P. L. Courier expressed this new tendency perfectly. The God of the good people" and the ideal of the bourgeois king, at once liberal and democratic, sketched against the majestic and thenceforth inoffensive

background of the Empire's gigantic victories such was at that period the daily intellectual food of the bourgeoisie of France.

Lamartine, to be sure, excited by a vain and ridiculously envious desire to rise to the poetic height of the great Byron, had begun his coldly delirious hymns in honour of the God of the nobles and of the legitimate monarchy. But his songs resounded only in aristocratic salons. The bourgeoisie did not hear them. Béranger was its poet and Courier was its political writer.

The revolution of July resulted in lifting its tastes. We know that every bourgeois in France carries within him the imperishable type of the bourgeois gentleman, a type which never fails to appear immediately the parvenu acquires a little wealth and power. In 1830 the wealthy bourgeoisie had definitely replaced the old nobility in the seats of power. It naturally tended to establish a new aristocracy. An aristocracy of capital first of all, but also an aristocracy of intellect, of good manners and delicate sentiments. It began to feel religious.

This was not on its part simply an aping of aristocratic customs. It was also a necessity of its position. The proletariat had rendered it a final service in once more aiding it to overthrow the nobility. The bourgeoisie now had no further need of its cooperation, for it felt itself firmly seated in the shadow of the throne of July, and the alliance with the people, thenceforth useless, began to become inconvenient. It was necessary to remand it to its place, which naturally could not be done without provoking great indignation among the masses. It became necessary to restrain this indignation. In the name of what? In the name of the bourgeois interest bluntly confessed? That would have been much too cynical. The more unjust and inhuman an interest is, the greater need it has of sanction. Now, where find it if not in religion, that good protectress of all I the well-fed and the useful consoler of the hungry? And more than ever the triumphant bourgeoisie saw that religion was indispensable to the people.

After having won all its titles to glory in religious, philosophical, and political opposition, in protest and in revolution, it at last became the dominant class and thereby even the defender and preserver of the State, thenceforth the regular institution of the exclusive power of that class. The State is force, and for it, first of all, is the right of force, the triumphant argument of the needle-gun, of the *chassepot*. But man is so singularly constituted that this argument, wholly eloquent as it may appear, is not sufficient in the long run. Some moral sanction or other is absolutely necessary to enforce his respect. Further, this sanction must be at once so simple and so plain that it may convince the masses, who, after having been reduced by the power of the State, must also be induced to morally recognise its right.

There are only two ways of convincing the masses of the goodness of any social institution whatever. The first, the only real one, but also the most difficult to adopt--because it implies the abolition of the State, or, in other words, the abolition of the organised political exploitation of the majority by any minority whatsoever--would be the direct and complete satisfaction of the needs and aspirations of the people, which would be equivalent to the complete liquidation of the political and

economical existence of the bourgeois class, or, again, to the abolition of the State. Beneficial means for the masses, but detrimental to bourgeois interests; hence it is useless to talk about them.

The only way, on the contrary, harmful only to the people, precious in its salvation of bourgeois privileges, is no other than religion. That is the eternal *mirage* which leads away the masses in a search for divine treasures, while much more reserved, the governing class contents itself with dividing among all its members--very unequally, moreover and always giving most to him who possesses most--the miserable goods of earth and the plunder taken from the people, including their political and social liberty.

There is not, there cannot be, a State without religion. Take the freest States in the world--the United States of America or the Swiss Confederation, for instance--and see what an important part is played in all official discourses by divine Providence, that supreme sanction of all States.

But whenever a chief of State speaks of God, be he William I., the Knouto-Germanic emperor, or Grant, the president of the great republic, be sure that he is getting ready to shear once more his people-flock.

The French liberal and Voltairean bourgeoisie, driven by temperament to a positivism (not to say a materialism) singularly narrow and brutal, having become the governing class of the State by its triumph of 1830, had to give itself an official religion. It was not an easy thing. The bourgeoisie could not abruptly go back under the yoke of Roman Catholicism. Between it and the Church of Rome was an abyss of blood and hatred, and, however practical and wise one becomes, it is never possible to repress a passion developed by history. Moreover, the French bourgeoisie would have covered itself with ridicule if it had gone back to the Church to take part in the pious ceremonies of its worship, an essential condition of a meritorious and sincere conversion. Several attempted it, it is true, but their heroism was rewarded by no other result than a fruitless scandal. Finally, a return to Catholicism was impossible on account of the insolvable contradiction which separates the invariable politics of Rome from the development of the economical and political interests of the middle class.

In this respect Protestantism is much more advantageous. It is the bourgeois religion *par excellence*. It accords just as much liberty as is necessary to the bourgeois, and finds a way of reconciling celestial aspirations with the respect which terrestrial conditions demand. Consequently it is especially in Protestant countries that commerce and industry have been developed. But it was impossible for the French bourgeoisie to become Protestant. To pass from one religion to another--unless it be done deliberately, as sometimes in the case of the Jews of Russia and Poland, who get baptised three or four times in order to receive each time the remuneration allowed them--to seriously change one's religion, a little faith is necessary. Now, in the exclusive positive heart of the French bourgeois there is no room for faith. He professes the most profound indifference for all questions which touch neither his pocket first nor his social vanity afterwards. He is as indifferent to Protestantism as to

Catholicism. On the other hand, the French bourgeois could not go over to Protestantism without putting himself in conflict with the Catholic routine of the majority of the French people, which would have been great imprudence on the part of a class pretending to govern the nation.

There was still one way left--to return to the humanitarian and revolutionary religion of the eighteenth century. But that would have led too far. So the bourgeoisie was obliged, in order to sanction its new State, to create a new religion which might be boldly proclaimed, without too much ridicule and scandal, by the whole bourgeois class.

Thus was born *doctrinaire* Deism.

Others have told, much better than I could tell it, the story of the birth and development of this school, which had so decisive and--we may well add--so fatal an influence on the political, intellectual, and moral education of the bourgeois youth of France. It dates from Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël; its real founder was Royer-Collard; its apostles, Guizot, Cousin, Villemain, and many others. Its boldly avowed object was the reconciliation of Revolution with Reaction, or, to use the language of the school, of the principle of liberty with that of authority, and naturally to the advantage of the latter.

This reconciliation signified: in politics, the taking away of popular liberty for the benefit of bourgeois rule, represented by the monarchical and constitutional State; in philosophy, the deliberate submission of free reason to the eternal principles of faith. We have only to deal here with the latter.

We know that this philosophy was specially elaborated by M. Cousin, the father of French eclecticism. A superficial and pedantic talker, incapable of any original conception, of any idea peculiar to himself, but very strong on commonplace, which he confounded with common sense, this illustrious philosopher learnedly prepared, for the use of the studious youth of France, a metaphysical dish of his own making the use of which, made compulsory in all schools of the State under the University, condemned several generations one after the other to a cerebral indigestion. Imagine a philosophical vinegar sauce of the most opposed systems, a mixture of Fathers of the Church, scholastic philosophers, Descartes and Pascal, Kant and Scotch psychologists all this a superstructure on the divine and innate ideas of Plato, and covered up with a layer of Hegelian immanence accompanied, of course, by an ignorance, as contemptuous as it is complete, of natural science, and proving just as two times two make *five* the existence of a personal God. . . .

Footnotes

¹ I call it "iniquitous" because, as I believe I have proved In the Appendix alluded to, this mystery has been and still continues to be the consecration of all the horrors which have been and are being committed in the world; I call it unique, because all the other theological and metaphysical absurdities which debase the human mind are but its necessary consequences.

²Mr. Stuart Mill is perhaps the only one whose serious idealism may be fairly doubted, and that for two reasons: first, that if not absolutely the disciple, he is a passionate admirer, an adherent of the

positive philosophy of Auguste Comte, a philosophy which, in spite of its numerous reservations, is really Atheistic; second, that Mr. Stuart Mill is English, and in England to proclaim oneself an Atheist is to ostracise oneself, even at this late day.

³In London I once heard M. Louis Blanc express almost the same idea. "The best form of government," said he to me, "would be that which would invariably call men of virtuous genius to the control of affairs."

⁴ One day I asked Mazzini what measures would be taken for the emancipation of the people, once his triumphant unitary republic had been definitely established. "The first measure," he answered "will be the foundation of schools for the people." "And what will the people be taught in these schools?" "The duties of man -- sacrifice and devotion." But where will you find a sufficient number of professors to teach these things, which no one has the right or power to teach, unless he preaches by example? Is not the number of men who find supreme enjoyment in sacrifice and devotion exceedingly limited? Those who sacrifice themselves in the service of a great idea obey a lofty passion, and, *satisfying this personal passion*, outside of which life itself loses all value in their eyes, they generally think of something else than building their action into doctrine, while those who teach doctrine usually forget to translate it into action, for the simple reason that doctrine kills the life, the living spontaneity, of action. Men like Mazzini, in whom doctrine and action form an admirable unity, are very rare exceptions. In Christianity also there have been great men, holy men, who have really practised, or who, at least, have passionately tried to practice all that they preached, and whose hearts, overflowing with love, were full of contempt for the pleasures and goods of this world. But the immense majority of Catholic and Protestant priests who, by trade, have preached and still preach the doctrines of chastity, abstinence, and renunciation belie their teachings by their example. It is not without reason, but because of several centuries' experience, that among the people of all countries these phrases have become by-words: *As licentious as a priest; as gluttonous as a priest; as ambitious as a priest; as greedy, selfish, and grasping as a priest*. It is, then, established that the professors of the Christian virtues, consecrated by the Church, the priests, *in the immense majority of cases*, have practised quite the contrary of what they have preached. This very majority, the universality of this fact, show that the fault is not to be attributed to them as individuals, but to the social position, impossible and contradictory in itself, in which these individuals are placed. The position of the Christian priest involves a double contradiction. In the first place, that between the doctrine of abstinence and renunciation and the positive tendencies and needs of human nature -- tendencies and needs which, in some individual cases, always very rare, may indeed be continually held back, suppressed, and even entirely annihilated by the constant influence of some potent intellectual and moral passion; which at certain moments of collective exaltation, may be forgotten and neglected for some time by a large mass of men at once; but which are so fundamentally inherent in our nature that sooner or later they always resume their rights: so that, when they are not satisfied in a regular and normal way, they are always replaced at last by unwholesome and monstrous satisfaction. This is a natural and consequently fatal and irresistible law, under the disastrous action of which inevitably fall all Christian priests and especially those of the Roman Catholic Church. It cannot apply to the professors, that is to the priests of the modern Church, unless they are also obliged to preach Christian abstinence and renunciation.

But there is another contradiction common to the priests of both sects. This contradiction grows out of the very title and position of master. A master who commands, oppresses, and exploits is a wholly logical and quite natural personage. But a master who sacrifices himself to those who are subordinated to him by his divine or human privilege is a contradictory and quite impossible being. This is the very constitution of hypocrisy, so well personified by the Pope, who, while calling himself *the lowest servant of the servants of God* -- in token whereof, following the example of Christ, he even washes once a year the feet of twelve Roman beggars -- proclaims himself at the same time vicar of God, absolute and infallible master of the world. Do I need to recall that the priests of all churches, far from sacrificing themselves to the flocks confided to their care, have always sacrificed them, exploited them, and kept them in the condition of a flock, partly to satisfy

their own personal passions and partly to serve the omnipotence of the Church? Like conditions, like causes, always produce like effects. It will, then, be the same with the professors of the modern School divinely inspired and licensed by the State. They will necessarily become, some without knowing it, others with full knowledge of the cause, teachers of the doctrine of popular sacrifice to the power of the State and to the profit of the privileged classes.

Must we, then, eliminate from society all instruction and abolish all schools? Far from it! Instruction must be spread among the masses without stint, transforming all the churches, all those temples dedicated to the glory of God and to the slavery of men, into so many schools of human emancipation. But, in the first place, let us understand each other; schools, properly speaking, in a normal society founded on equality and on respect for human liberty, will exist only for children and not for adults: and, in order that they may become schools of emancipation and not of enslavement, it will be necessary to eliminate, first of all, this fiction of God, the eternal and absolute enslaver. The whole education of children and their instruction must be founded on the scientific development of reason, not on that of faith; on the development of personal dignity and independence, not on that of piety and obedience; on the worship of truth and justice at any cost, and above all on respect for humanity, which must replace always and everywhere the worship of divinity. The principle of authority, in the education of children, constitutes the natural point of departure; it is legitimate, necessary, when applied to children of a tender age, whose intelligence has not yet openly developed itself. But as the development of everything, and consequently of education, implies the gradual negation of the point of departure, this principle must diminish as fast as education and instruction advance, giving place to increasing liberty. All rational education is at bottom nothing but this progressive immolation of authority for the benefit of liberty, the final object of education necessarily being the formation of free men full of respect and love for the liberty of others. Therefore the first day of the pupils' life, if the school takes infants scarcely able as yet to stammer a few words, should be that of the greatest authority and an almost entire absence of liberty; but its last day should be that of the greatest liberty and the absolute abolition of every vestige of the animal or divine principle of authority.

The principle of authority, applied to men who have surpassed or attained their majority, becomes a monstrosity, a flagrant denial of humanity, a source of slavery and intellectual and moral depravity. Unfortunately, paternal governments have left the masses to wallow in an ignorance so profound that it will be necessary to establish schools not only for the people's children, but for the people themselves. From these schools will be absolutely eliminated the smallest applications or manifestations of the principle of authority. They will be schools no longer; they will be popular academies, in which neither pupils nor masters will be known, where the people will come freely to get, if they need it, free instruction, and in which, rich in their own experience, they will teach in their turn many things to the professors who shall bring them knowledge which they lack. This, then, will be a mutual instruction, an act of intellectual fraternity between the educated youth and the people.

The real school for the people and for all grown men is life. The only grand and omnipotent authority, at once natural and rational, the only one which we may respect, will be that of the collective and public spirit of a society founded on equality and solidarity and the mutual human respect of all its members. Yes. this is an authority which is not at all divine, wholly human, but before which we shall bow willingly, certain that, far from enslaving them, it will emancipate men. It will be a thousand times more powerful, be sure of it than all your divine, theological metaphysical, political, and judicial authorities, established by the Church and by the State, more powerful than your criminal codes, your jailers, and your executioners.

The power of collective sentiment or public spirit is even now a very serious matter. The men most ready to commit crimes rarely dare to defy it, to openly affront it. They will seek to deceive it, but will take care not to be rude with it unless they feel the support of a minority larger or smaller. No man, however powerful he believes himself, will ever have the strength to bear the unanimous contempt of society; no one can live without feeling himself sustained by the approval and esteem

of at least some portion of society. A man must be urged on by an immense and very sincere conviction in order to find courage to speak and act against the opinion of all, and never will a selfish, depraved, and cowardly man have such courage.

Nothing proves more clearly than this fact the natural and inevitable solidarity--this law of sociability--which binds all men together, as each of us can verify daily, both on himself and on all the men whom he knows. But, if this social power exists, why has it not sufficed hitherto to moralise, to humanise men? Simply because hitherto this power has not been humanised itself; it has not been humanised because the social life of which it is ever the faithful expression is based, as we know, on the worship of divinity not on respect for humanity; on authority, not on liberty; on privilege, not on equality; on the exploitation, not on the brotherhood of men; on iniquity and falsehood, not on justice and truth. Consequently its real action, always in contradiction of the humanitarian theories which it professes, has constantly exercised a disastrous and depraving influence. It does not repress vices and crimes; it creates them. Its authority is consequently a divine, anti-human authority; its influence is mischievous and baleful. Do you wish to render its authority and influence beneficent and human? Achieve the social revolution. Make all needs really solidary, and cause the material and social interests of each to conform to the human duties of each. And to this end there is but one means: Destroy all the institutions of Inequality; establish the economic and social equality of all, and on this basis will arise the liberty the morality, the solidary humanity of all.

I shall return to this, the most important question of Socialism.

⁵ Here three pages of Bakunin's manuscript are missing.

⁶ The lost part of this sentence perhaps said: "If men of science in their researches and experiments are not treating men actually as they treat animals, the reason is that" they are not exclusively men of science, but are also more or less men of life.

⁷ Science, in becoming the patrimony of everybody, will wed itself in a certain sense to the immediate and real life of each. It will gain in utility and grace what it loses in pride, ambition, and *doctrinaire* pedantry. This, however, will not prevent men of genius, better organized for scientific speculation than the majority of their fellows, from devoting themselves exclusively to the cultivation of the sciences, and rendering great services to humanity. Only, they will be ambitious for no other social influence than the natural influence exercised upon its surroundings by every superior intelligence, and for no other reward than the high delight which a noble mind always finds in the satisfaction of a noble passion.

⁸ Universal *experience*, on which all science rests, must be clearly distinguished from universal *faith*, on which the idealists wish to support their beliefs: the first is a real authentication of facts; the second is only a supposition of facts which nobody has seen, and which consequently are at variance with the experience of everybody.

⁹ The idealists, all those who believe in the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, must be excessively embarrassed by the difference in intelligence existing between races, peoples, and individuals. Unless we suppose that the various divine particles have been irregularly distributed, how is this difference to be explained? Unfortunately there is a considerable number of men wholly stupid, foolish even to idiocy. Could they have received in the distribution a particle at once divine and stupid? To escape this embarrassment the idealists must necessarily suppose that all human souls are equal. but that the prisons in which they find themselves necessarily confined, human bodies, are unequal, some more capable than others of serving as an organ for the pure intellectuality of soul. According to this. such a one might have very fine organs at his disposition. such another very gross organs. But these are distinctions which idealism has not the power to use without falling into inconsistency and the grossest materialism, for in the presence of absolute immateriality of soul all bodily differences disappear, all that is corporeal, material, necessarily appearing indifferent, equally and absolutely gross. The abyss which separates soul from body,

absolute immateriality from absolute materiality, is infinite. Consequently all differences, by the way inexplicable and logically impossible, which may exist on the other side of the abyss, in matter, should be to the soul null and void, and neither can nor should exercise any influence over it. In a word, the absolutely immaterial cannot be constrained, imprisoned, and much less expressed in any degree whatsoever by the absolutely material. Of all the gross and materialistic (using the word in the sense attached to it by the idealists) imaginations which were engendered by the primitive ignorance and stupidity of men, that of an immaterial soul imprisoned in a material body is certainly the grossest, the most stupid. and nothing better proves the omnipotence exercised by ancient prejudices even over the best minds than the deplorable sight of men endowed with lofty intelligence still talking of it in our days.

¹⁰ I am well aware that in the theological and metaphysical systems of the Orient, and especially in those of India, including Buddhism, we find the principle of the annihilation of the real world in favour of the ideal and of absolute abstraction. But it has not the added character of voluntary and deliberate negation which distinguishes Christianity; when those systems were conceived. the world of human thought of will and of liberty, had not reached that stage of development which was afterwards seen in the Greek and Roman civilisation.

¹¹ It seems to me useful to recall at this point an anecdote--one, by the way, well known and thoroughly authentic--which sheds a very clear light on the personal value of this warmer-over of the Catholic beliefs and on the religious sincerity of that period. Chateaubriand submitted to a publisher a work attacking faith. The publisher called his attention to the fact that atheism had gone out of fashion, that the reading public cared no more for it, and that the demand, on the contrary, was for religious works. Chateaubriand withdrew, but a few months later came back with his *Genius of Christianity*.

Bakunin on Education II

[deals with natural ability etc, good for the old lib-caps]

We have shown how, as long as there are two or more degrees of instruction for the various strata of society, there must, of necessity, be classes, that is, economic and political privilege for a small number of the contented and slavery and misery for the lot of the generality of men.

As members of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA/AIT), we seek equality and, because we seek it, we must also seek integral education, the same education for everyone.

But if everyone is schooled who will want to work? we hear someone ask. Our answer to that is a simple one: everyone must work and everyone must receive education. To this, it is very often objected that this mixing of industrial with intellectual labour cannot be, except one or the other suffer by it. The manual workers will make poor scholars, and the scholars will never be more than quite pathetic workers. True, in the society of today where manual labour and intellectual labour are equally distorted by the quite artificial isolation in which both are kept. But we are quite persuaded that in the rounded human being, each of these pursuits, the muscular and the nervous, must be developed in equal measure and that far from being inimical each must lean upon, enhance and reinforce the other. The science of the sage will become more fruitful, more useful and more expansive when the sage is no longer a stranger to manual labour, and the labours of the workmen, when he is educated, will be more intelligent and thus more productive than those of an ignorant workman. From which it follows that, for work's sake as much as for the sake of science, there must no longer be this division into workers and scholars and henceforth there must be only men.

The result of this is that those men who are today, on account of their superior intellects, caught up in the ivory towers of science and who, once they have established themselves in this world, yield to the need for a thoroughly bourgeois position and bend their every invention to the exclusive use of the privileged class to which they themselves belong. These men, I say, once they become truly the fellows of everyone, fellows not just in their imagination nor just in their speech but in fact, in their work, will just as necessarily convert their inventions and applications of their learning to the benefit of all, and especially apply themselves to the task of making work (the basis, the only real and rightful basis of human society) lighter and more dignified.

It is quite possible and, indeed, likely that during the period of fairly lengthy transition which will, naturally, succeed the great crisis of society, the loftiest sciences will fall considerably below their current levels. Equally, it is not to be doubted that luxury and everything constituting the refinements of life will have to disappear from the social scene for quite a long time and will not be able to reappear as the exclusive amusements of a few, but will have to return as ways of dignifying life for everybody, and then only once society has conquered need in all of us. But would this temporary eclipse of the lofty sciences be such a misfortune? Whatever science may lose in terms of sublime elevation, will it not win through the extension of its base? Doubtless there will be fewer illustrious sages, but at the same time there will be fewer ignoramuses too. There will be no more of these men who can touch the skies, but, on the other hand, millions of men who may be degraded and crushed today will be able to tread the earth as human beings: no demigods, but no slaves either. Both the slave and the demigods will achieve human-ness, the one by rising a lot, the other by stooping a little. Thus no longer will there be a place for deification, nor for contumely. Everyone will shake hands with his neighbour and, once reunited, we shall all march with a new spring in our steps, onwards to new conquests, in the realm of science as in the realm of life itself.

So, far from having any misgivings about that eclipse of science - which will be in any case only a fleeting one we ought to call for it with all our powers since its effect will be to humanise both scholar and manual labourer and to reconcile science and life. And we are convinced that, once we have achieved this new foundation, the progress of mankind, in the realm of science as elsewhere in

life, will very quickly outstrip everything that we have seen and everything we might conjure up in our imaginations today. But here another question crops up: will every individual have an equal capacity for absorbing education to the same degree? Let us imagine a society organised along the most egalitarian lines, a society in which children will, from birth onwards, start out with the same circumstances economically, socially and politically, which is to say the same upkeep, the same education, the same instruction: among these thousands of tiny individuals will there not be an infinite variety of enthusiasms, natural inclinations and aptitudes?

Such is the big argument advanced by our adversaries, the bourgeois pure and simple, and the bourgeois socialists as well. They imagine it to be unanswerable. So let us try to prove the opposite. Well, to begin with, by what right do they make their stand for the principle of individual capabilities? Is there room for the development of capabilities in society as at present constituted? Can there be room for that development in a society which continues to have the right of inheritance as its foundation? Self-evidently not; for, from the moment that the right of inheritance applies, the career of children will never be determined by their individual gifts and application: it will be determined primarily by their economic circumstances, by the wealth or poverty of their families. Wealthy but empty-headed heirs will receive a superior education; the most intelligent children of the proletariat will receive ignorance as their inheritance, just as happens at present. So, is it not hypocritical, when speaking not only of society as it is today but even of a reformed society which would still have as its fundamentals private property ownership and the right of inheritance - Is it not sordid sophistry to talk about individual rights based on individual capabilities? There is such a lot of talk today of individual liberty, yet what prevails is not the individual person, nor the individual in general, but the individual upon whom privilege is conferred by his social position. Thus what counts is position and class. Just let one intelligent individual from the ranks of the bourgeoisie dare to take a stand against the economic privileges of that respectable class and you will see how much these good bourgeois, forever prattling about individual liberty today, respect his liberty as an individual. Don't talk to us about individual abilities! Is it not an everyday thing for us to see the greatest abilities of working men and bourgeois forced to give way and even to kowtow before the crass stupidity of the heirs to the golden calf? Individual liberty - not privileged liberty but human liberty, and the real potential of individuals - will only be able to enjoy full expansion in a regime of complete equality. When there exists an equality of origins for all men on this earth then, and only then (with safeguards, of course, for the superior calls of fellowship or solidarity, which is and ever shall remain the greatest producer of all social phenomena, from human intelligence to material wealth) only then will one be able to say, with more reason than one can today, that every individual is a self-made man. Hence our conclusion is that, if individual talents are to prosper and no longer be thwarted in bringing forth their full fruits, the first precondition is that all individual privileges, economic as well as political, must disappear, which is to say that all class distinctions must be abolished. That requires that private property rights and the rights of inheritance must go, and equality must triumph economically, politically and socially.

But once equality has triumphed and is well established, will there be no longer any difference in the talents and degree of application of the various individuals? There will be a difference, not so many as exist today, perhaps, but there will always be differences. Of that there can be no doubt. This is a proverbial truth which will probably never cease to be true - that no tree ever brings forth two leaves that are exactly identical. How much more will this be true of men, men being much more complicated creatures than leaves. But such diversity, far from constituting an affliction is, as the German philosopher Feuerbach has forcefully noted, one of the assets of mankind. Thanks to it, the human race is a collective whole wherein each human being complements the rest and has need of them; so that this infinite variation in human beings is the very cause and chief basis of their solidarity - an important argument in favour of equality.

Basically, even in today's society, if one excepts two categories of men - men of genius and idiots - and provided one abstracts conjured up artificially through the influence of a thousand social factors such as education, instruction, economic and political status which create differences not merely

within each social stratum, but in almost every family unit, one will concede that from the point of view of intellectual gifts and moral energy the vast majority of men are very much alike or, at least, are worth about the same - weakness in one regard being almost always counterbalanced by an equivalent strength in another, so that it becomes impossible to say whether one man chosen from this mass is much the superior or the inferior of his neighbour. The vast majority of men are not identical but equivalent and thus equal.

Which means that the line of argument pursued by our adversaries is left with nothing but the geniuses and the idiots.

As we know, idiocy is a psychological and social affliction. Thus, it should be treated not in the schools but in the hospitals and one is entitled to expect that a more rational system of social hygiene - above all, one that cares more for the physical and moral well-being of the individual than the current system - will some day be introduced and that together with a new society organised along egalitarian lines it will eventually eradicate from the surface of the earth this affliction of idiocy, such a humiliation to the human race. As for the men of genius, one should note first of all that, happily or unhappily, according to one's main point of view, such men have not featured in the history of mankind except as the extremely rare exceptions to all of the rules known to us and one cannot organise to cater for exceptions. Even so, it is our hope that the society of the future will be able to discover, through a truly practical popular organisation of its collective assets the means by which to render such geniuses less necessary, less intimidating and more truly the benefactors of us all. For we must never lose sight of Voltaire's great dictum: 'There is someone with more wit than the greatest geniuses, and that is everyone'. So it is merely a question of organising this everyone for the sake of the fullest liberty rooted in the most complete economic, political and social equality, and one need no longer fear the dictatorial ambitions and despotic inclinations of the men of genius.

As for turning out such men of genius through education, one ought to banish the thought from one's mind. Moreover, of all the men of genius we have known thus far, none or almost none ever displayed their genius while yet in their childhood, nor in their adolescence nor yet in their early youth. Only in their mature years did they ever reveal themselves geniuses and several were not recognised as such until after their death whereas many supposedly great men having had their praises sung while youths by better men have finished their careers in the most absolute obscurity. So it is never in the childhood years, nor even in the adolescent years that one can discern and determine the comparative excellencies and shortcomings of men, nor the extent of their talents, nor their inborn aptitudes. All of these things only become obvious and are governed by the development of the individual person and, just as there are some natures precocious and some very slow - although the latter are by no means inferior and, indeed, are often superior - so no schoolmaster will ever be in a position to specify in advance the career or nature of the occupations which his charges will choose once they attain the age when they have the freedom to choose.

From which it follows that society, disregarding any real or imagined differences in aptitudes or abilities and possessed of no means of determining these in any event and of no right to allot the future career of children owes them all, without a single exception, an absolutely equal education and instruction.

[Egalite, 14 August 1869]

Marxism Freedom and the State

Translated and Edited with a Biographical Sketch by

K. J. Kenafick

TO THE MEMORY OF
J. W. (Chummy) FLEMING
WHO, FOR NEARLY SIXTY YEARS
UPHELD THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM
AT THE YARA BANK OPEN AIR FORUM
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

-- K. J. Kenafick

[First published in 1950 by Freedom Press. Scanned in and put in HTML format by Greg Alt (galt@facility.cs.utah.edu) on January 15, 1996. There was no copyright notice found in the 1984 printing by Freedom Press. All of the text except for the footnotes, foreword, and biography were written by Mikhail Bakunin and translated and edited by Kenafick. I have tried to fix all the errors resulting from scanning, but be aware that there are probably a few left {Dana Ward corrected html errors, December, 1999}]

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Liberty for all, and a natural respect for that liberty: such are the essential conditions of international solidarity.

--Bakunin

Foreword

In my book Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx, I stated in a footnote that I intended to reprint certain passages from Bakunin in a booklet to be entitled Marxism, Anarchism and the State. The present work is a fulfillment of that intention; but I have slightly altered the title, because on reflection, I felt that Bakunin was here treating of wider and deeper matters than merely the merits of one

political philosophy as against another. He was treating of the whole question of man's freedom in relation to society, to the community.

This question is the supreme question of our generation. On its solution depends the fate of the human race; for if the answer to the question of man's freedom in relation to the community is to be the totalitarian answer that he has none, then indeed can the march of human progress be said to have come to its end. And that end, bearing in mind the circumstances of this atomic age can only be amidst war and universal destruction.

In many parts of his writings, Bakunin has given his views on the nature and possibilities of human freedom--which he sharply differentiated from egoism and self centred individualism. Apart from that reproduced on the first page of the extracts, perhaps the best definition he has given is that couched in the following words:

"We understand by liberty, on the one hand, the development, as complete as possible of all the natural faculties of each individual, and, on the other hand, his independence, not as regards natural and social laws but as regards all the laws imposed by other human wills, whether collective or separate.

"When we demand the liberty of the masses, we do not in the least claim to abolish any of the natural influences of any individual or of any group of individuals which exercise their action on them. What we want is the abolition of artificial, privileged, legal, official, influences." (Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx, p. 300)

With this view of liberty is linked Bakunin's view of authority, which he by no means equates with organisation and self-discipline, which, in themselves, he regarded as very desirable. What he meant by "authority", namely the right to command or to enforce obedience, was considered by him to be fundamentally of religious origin. The idea of an authoritarianism that it is our duty to obey authority, is derived, according to his theory from religious origins, even when it has later taken political forms. Hence the opposition to religion, which takes a prominent position in his writings, much more so than in those of the Marxians, and which sometimes is rather violently expressed.

There is also another reason for the criticism of religion and churches that is to be found so frequently in his writings, and that is the close connection between religion and the State which distinguishes the Hegelian philosophy, against which Bakunin had rebelled. It is pointed out by Gide and Rist: "The State, according to Hegel, is an aggression of the spirit realising itself in the conscience of the world, while nature is an expression of the same spirit without the conscience, an alter ego--a spirit in bondage. God moving in the world has made the State possible. Its foundation is in the might of reason realising itself in will. It is necessary to think of it not merely as a given State or a particular institution, but of its essence or idea as a real manifestation of God. Every State, of whatever kind it may be, partakes of this divine essence." (A History of Economic Doctrines, p. 435)

Now this close identification of the spirit of God and the spirit of the State is reason enough why Bakunin, as an enemy the State, should also have considered it necessary to attack religion. Thus, the term "God and the State" later applied by its editors to a fragment of his works, is quite fitting. The Marxians, on the other hand, as adherents of the State, and as champions of authority, found no such necessity for making a frontal attack on religion, and encountered accordingly much less of the animosity of religiously-minded people than was the fate of the Anarchists.

Opinions may differ in the Socialist movement itself as to the relative importance to be given to the discussion of the religious questions; but the matter is mentioned here only in order to explain Bakunin's attitude and to show that it had a logical development, whether or not it were the best tactic to pursue, and whether or not its fundamental assumptions were correct.

As will be indicated in more detail in the following biography, the extracts printed in this volume are taken mainly from those writings of Bakunin touching on his controversy with Marx and

therefore belong to the years 1870-72; but the passages dealing with the nature and characteristics of the State in general are mostly taken from *Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologianism* written in 1867, and based, as the title indicates, on the above-mentioned close connection, to his mind, between the State and religion.

It is not only the question of the relation of Marxian doctrines to those of freedom and of the State, so much discussed in the following pages that gives them interest and importance, but also the light they throw on the system that now exists in Soviet Russia, and which calls itself "Socialist" and "democratic", where it is, in reality, neither the one nor the other, but essentially capitalistic and totalitarian or, as Bakunin expressed it in a passage to be quoted later "all work performed in the employ of the State". Bakunin showed in the early seventies of the nineteenth century that such a system must result if it is attempted to transform society on an authoritarian basis; the existence in the middle of the twentieth century of that portentous phenomenon, the Soviet Government, has proved him up to the hilt to be right. In the words of his friend and collaborator, James Guillaume, "How could one want an equalitarian and free society to issue from an authoritarian organisation? It is impossible."

Melbourne, 1950.

K. J. Kenafick

Life of Bakunin

Michael Alexandrovitch Bakunin was born on 30th May, 1814, in the Russian province of Tvar. He was the eldest son of a retired diplomat, who was a member of the ancient Russian nobility. Young Michael passed his boyhood on the family estate, and gained there an insight into the peasant mentality which is reflected in his later writings.

At the age of fifteen, after a good home education under tutors, he was sent to St. Petersburg to study for and enter the Artillery School. After five years of military studies, he was posted as ensign to a regiment stationed in Poland; but the monotonous life of a remote garrison soon proved highly unpalatable to this very sociable and highspirited young aristocrat. He threw up his commission and the whole military career and adopted instead that of a student in Moscow.

The adolescence and young manhood of Bakunin were spent under the iron despotism of the Tsar Nicholas I, the most consistently reactionary that Russia had ever known and the most rigidly repressive till the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. Under this regime every type of liberalism of even the mildest kind, whether in politics, literature, or religion, was ruthlessly crushed. In philosophy alone did there seem to be any chance for discussion, and those who would in Western countries have turned to politics devoted their attention in Russia to philosophy. Bakunin was one of these and in fact at this time his interest in politics appears to have been nil. His favourite philosophers were Fichte and Hegel; from the former he learned that freedom, liberty, independence were the highest expression of the moral law; from the latter, the dominating philosopher of the time, he gained a knowledge of the Dialectic, the theory that all life and history constitute a process of the reconciliation of opposites on a higher plane--or, as Hegel expressed it thesis, antithesis and synthesis. From this there naturally arose a theory of historic evolution.

Five years of Bakunin's life (1835-40) were spent in the study of philosophy, at Moscow, and then he went to Berlin to imbibe more knowledge of his subject at its fountainhead. The political and intellectual atmosphere of Germany, though reactionary compared to those of France and England, was almost progressive as compared with Russia and some of the younger adherents of Hegel began to develop Radical ideas from his doctrine of the Dialectic. Prominent among these was Ludwig Feuerbach, whose book *The Essence of Christianity* took a decidedly materialistic, in fact, atheistic attitude. It converted many young intellectuals to its viewpoint and among these were Karl Marx,

Friedrich Engels and Michael Bakunin. The latter's intellectual evolution had now begun--the evolution that was to turn him from an orthodox subject of the Tsar into a Materialist, a Revolutionary Socialist, and an Anarchist.

In 1842 he went to Dresden in Saxony and in October published in Arnold Ruge's *Deutsche Fahrbecher* an article entitled "Reaction in Germany" which led to revolutionary conclusions and which ended with words that became celebrated: "Let us put our trust in the eternal spirit which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unsearchable and eternally creative source of all life. The desire for destruction is also a creative desire."

Leaving Saxony which had become too hot to hold him as a result of this article, Bakunin went in 1843 to Switzerland. Here he made the acquaintance of Wilhelm Weitling and his writings. This man was a self-educated German Communist, who preached revolution and Socialism in phrases foreshadowing the later Anarchism. He said for instance: "The perfect society has no government but only an administration, no laws but only obligations, no punishments but means of correction." These sentiments greatly impressed and influenced the liberty-loving Bakunin. But they caused the gaoling of Weitling and when the Tsarist Government heard of Bakunin's connection with him, the young man was summoned back to Russia. He refused to go and was outlawed. He went for a brief period to Brussels and then, early in 1844, to Paris.

Bakunin's sojourn in Paris was of vital importance in his intellectual development. He encountered here two men whose influence on his thought was very great. These men were Karl Marx and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Bakunin had many discussions with Marx at this period, and though greatly impressed by the German thinker's real genius, scholarship, and revolutionary zeal and energy, was repelled by his arrogance, egotism, and jealousy. These faults were ones of which Bakunin himself was entirely free, and this temperamental difference alone would have made it difficult for these two great men to get along together, even if their opinions had not been dissimilar in many respects, and if outside influences had not deliberately poisoned their relationships at a later time.

But at this period of the early eighteen forties their differences had not yet matured and Bakunin no doubt learned a good deal from Marx of the doctrine of Historical Materialism which is so important an element in both these great Socialistic thinkers' work.

From Proudhon he learned at this period even more than from Marx. The former can be considered as the father of modern Anarchism, for he utterly rejected the very concept of Authority, in both politics and religion. In his economic views, he advocated a scheme called Mutualism, in which the most important role was played by a national bank, based on the mutual confidence of all those who were engaged in production. Bakunin did not take up this idea far he was impressed rather by the Marxian economies and advocated a system of Collectivism, but he thoroughly appreciated the spirit of liberty that breathed through all Proudhon's writings and talk, and he placed him in that respect above Marx, of whom he truly said that the spirit of liberty was lacking in him; he remained from head to foot an Authoritarian.

Towards the end of 1847, Bakunin was expelled from Paris for having delivered a speech advocating freedom for Poland which was so displeasing to the Tsarist Government that it put pressure on the French Government to take action against him. He spent a few months in Brussels, but the revolution of February, 1848, which overthrew King Louis Philippe and established the Second Republic allowed Bakunin to return to Paris and he took a prominent part in the political demonstrations of the day. But he was soon attracted by the rising revolutionary movements in Central Europe. In Prague he participated in a brief insurrection, and in May, 1849, in another in Dresden. This resulted in his arrest, and finally his extradition to Russia, which claimed him as a fugitive. He passed eight horrible years in solitary confinement and it was only the death of the implacable Nicholas I and the accession of the milder Alexander II that enabled his family to secure his release. He spent four more years under surveillance in Siberia, where he married. Finally, in 1861, he escaped on an American vessel going to Japan and at the end of the year reached London.

In London he worked for a time with Alexander Herzen, the Russian Liberal, in his publications addressed to the Russian people, went for a while to try to help a Polish insurrection from there, and then settled down in Italy. Here he encountered the religiously-minded Nationalism of Mazzini, a man whom he greatly respected personally (having met him in London), but whose ideas he heartily disliked. This led him to accentuate the anti-patriotic and anti-religious elements in his own ideas, which by this period of the middle eighteen-sixties had become practically those later called "Anarchism".

In 1867 he went to Geneva to attend the inaugural Congress of the League for Peace and Freedom, a bourgeois body of which he thought some use could be made for the purpose of Socialist propaganda. He soon found that this could not be done (his ideas as set out in an article entitled "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-theologism", were far too radical), and instead he concentrated on the First International, which had been founded, largely through the instrumentality of Marx, in 1864. On leaving the League for Peace and Freedom, Bakunin and his friends had formed the Alliance of Socialist Democracy and this body now applied to join the International. The application aroused the suspicions of Marx who felt a jealous possessiveness as regards the International and had a German-minded antipathy to anything coming from a Russian. The initial proposal was therefore turned down and the Alliance was only admitted in sections, and when as a separate body it had been disbanded. (July, 1869.)

In September of the same year, a Congress of the International was held at Basel. This Congress showed itself favourable to Bakunin's view that inheritance should be abolished and rejected Marx's views on this subject. This was the beginning of a breach between Marx and his followers on the one hand and Bakunin and his followers on the other. It was fundamentally a difference on the question as to the role of the State in the Socialist programme. The Marxian view was essentially that the State must be used to bring about and consolidate Socialism; the views of the Bakuninists (at this period beginning to be called "Anarchists") was that the State must be abolished, and that it could never under any circumstances be used to attain either Socialism or any form of social justice for the workers.

These differences spread rapidly throughout the International and were deepened and exacerbated in Switzerland (where Bakunin was now settled) by a Russian emigre named Utin, who by methods of character-assassination poisoned Marx's already jealous and vindictive mind still further against Bakunin. The latter rightly resented the campaign of calumny which was now launched against him but he was of a tolerant and generous disposition and for all his resentment against Marx's tactics (only too prophetic of later "Communist" methods) never failed to acknowledge Marx's greatness as Socialist and thinker. He even began at this time a Russian translation of Marx's Capital, a book he highly admired, and whose economic doctrines he enthusiastically supported.

In the early part of 1870, Bakunin was mainly occupied in trying to stir up the Russian people to insurrection. This activity was in collaboration with a fanatical young revolutionary named Sergei Nechayev. The latter had committed a political murder in Russia and deceived Bakunin into condoning this act. He also published a "Revolutionary Catechism" which has often been mistaken for a production of Bakunin's, and which preaches the most violent and amoral tactics against existing society. Internal evidence shows that it cannot be Bakunin's for he was not an advocate of such opinions; and when he finally became aware of Nechayev's unscrupulousness he broke with him. The fugitive was later extradited to Russia and died in jail. The whole episode did Bakunin considerable harm, giving him because of his association with Nechayev, a reputation for violence and amoralism which was quite undeserved.

The Franco-German war which broke out in July, 1870, led to the writing of Bakunin's most important works. He looked to Social Revolution on the part of peasants and workers both to overthrow the reactionary regime of Napoleon III and to repel the German invaders under the direction of Bismarck. With the purpose of stirring up such a movement he wrote A Letter to a Frenchman, and then in September after the fall of the Second Empire and the establishment of the

Third Republic, went to Lyons to launch an Anarchist rising. Through lack of determination and support by the workers' leaders themselves, despite Bakunin's demand for energetic action, the movement failed after an initial and brief success, and he fled to Marseilles, and thence back to Locarno, whence he had come to Lyons.

This fiasco deeply embittered and depressed Bakunin. He had lost all faith in the bourgeoisie since their turning on the workers in the revolutions of 1848, but now even the workers had shown themselves supine, and he became very pessimistic about their future. Arising out of these events he now wrote his greatest work, *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*. The title implied an alliance between the knout of the Russian Tsar and the new German Empire of Bismarck and Wilhelm I to crush the social revolution. It became a very voluminous work, treating in an extremely discursive way all manner of subjects, political, historical, economic, religious, philosophical, metaphysical, ethical and even astronomical, for as an Appendix to it Bakunin gave an exposition of the ideas of the System of Nature which he held and which was a complete and consistent Materialism. The piece known as "God and the State" is merely a fragment of this greater work, which is indeed Bakunin's "Magnum opus", his testament, as he called it. He worked at it intermittently from the close of 1870 to the close of 1872 and even then never succeeded in finishing it. (Sections of this work, written in November and December, 1872, have been quoted at length in the text)

The Paris Commune of March-May, 1871, interested him greatly though he no longer had any illusions about a workers' victory in any near future. He considered however that the events of the Commune gave a practical justification of his theories as against those of the Marxians, and a study of that historic episode would seem to justify his contention. In this same year, 1871, he had a controversy with Mazzini who had attacked both the International and the Commune, the former as being anti-nationalist and the latter as being atheistic and therefore both being abhorrent to Mazzini's religious nationalism. Bakunin respectfully but trenchantly replied in a pamphlet called *The Political Theology of Mazzini* which had a wide circulation in Italy and a great effect on the Italian working class, which largely became imbued with Anarchist ideas. In Spain also, Bakunin's ideas bore fruit and to a lesser extent in France.

In 1872 he was occupied with the coming Congress of the International at the Hague. This meeting, which was held in September, was "packed" by the Marxists in a manner which later "Communist" tactics have made only too familiar. The equally familiar tactics of character-assassination were also resorted to by Marx, to his everlasting discredit, and Bakunin and his closest friend and collaborator, James Guillaume, were expelled from the International, the headquarters of which were at the same time shifted to New York to prevent it from falling into the hands of the anti-Marxists, who constituted a real majority in the International. That organisation soon withered and died in its alien home; but the Anarchists set up a new International in Switzerland and this lasted a few years more, surviving Bakunin himself.

It was based on Bakunin's idea of the Workers' International being a loose association of fully autonomous, national groups, devoted only to the economic struggle, in contradistinction to Marx's attempt to convert it into a highly centralised and rigidly controlled instrument of political manoeuvres--in fact what Lenin afterwards made of the Third International.

In order to ventilate his grievances and to explain his attitude to Marx and Marxism, Bakunin wrote a lengthy letter to the Brussels newspaper *Liberte*, and large extracts from this letter have been printed in the following pages.

In 1873, Bakunin formally withdrew from political activities. His health had been permanently injured by the long years of solitary confinement in Russian prisons and, though he was a man of great size, physical strength and energy, he was now old before his time.

He came out of his retirement, however, for the last time, in May, 1874, to lead an insurrection in the Italian province of Bologna; but this was a complete fiasco. It had been meant as a political

demonstration and this was in accordance with Bakunin's view that such actions should be used as a means of awakening the people's interest. He had had no faith whatever in the use of political action (in the sense of voting at Parliamentary elections and referenda) ever since the abortive revolutions of 1848 with their aftermath of betrayal of the workers and of democracy itself by the bourgeoisie. He agreed with Proudhon's dictum (born of the same events) that universal suffrage was counter-revolution.

His doctrine, however, had nothing in common with the Nihilistic tactics of bomb outrages and assassinations which, after his death, were adopted by some Anarchists and tended to discredit the movement. He believed in mass organisations, in solidarity, and to him Individualism was a bourgeois ideology--a mere excuse for egoism. True liberty could only be achieved in and through Society.

Bakunin was in other words a Socialist, or as he often called himself, a Collectivist, but his Socialism was of the Libertarian school and expressively rejected authority and, above all, the State. In this respect he followed the doctrine of Proudhon, not of Marx. His system in fact consists of Proudhonian politics and Marxian economics.

Bakunin died at Berne on 1st July, 1876, and was buried in the cemetery there. Exactly seventy years after his death, on the 1st July, 1946, a gathering of international Anarchists stood by his graveside to pay homage to his memory.

The message which, above all, Bakunin tried to preach was that only the workers could free the workers; in other words, he desired to stimulate the self-activity of the working-class. He was never tired of quoting the celebrated slogan of the First International: "The emancipation of the toilers must be the work of the toilers themselves," and he expressly excluded from the concept of "toilers" those ex-workers who, having gained the leadership of a working-class movement, endeavour to make themselves masters of it and lead it where they are determined that it shall go. To Bakunin that was not emancipation, it was merely a change of masters. But he wanted the triumph of Humanity--a concept he had borrowed from the great philosopher of Positivism, Auguste Comte--a full human development of all men in conditions of liberty and equality.

To him this could not be achieved by the methods envisaged by Marx and, in the pages that follow, he has given a picture of what he thought the Marxian State would be like. The startling similarity of this picture to that of present-day Soviet Russia is due to the fact that Lenin, the founder of the regime, himself a product of the despotic Tsarist regime, laid great stress on the authoritarian aspects of Marxism as opposed to the more democratic elements of Anarchism. Bakunin had assumed that, in practice, the authoritarian elements in Marxism when it attained power would predominate, and this turned out to be correct.

It is obvious of course that Marxism and Bakuninism despite these differences have much in common and Bakunin himself has not failed to point this out in the pages that follow. Both systems were founded on the idea of Historical Materialism, both accepted the class struggle, both were Socialist in the sense of being opposed to private property in the means of production. They differed in that Bakuninism refused to accept the State under any circumstances whatever, that it rejected Party politics or Parliamentary action, and that it was founded on the principle of liberty as against that of authority: and indeed, it is this spirit of liberty (not Individualism) that distinguishes Bakunin, and in the light of which his criticisms of Marx and Marxism must be read. He had the true instinct that no man can be really emancipated except by himself.

Up to the present, however, the emancipation of the workers has nowhere been achieved, either by Bakunin's methods nor by Marx's (and certainly not in Soviet Russia); but to-day the more militant elements in the Left-wing and anti-Stalinist Socialist movements are beginning to give Bakunin's teachings more serious consideration than Marxians had ever done before; and some of them are commencing to feel that after all there may be something in what he said. If, therefore, the Socialist movement, in its more militant and revolutionary aspects, continues to exist throughout the world, it

is possible that the political theories of Marx may give way to those of Bakunin, and that in the end he will prevail as the inspiring genius of militant and democratic Socialism.

[Here is some more information about Bakunin and other Prominent Anarchists and Left-Libertarians.]

Chapter I

Introductory

I am a passionate seeker after Truth and a not less passionate enemy of the malignant fictions used by the "Party of Order", the official representatives of all turpitudes, religious, metaphysical, political, judicial, economic, and social, present and past, to brutalise and enslave the world; I am a fanatical lover of Liberty; considering it as the only medium in which can develop intelligence, dignity, and the happiness of man; not official "Liberty", licensed, measured and regulated by the State, a falsehood representing the privileges of a few resting on the slavery of everybody else; not the individual liberty, selfish, mean, and fictitious advanced by the school of Rousseau and all other schools of bourgeois Liberalism, which considers the rights of the individual as limited by the rights of the State, and therefore necessarily results in the reduction of the rights of the individual to zero.

No, I mean the only liberty which is truly worthy of the name, the liberty which consists in the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers which are to be found as faculties latent in everybody, the liberty which recognises no other restrictions than those which are traced for us by the laws of our own nature; so that properly speaking there are no restrictions, since these laws are not imposed on us by some outside legislator, beside us or above us; they are immanent in us, inherent, constituting the very basis of our being, material as well as intellectual and moral; instead, therefore, of finding them a limit, we must consider them as the real conditions and effective reason for our liberty.

I mean that liberty of each individual which, far from halting as at a boundary before the liberty of others, finds there its confirmation and its extension to infinity; the illimitable liberty of each through the liberty of all, liberty by solidarity, liberty in equality; liberty triumphing over brute force and the principle of authority which was never anything but the idealised expression of that force, liberty which, after having overthrown all heavenly and earthly idols, will found and organise a new world, that of human solidarity, on the ruins of all Churches and all States.

I am a convinced upholder of economic and social equality, because I know that, without that equality, liberty, justice, human dignity, morality, and the well-being of individuals as well as the prosperity of nations will never be anything else than so many lies. But as upholder in all circumstances of liberty, that first condition of humanity, I think that liberty must establish itself in the world by the spontaneous organisation of labour and of collective ownership by productive associations freely organised and federalised in districts, and by the equally spontaneous federation of districts, but not by the supreme and tutelary action of the State.

There is the point which principally divides the Revolutionary Socialists or Collectivists from the Authoritarian Communists, who are upholders of the absolute initiative of the State. Their goal is the same; each party desires equally the creation of a new social order founded only on the organisation of collective labour, inevitably imposed on each and everyone by the very force of things, equal economic conditions for all, and the collective appropriation of the instruments of labour. Only the Communists imagine that they will be able to get there by the development and organisation of the political power of the working-classes, and principally of the proletariat of the

towns, by the help of the bourgeois Radicalism, whilst the Revolutionary Socialists, enemies of all equivocal combinations and alliances, think on the contrary that they cannot reach this goal except by the development and organisation, not of the political but of the social and consequently anti-political power of the working masses of town and country alike, including all favourably disposed persons of the upper classes, who, breaking completely with their past, would be willing to join them and fully accept their programme.

Hence, two different methods. The Communists believe they must organise the workers' forces to take possession of the political power of the State. The Revolutionary Socialists organise with a view to the destruction, or if you prefer a politer word, the liquidation of the State. The Communists are the upholders of the principle and practice of, authority, the Revolutionary Socialists have confidence only in liberty. Both equally supporters of that science which must kill superstition and replace faith, the former would wish to impose it; the latter will exert themselves to propagate it so that groups of human beings, convinced, will organise themselves and will federate spontaneously, freely, from below upwards, by their own movement and conformably to their real interests, but never after a plan traced in advance and imposed on the "ignorant masses" by some superior intellects.

The Revolutionary Socialists think that there is much more practical sense and spirit in the instinctive aspirations and in the real needs of the masses of the people than in the profound intellect of all these learned men and tutors of humanity who, after so many efforts have failed to make it happy, still presume to add their efforts. The Revolutionary Socialists think, on the contrary, that the human race has let itself long enough, too long, be governed, and that the source of its misfortunes does not lie in such or such form of government but in the very principle and fact of government, of whatever type it may be. It is, in fine, the contradiction already become historic, which exists between the Communism scientifically developed by the German school[1] and accepted in part by the American and English Socialists on the one hand, and the Proudhonism largely developed and pushed to its last consequences, on the other hand, which is accepted by the proletariat of the Latin countries.

It has equally been accepted and will continue to be still more accepted by the essentially anti-political sentiment of the Slav peoples.

Chapter II

Marxist Ideology

The doctrinaire school of Socialists, or rather of German Authoritarian Communists, was founded a little before 1848, and has rendered, it must be recognised, eminent services to the cause of the proletariat not only in Germany, but in Europe. It is to them that belongs principally the great idea of an "International Workingmen's Association" and also the initiative for its first realisation. Today,[2] they are to be found at the head of the Social Democratic Labour Party in Germany, having as its organ the "Volksstaat" ["People's State"].

It is therefore a perfectly respectable school which does not prevent it from displaying a very bad disposition sometimes, and above all from taking for the bases of its theories, a principal[3] which is profoundly true when one considers it in its true light, that is to say, from the relative point of view, but which when envisaged and set down in an absolute manner as the only foundation and first source of all other principles, as is done by this school, becomes completely false.

This principle, which constitutes besides the essential basis of scientific Socialism, was for the first

time scientifically formulated and developed by Karl Marx, the principal leader of the German Communist school. It forms the dominating thought of the celebrated "Communist Manifesto" which an international Committee of French, English, Belgian and German Communists assembled in London issued in 1848 under the slogan: "Proletarians of all lands, unite" This manifesto, drafted as everyone knows, by Messrs. Marx and Engels, became the basis of all the further scientific works of the school and of the popular agitation later started by Ferdinand Lassalle[4] in Germany.

This principle is the absolute opposite to that recognised by the Idealists of all schools. Whilst these latter derive all historical facts, including the development of material interests and of the different phases of the economic organisation of society, from the development of Ideas, the German Communists, on the contrary, want to see in all human history, in the most idealistic manifestations of the collective as well as the individual life of humanity, in all the intellectual, moral, religious, metaphysical, scientific, artistic, political, juridical, and social developments which have been produced in the past and continue to be produced in the present, nothing but the reflections or the necessary after-effects of the development of economic facts. Whilst the Idealists maintain that ideas dominate and produce facts, the Communists, in agreement besides with scientific Materialism say, on the contrary, that facts give birth to ideas and that these latter are never anything else but the ideal expression of accomplished facts and that among all the facts, economic and material facts, the pre-eminent facts, constitute the essential basis, the principal foundation of which all the other facts, intellectual and moral, political and social, are nothing more than the inevitable derivatives.

We, who are Materialists and Determinists, just as much as Marx himself, we also recognise the inevitable linking of economic and political facts in history. We recognise, indeed, the necessity, the inevitable character of all events that happen, but we do not bow before them indifferently and above all we are very careful about praising them when, by their nature, they show themselves in flagrant opposition to the supreme end of history[5] to the thoroughly human ideal that is to be found under more or less obvious forms, in the instincts, the aspirations of the people and under all the religious symbols of all epochs, because it is inherent in the human race, the most social of all the races of animals on earth. Thus this ideal, to-day better understood than ever, can be summed up in the words: It is the triumph of humanity, it is the conquest and accomplishment of the full freedom and full development, material, intellectual and moral, of every individual, by the absolutely free and spontaneous organisation of economic and social solidarity as completely as possible between all human beings living on the earth.

Everything in history that shows itself conformable to that end, from the human point of view--and we can have no other--is good; all that is contrary to it is bad. We know very well, in any case, that what we call good and bad are always, one and the other, the natural results of natural causes, and that consequently one is as inevitable as the other. But as in what is properly called Nature we recognise many necessities that we are little disposed to bless, for example the necessity of dying of hydrophobia when bitten by a mad dog,[6] in the same way, in that immediate continuation of the life of Nature, called History, we encounter many necessities which we find much more worthy of opprobrium than of benediction and which we believe we should stigmatise with all the energy of which we are capable, in the interest of our social and individual morality, although we recognise that from the moment they have been accomplished, even the most detestable historic facts have that character of inevitability which is found in all the Phenomena of Nature as well as those of history.

To make my idea clearer, I shall illustrate it by some examples. When I study the respective social and political conditions in which the Romans and the Greeks came into contact towards the decline of Antiquity, I arrive at the conclusion that the conquest and destruction by the military and civic barbarism of the Romans, of the comparatively high standard of human liberty of Greece was a logical, natural, absolutely inevitable fact. But that does not prevent me at all from taking retrospectively and very firmly, the side of Greece against Rome in that struggle, and I find that the human race gained absolutely nothing by the triumph of the Romans.

In the same way, I consider as perfectly natural, logical, and consequently inevitable fact, that Christians should have destroyed with a holy fury all the libraries of the Pagans, all the treasures of Art, and of ancient philosophy and science.[7] But it is absolutely impossible for me to grasp what advantages have resulted from it for our political and social development. I am even very much disposed to think that apart from that inevitable process of economic facts in which, if one were to believe Marx, there must be sought to the exclusion of all other considerations, the only cause of all the intellectual and moral facts which are produced in history--I say I am strongly disposed to think that this act of holy barbarity, or rather that long series of barbarous acts and crimes which the first Christians, divinely inspired, committed against the human spirit, was one of the principal causes of the intellectual and moral degradation and consequently also of the political and social enslavement which filled that long series of baneful centuries called the Middle Ages. Be sure of this, that if the first Christians had not destroyed the libraries, Museums, and Temples of antiquity, we should not have been condemned to-day to fight the mass of horrible and shameful absurdities, which still obstruct men's brains to such a degree as to make us doubt sometimes the possibility of a more human future.

Following on with the same order of protests against facts which have happened in history and of which consequently I myself recognise the inevitable character, I pause before the splendour of the Italian Republics and before the magnificent awakening of human genius in the epoch of the Renaissance. Then I see approaching the two evil geniuses, as ancient as history itself, the two bo-constrictors which up till now have devoured everything human and beautiful that history has produced. They are called the Church and the State, the Papacy and the Empire. Eternal evils and inseparable allies, I see them become reconciled, embrace each other and together devour and stifle and crush that unfortunate and too beautiful Italy, condemn her to three centuries of death. Well, again I find all that very natural, logical, inevitable, but nevertheless abominable, and I curse both Pope and Emperor at the same time.

Let us pass on to France. After a struggle which lasted a century Catholicism, supported by the State, finally triumphed there over Protestantism. Well, do I not still find in France to-day some politicians or historians of the fatalist school and who, calling themselves Revolutionaries, consider this victory of Catholicism--a bloody and inhuman victory if ever there was one--as a veritable triumph for the Revolution? Catholicism, they maintain, was then the State, democracy, whilst Protestantism represented the revolt of the aristocracy against the State and consequently against democracy. It is with sophisms like that--completely identical besides with the Marxian sophisms, which, also, consider the triumphs of the State as those of Social Democracy--it is with these absurdities, as disgusting as revolting, that the mind and moral sense of the masses is perverted, habituating them to consider their blood-thirsty exploiters, their age-long enemies, their tyrants, the masters and the servants of the State, as the organs, representatives, heroes, devoted servants of their emancipation.

It is a thousand times right to say that Protestantism then, not as Calvinist theology, but as an energetic and armed protest, represented revolt, liberty, humanity, the destruction of the State; whilst Catholicism was public order, authority, divine law, the salvation of the State by the Church and the Church by the State, the condemnation of human society to a boundless and endless slavery.

Whilst recognising the inevitability of the accomplished fact, I do not hesitate to say that the triumph of Catholicism in France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a great misfortune for the whole human race, and that the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, as well as the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were facts as disastrous for France herself as were lately the defeat and massacre of the people of Paris in the Commune. I have actually heard very intelligent and very estimable Frenchmen explain this defeat of Protestantism in France by the essentially revolutionary nature of the French people. "Protestantism," they said, "was only a semi-revolution; we needed a complete revolution; it is for that reason that the French nation did not wish, and was not able to stop at the Reformation. It preferred to remain Catholic till the moment when it could proclaim Atheism; and it is because of that that it bore with such a perfect and Christian resignation both the

horrors of Saint Bartholomew and those not less abominable of the executors of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes."

These estimable patriots do not seem to want to consider one thing. It is that a people, who under whatsoever pretext it may be, suffers tyranny, necessarily loses at length the salutary habit of revolt and even the very instinct of revolt. It loses the feeling for liberty, and once a people has lost all that, it necessarily becomes not only by its outer conditions, but in itself, in the very essence of its being, a people of slaves. It was because Protestantism was defeated in France that the French people lost, or rather, never acquired, the custom of liberty. It is because this tradition and this custom are lacking in it that it has not to-day what we call political consciousness, and it is because it is lacking in this consciousness that all the revolutions it has made up to now have not been able to give it or secure it political liberty. With the exception of its great revolutionary days, which are its festival days, the French people remain to-day as yesterday, a people of slaves.

Chapter III

The State and Marxism

All work to be performed in the employ and pay of the State--such is the fundamental principle of Authoritarian Communism, of State Socialism. The State having become sole proprietor--at the end of a certain period of transition which will be necessary to let society pass without too great political and economic shocks from the present organisation of bourgeois privilege to the future organisation of the official equality of all--the State will be also the only Capitalist, banker, money-lender, organiser, director of all national labour and distributor of its products. Such is the ideal, the fundamental principle of modern Communism.

Enunciated for the first time by Babeuf,[8] towards the close of the Great French Revolution, with all the array of antique civism and revolutionary violence, which constituted the character of the epoch, it was recast and reproduced in miniature, about forty-five years later by Louis Blanc[9] in his tiny pamphlet on The Organisation of Labour, in which that estimable citizen, much less revolutionary, and much more indulgent towards bourgeois weaknesses than was Babeuf, tried to gild and sweeten the pill so that the bourgeois could swallow it without suspecting that they were taking a poison which would kill them. But the bourgeois were not deceived, and returning brutality for politeness, they expelled Louis Blanc from France. In spite of that, with a constancy which one must admire, he remained alone in faithfulness to his economic system and continued to believe that the whole future was contained in his little pamphlet on the organisation of Labour.

The Communist idea later passed into more serious hands. Karl Marx, the undisputed chief of the Socialist Party in Germany--a great intellect armed with a profound knowledge, whose entire life, one can say it without flattering, has been devoted exclusively to the greatest cause which exists to-day, the emancipation of labour and of the toilers--Karl Marx who is indisputably also, if not the only, at least one of the principal founders of the International Workingmen's Association, made the development of the Communist idea the object of a serious work. His great work, Capital, is not in the least a fantasy, an "a priori" conception, hatched out in a single day in the head of a young man more or less ignorant of economic conditions and of the actual system of production. It is founded on a very extensive, very detailed knowledge and a very profound analysis of this system and of its conditions. Karl Marx is a man of immense statistical and economic knowledge. His work on Capital, though unfortunately bristling with formulas and metaphysical subtleties which render it unapproachable for the great mass of readers, is in the highest degree a scientific or realist work: in the sense that it absolutely excludes any other logic than that of the facts.

Living for very nearly thirty years, almost exclusively among German workers, refugees like himself and surrounded by more or less intelligent friends and disciples belonging by birth and relationship to the bourgeois world, Marx naturally has managed to form a Communist school, or a sort of little Communist Church, composed of fervent adepts and spread all over Germany. This Church, restricted though it may be on the score of numbers, is skilfully organised, and thanks to its numerous connections with working-class organisations in all the principal places in Germany, it has already become a power.[10] Karl Marx naturally enjoys an almost supreme authority in this Church, and to do him justice, it must be admitted that he knows how to govern this little army of fanatical adherents in such a way as always to enhance his prestige and power over the imagination of the workers of Germany.

Marx is not only a learned Socialist, he is also a very clever Politician and an ardent patriot. Like Bismarck, though by somewhat different means, and like many other of his compatriots, Socialists or not, he wants the establishment of a great Germanic State for the glory of the German people and for the happiness and the voluntary, or enforced civilization of the world.

The policy of Bismarck is that of the present; the policy of Marx, who considers himself at least as his successor, and his continuator, is that of the future. And when I say that Marx considers himself the continuator of Bismarck, I am far from calumniating Marx. If he did not consider himself as such, he would not have permitted Engels, the confidant of all his thoughts, to write that Bismarck serves the cause of Social Revolution. He serves it now in his own way; Marx will serve it later, in another manner. That is the sense in which he will be later, the continuator, as to-day he is the admirer of the policy of Bismarck.

Now let us examine the particular character of Marx's policy, let us ascertain the essential points on which it is to be separated from the Bismarckian policy. The principal point, and, one might say, the only one, is this: Marx is a democrat, an Authoritarian Socialist, and a Republican; Bismarck is an out and out Pomeranian, aristocratic, monarchical Junker. The difference is therefore very great, very serious, and both sides are sincere in this difference. On this point, there is no possible understanding or reconciliation possible between Bismarck and Marx. Even apart from the numerous irrevocable pledges that Marx throughout his life, has given to the cause of Socialist democracy, his very position and his ambitions give a positive guarantee on this issue. In a monarchy, however Liberal it might be, or even cannot be any place, any role for Marx, and so much the more so in the Prussian Germanic Empire founded by Bismarck, with a bugbear of an Emperor, militarist and bigoted, as chief and with all the barons and bureaucrats of Germany for guardians. Before he can arrive at power, Marx will have to sweep all that away.

Therefore he is forced to be Revolutionary. That is what separates Marx from Bismarck---the form and the conditions of Government. One is an out and out aristocrat and monarchist; and in a Conservative Republic like that of France under Thiers[11], there the other is an out and out democrat and republican, and, into the bargain, a Socialist democrat and a Socialist republican.

Let us see now what unites them. It is the out and out cult of the State. I have no need to prove it in the case of Bismarck, the proofs are there. From head to foot he is a State's man and nothing but a State's man. But neither do I believe that I shall have need of too great efforts to prove that it is the same with Marx. He loves government to such a degree that he even wanted to institute one in the International Workingmen's Association; and he worships power so much that he wanted to impose and still means to-day to impose his dictatorship on us. It seems to me that that is sufficient to characterise his personal attitude. But his Socialist and political programme is a very faithful expression of it. The supreme objective of all his efforts, as is proclaimed to us by the fundamental statutes of his party in Germany, is the establishment of the great People's State (Volksstaat).

But whoever says State, necessarily says a particular limited State, doubtless comprising, if it is very large, many different peoples and countries, but excluding still more. For unless he is dreaming of the Universal State as did Napoleon and the Emperor Charles the Fifth, or as the Papacy dreamed of the Universal Church, Marx, in spite of all the international ambition which

devours him to-day, will have, when the hour of the realisation of his dreams has sounded for him--if it ever does sound--he will have to content himself with governing a single State and not several States at once. Consequently, who ever says State says, a State, and whoever says a State affirms by that the existence of several States, and whoever says several States, immediately says: competition, jealousy, truceless and endless war. The simplest logic as well as all history bear witness to it.

Any State, under pain of perishing and seeing itself devoured by neighbouring States, must tend towards complete power, and, having become powerful, it must embark on a career of conquest, so that it shall not be itself conquered; for two powers similar and at the same time foreign to each other could not co-exist without trying to destroy each other. Whoever says conquest, says conquered peoples, enslaved and in bondage, under whatever form or name it may be.

It is in the nature of the State to break the solidarity of the human race and, as it were, to deny humanity. The State cannot preserve itself as such in its integrity and in all its strength except it sets itself up as supreme and absolute be-all and end-all, at least for its own citizens, or to speak more frankly, for its own subjects, not being able to impose itself as such on the citizens of other States unconquered by it. From that there inevitably results a break with human, considered as universal, morality and with universal reason, by the birth of State morality and reasons of State. The principle of political or State morality is very simple. The State, being the supreme objective, everything that is favourable to the development of its power is good; all that is contrary to it, even if it were the most humane thing in the world, is bad. This morality is called Patriotism. The International is the negation of patriotism and consequently the negation of the State. If therefore Marx and his friends of the German Socialist Democratic Party should succeed in introducing the State principle into our programme, they would kill the International.

The State, for its own preservation, must necessarily be powerful as regards foreign affairs; but if it is so as regards foreign affairs, it will infallibly be so as regards home affairs. Every State, having to let itself be inspired and directed by some particular morality, conformable to the particular conditions of its existence, by a morality which is a restriction and consequently a negation of human and universal morality, must keep watch that all its subjects, in their thoughts and above all in their acts, are inspired also only by the principles of this patriotic or particular morality, and that they remain deaf to the teachings of pure or universally human morality. From that there results the necessity for a State censorship; too great liberty of thought and opinions being, as Marx considers, very reasonably too from his eminently political point of view, incompatible with that unanimity of adherence demanded by the security of the State. That that in reality is Marx's opinion is sufficiently proved by the attempts which he made to introduce censorship into the International, under plausible pretexts, and covering it with a mask.

But however vigilant this censorship may be, even if the State were to take into its own hands exclusively education and all the instruction of the people, as Mazzini wished to do, and as Marx wishes to do to-day the State can never be sure that prohibited and dangerous thoughts may not slip in and be smuggled somehow into the consciousness of the population that it governs. Forbidden fruit has such an attraction for men, and the demon of revolt, that eternal enemy of the State, awakens so easily in their hearts when they are not sufficiently stupified, that neither this education nor this instruction, nor even the censorship, sufficiently guarantee the tranquillity of the State. It must still have a police, devoted agents who watch over and direct, secretly and unobtrusively, the current of the peoples' opinions and passions. We have seen that Marx himself is so convinced of this necessity, that he believed he should fill with his secret agents all the regions of the International and above all, Italy, France, and Spain. Finally, however perfect may be, from the point of view of the preservation of the State, the organisation of education and instruction for the people, of censorship and the police, the State cannot be secure in its existence while it does not have, to defend it against its enemies at home, an armed force. The State is government from above downwards of an immense number of men, very different from the point of view of the degree of their culture, the nature of the countries or localities that they inhabit, the occupation they follow, the interests and the aspirations directing them--the State is the government of all these by some or

other minority; this minority, even if it were a thousand times elected by universal suffrage and controlled in its acts by popular institutions, unless it were endowed with the omniscience, omnipresence and the omnipotence which the theologians attribute to God, it is impossible that it could know and foresee the needs, or satisfy with an even justice the most legitimate and pressing interests in the world. There will always be discontented people because there will always be some who are sacrificed.

Besides, the State, like the Church, by its very nature is a great sacrificer of living beings. It is an arbitrary being, in whose heart all the positive, living, individual, and local interests of the population meet, clash, destroy each other, become absorbed in that abstraction called the common interest, the public good, the public safety, and where all real wills cancel each other in that other abstraction which bears the name of the will of the people. It results from this, that this so-called will of the people is never anything else than the sacrifice and the negation of all the real wills of the population; just as this so-called public good is nothing else than the sacrifice of their interests. But so that this omnivorous abstraction could impose itself on millions of men, it must be represented and supported by some real being, by living force or other. Well, this being, this force, has always existed. In the Church it is called the clergy, and in the State--the ruling or governing class.

And, in fact, what do we find throughout history? The State has always been the patrimony of some privileged class or other; a priestly class, an aristocratic class, a bourgeois class, and finally a bureaucratic class, when, all the other classes having become exhausted, the State falls or rises, as you will, to the condition of a machine; but it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of the State that there should be some privileged class or other which is interested in its existence. And it is precisely the united interest of this privileged class which is called Patriotism.

By excluding the immense majority of the human race from its bosom, by casting it beyond the pale of the engagements and reciprocal duties of morality, justice and right, the State denies humanity, and with that big word, "Patriotism", imposes injustice and cruelty on all its subjects, as a supreme duty. It restrains, it mutilates, it kills humanity in them, so that, ceasing to be men, they are no longer anything but citizens--or rather, more correctly considered in relation to the historic succession of facts--so that they shall never raise themselves beyond the level of the citizen to the level of a man.

If we accept the fiction of a free State derived from a social contract, then discerning, just, prudent people ought not to have any longer any need of government or of State. Such a people can need only to live, leaving a free course to all their instincts: justice and public order will naturally and of their accord proceed from the life of the people, and the State, ceasing to be the providence, guide, educator, and regulator of society, renouncing all its repressive power, and falling to the subaltern role which Proudhon assigns it, will no longer anything else but a simple business office, a sort of central clearing house at the service of society.

Doubtless, such a political organisation, or rather, such a reduction of political action in favour of liberty in social life, would be a great benefit for society, but it would not at all please the devoted adherents of the State. They absolutely must have a State-Providence, a State directing social life, dispensing justice, and administering public order. That is to say, whether they admit it or not, and even when they call themselves Republicans, democrats, or even Socialists, they always must have a people who are more or less ignorant, minor, incapable, or to call things by their right names, ruff-raff, to govern; in order, of course, that doing violence to their own disinterestedness and modesty, they can keep the best places for themselves, in order always to have the opportunity to devote themselves to the common good, and that, strong in their virtuous devotion and their exclusive intelligence, privileged guardians of the human flock, whilst urging it on for its own good and leading it to security, they may also fleece it a little.

Every logical and sincere theory of the State is essentially founded on the principle of authority--that is to say on the eminently theological, metaphysical and political idea that the masses, always

incapable of governing themselves, must submit at all times to the benevolent yoke of a wisdom and a justice, which in one way or another, is imposed on them from above. But imposed in the name of what and by whom? Authority recognised and respected as such by the masses can have only three possible sources--force, religion, or the action of a superior intelligence; and this supreme intelligence is always represented by minorities.

Slavery can Change its form and its name--its basis remains the same. This basis is expressed by the words: being a slave is being forced to work for other people--as being a master is to live on the labour of other people. In ancient times, as to-day in Asia and Africa, slaves were simply called slaves. In the Middle Ages, they took the name of "serfs", to-day they are called "wage-earners". The position of these latter is much more honourable and less hard than that of slaves, but they are none the less forced by hunger as well as by the political and social institutions, to maintain by very hard work the absolute or relative idleness of others. Consequently, they are slaves. And, in general, no State, either ancient or modern, has ever been able, or ever will be able to do without the forced labour of the masses, whether wage-earners or slaves, as a principal and absolutely necessary basis of the liberty and culture of the political class: the citizens.

Even the United States is no exception to this rule. Its marvellous prosperity and enviable progress are due in great part and above all to one important advantage--the great territorial wealth of North America. The immense quantity of uncultivated and fertile lands, together with a political liberty that exists nowhere else attracts every year hundreds of thousands of energetic, industrious and intelligent colonists. This wealth, at the same time keeps off pauperism and delays the moment when the social question will have to be put. A worker who does not find work or who is dissatisfied with the wages offered by the capitalist can always, if need be, emigrate to the far West to clear there some wild and unoccupied land.[12]

This possibility always remaining open as a last resort to all American workers, naturally keeps wages at a level, and gives to every individual an independence, unknown in Europe. Such is the advantage, but here is the disadvantage. As cheapness of the products of industry is achieved in great part by cheapness of labour, the American manufacturers for most of the time are not in a condition to compete against the manufacturers of Europe--from which there results, for the industry of the Northern States, the necessity for a protectionist tariff. But that has a result, firstly to create a host of artificial industries and above all to oppress and ruin the non-manufacturing Southern States and make them want secession; finally to crowd together into cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston and many others, proletarian working masses who, little by little, are beginning to find themselves already in a situation analogous to that of the workers in the great manufacturing States of Europe. And we see, in effect the social question already being posed in the Northern States, just as it was posed long before in our countries.

And there too, the self-government of the masses, in spite of all the display of the people's omnipotence, remains most of the time in a state of fiction. In reality, it is minorities which govern. The so-called Democratic Party, up to the time of the Civil War to emancipate the slaves, were the out and out partisans of slavery and of the ferocious oligarchy of the planters, demagogues without faith or conscience, capable of sacrificing everything to their greed and evil-minded ambition, and who, by their detestable influence and actions, exercised almost unhindered, for nearly fifty years continuously, have greatly contributed to deprave the political morality of North America.

The Republican Party, though really intelligent and generous, is still and always a minority, and whatever the sincerity of this party of liberation, however great and generous the principles it professes, do not let us hope that, in power, it will renounce this exclusive position of a governing minority to merge into the mass of the nation so that the self-government of the people shall finally become a reality. For that there will be necessary a revolution far more profound than all those which hitherto have shaken the Old and New Worlds.

In Switzerland, in spite of all the democratic revolutions that have taken place there, it is still always the class in comfortable circumstances, the bourgeoisie, that is to say, the class privileged by

wealth, leisure, and education, which governs. The sovereignty of the people--a word which, anyway, we detest because in our eyes, all sovereignty is detestable--the government of the people by themselves is likewise a fiction. The people is sovereign in law, not in fact, for necessarily absorbed by their daily labour, which leaves them no leisure, and if not completely ignorant, at least very inferior in education to the bourgeoisie, they are forced to place in the hands of the latter their supposed sovereignty. The sole advantage which they get out of it in Switzerland, as in the United States, is that ambitious minorities, the political classes, cannot arrive at power otherwise than by paying court to the people, flattering their fleeting passions, which may sometimes be very bad, and most often deceiving them.

It is true that the most imperfect republic is a thousand times better than the most enlightened monarchy, for at least in the republic there are moments when, though always exploited, the people are not oppressed, while in monarchies they are never anything else. And then the democratic regime trains the masses little by little in public life, which the monarchy never does. But whilst giving the preference to the republic we are nevertheless forced to recognise and proclaim that whatever may be the form of government, whilst human society remains divided into different classes because of the hereditary inequality of occupations, wealth, education, and privileges, there will always be minority government and the inevitable exploitation of the majority by that minority.

The State is nothing else but this domination and exploitation regularised and systematised. We shall attempt to demonstrate it by examining the consequence of the government of the masses of the people by a minority, at first as intelligent and as devoted as you like, in an ideal State, founded on a free contract.

Suppose the government to be confined only to the best citizens. At first these citizens are privileged not by right, but by fact. They have been elected by the people because they are the most intelligent, clever, wise, and courageous and devoted. Taken from the mass of the citizens, who are regarded as all equal, they do not yet form a class apart, but a group of men privileged only by nature and for that very reason singled out for election by the people. Their number is necessarily very limited, for in all times and countries the number of men endowed with qualities so remarkable that they automatically command the unanimous respect of a nation is, as experience teaches us, very small. Therefore, under pain of making a bad choice, the people will be always forced to choose its rulers from amongst them.

Here, then, is society divided into two categories, if not yet to say two classes, of which one, composed of the immense majority of the citizens, submits freely to the government of its elected leaders, the other, formed of a small number of privileged natures, recognised and accepted as such by the people, and charged by them to govern them. Dependent on popular election, they are at first distinguished from the mass of the citizens only by the very qualities which recommended them to their choice and are naturally, the most devoted and useful of all. They do not yet assume to themselves any privilege, any particular right, except that of exercising, insofar as the people wish it, the special functions with which they have been charged. For the rest, by their manner of life, by the conditions and means of their existence, they do not separate themselves in any way from all the others, so that a perfect equality continues to reign among all. Can this equality be long maintained? We claim that it cannot and nothing is easier to prove it.

Nothing is more dangerous for man's private morality than the habit of command. The best man, the most intelligent, disinterested, generous, pure, will infallibly and always be spoiled at this trade. Two sentiments inherent in power never fail to produce this demoralisation; they are: contempt for the masses and the overestimation of one's own merits.

"The masses," a man says to himself, "recognising their incapacity to govern on their own account, have elected me their chief. By that act they have publicly proclaimed their inferiority and my superiority. Among this crowd of men, recognising hardly any equals of myself, I am alone capable of directing public affairs. The people have need of me; they cannot do without my services, while I, on the contrary, can get along all right by myself: they, therefore, must obey me for their own

security, and in condescending to command them, I am doing them a good turn."

Is not there something in all that to make a man lose his head and his heart as well, and become mad with pride? It is thus that power and the habit of command become for even the most intelligent and virtuous men, a source of aberration, both intellectual and moral.

But in the People's State of Marx, there will be, we are told, no privileged class at all. All will be equal, not only from the juridical and political point of view, but from the economic point of view. At least that is what is promised, though I doubt very much, considering the manner in which it is being tackled and the course it is desired to follow, whether that promise could ever be kept. There will therefore be no longer any privileged class, but there will be a government and, note this well, an extremely complex government, which will not content itself with governing and administering the masses politically, as all governments do to-day, but which will also administer them economically, concentrating in its own hands the production and the just division of wealth, the cultivation of land, the establishment and development of factories, the organisation and direction of commerce, finally the application of capital to production by the only banker, the State. All that will demand an immense knowledge and many "heads overflowing with brains"[13] in this government. It will be the reign of scientific intelligence, the most aristocratic, despotic, arrogant and contemptuous of all regimes. There will be a new class, a new hierarchy of real and pretended scientists and scholars, and the world will be divided into a minority ruling in the name of knowledge and an immense ignorant majority.[14] And then, woe betide the mass of ignorant ones!

Such a regime will not fail to arouse very considerable discontent in this mass and in order to keep it in check the enlightenment and liberating government of Marx will have need of a not less considerable armed force. For the government must be strong, says Engels, to maintain order among these millions of illiterates whose brutal uprising would be capable of destroying and overthrowing everything, even a government directed by heads overflowing with brains.

You can see quite well that behind all the democratic and socialistic phrases and promises of Marx's programme, there is to be found in his State all that constitutes the true despotic and brutal nature of all States, whatever may be the form of their government and that in the final reckoning, the People's State so strongly commended by Marx, and the aristocratic-monarchic State, maintained with as much cleverness as power by Bismarck, are completely identical by the nature of their objective at home as well as in foreign affairs. In foreign affairs it is the same deployment of military force, that is to say, conquest; and in home affairs it is the same employment of this armed force, the last argument of all threatened political powers against the masses, who, tired of believing, hoping, submitting and obeying always, rise in revolt.

Marx's Communist idea comes to light in all his writings; it is also manifest in the motions put forward by the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, situated in London, at the Congress of Basel in 1869, as well as by the proposals which he had intended to present to the Congress which was to take place in September, 1870, but which had to be suspended because of the Franco-German War. As a member of the General Council in London and as corresponding Secretary for Germany, Marx enjoys in this Council, as is well known, a great and it must be admitted, legitimate influence, so that it can be taken for certain that of the motions put to the Congress by the Council, several are principally derived from the system and the collaboration of Marx. It was in this way that the English citizen Lucraft, a member of the General Council, put forward at the Congress of Basel the idea that all the land in a country should become the property of the State, and that the cultivation of this land should be directed and administered by State officials, "Which," he added, "will only be possible in a democratic and Socialist State, in which the people will have to watch carefully over the good administration of the national land by the State."

This cult of the State is, in general, the principal characteristic of German Socialism. Lassalle, the greatest Socialist agitator and the true founder of the practical Socialist movement in Germany was steeped in it. He saw no salvation for the workers except in the power of the State; of which the workers should possess themselves, according to him, by means of universal suffrage.

Chapter IV

Internationalism and the State

Let us consider the real, national policy of Marx himself. Like Bismarck, he is a German patriot. He desires the greatness and power of Germany as a State. No one anyway will count it a crime in him to love his country and his people; and since he is so profoundly convinced that the State is the condition sine qua non of the prosperity of the one and the emancipation of the other, it will be found natural that he should desire to see Germany organized into a very large and very powerful State, since weak and small States always run the risk of seeing themselves swallowed up. Consequently Marx as a clear-sighted and ardent patriot, must wish for the greatness and strength of Germany as a State.

But, on the other hand, Marx is a celebrated Socialist and, what is more, one of the principal initiators of the International. He does not content himself with working for the emancipation of the proletariat of Germany alone; he feels himself in honor bound, and he considers it as his duty, to work at the same time for the emancipation of the proletariat of all other countries; the result is that he finds himself in complete conflict with himself. As a German patriot, he wants the greatness and power, that is to say, the domination of Germany; but as a Socialist of the International he must wish for the emancipation of all the peoples of the world. How can this contradiction be resolved?

There is only one way, that is to proclaim, after he has persuaded himself of it, of course, that the greatness and power of Germany as a State, is a supreme condition of the emancipation of the whole world, that the national and political triumph of Germany, is the triumph of humanity, and that all that is contrary to the advent of this great new omnivorous power is the enemy of humanity. This conviction once established, it is not only permitted, but it is commanded by the most sacred of causes, to make the International, including all the Federations of other countries, serve as a very powerful, convenient, above all, popular means for the setting up of the great Pan-German State. And that is precisely what Marx tried to do, as much by the deliberations of the Conference he called at London in 1871 as by the resolutions voted by his German and French friends at the Hague Congress. If he did not succeed better, it is assuredly not for lack of very great efforts and much skill on his part, but probably because the fundamental idea which inspires him is false and its realization is impossible.

One cannot commit a greater mistake than to ask either of a thing or of an institution, or of a man more than they can give. By demanding more from them one demoralises, impedes, perverts and kills them. The International in a short time produced great results. It organised and it will organise every day in a more formidable manner still, the proletariat for the economic struggle. Is that a reason to hope that one can use it as an instrument for the political struggle? Marx, because he thought so, very nearly killed the International, by his criminal attempt at the Hague. It is the story of the goose with the golden eggs. At the summons to the economic struggle masses of workers of different countries hastened along to range themselves under the flag of the International, and Marx imagined that the masses would stay under it--what do I say?--that they would hasten along in still more formidable numbers, when he, a new Moses, had inscribed the maxims of his political decalogue on our flag in the official and binding programme of the International.

There his mistake lay. The masses, without distinction of degree of culture, religious beliefs, country and speech, had understood the language of the International when it spoke to them of their poverty, their sufferings and their slavery under the yoke of Capitalism and exploiting private ownership; they understood it when it demonstrated to them the necessity of uniting their efforts in

a great solid, common struggle. But here they were being talked to about a very learned and above all very authoritarian political programme, which, in the name of their own salvation, was attempting, in that very International which was to organise their emancipation by their own efforts, to impose on them a dictatorial government, provisional, no doubt, but, meanwhile, completely arbitrary and directed by a head extraordinarily filled with brains.

Marx's programme is a complete fabric of political and economic institutions strongly centralised and very authoritarian, sanctioned, no doubt, like all despotic institutions in modern society, by universal suffrage, but subordinate nevertheless to a very strong government; to use the very words of Engels, the alter ego of Marx, the confidant of the legislator.

To what a degree of madness would not one have to be driven by ambition, or vanity, or both at once, to have been capable of conceiving the hope that one could retain the working masses of the different countries of Europe and America under the flag of the International on these conditions!

A universal State, government, dictatorship! The dream of Popes Gregory VII and Boniface VIII, of the Emperor Charles V, and of Napoleon, reproducing itself under new forms, but always with the same pretensions in the camp of Socialist Democracy! Can one imagine anything more burlesque, but also anything more revolting?

To maintain that one group of individuals, even the most intelligent and the best intentioned, are capable of becoming the thought, the soul, the guiding and unifying will of the revolutionary movement and of the economic organisation of the proletariat in all countries is such a heresy against common sense, and against the experience of history, that one asks oneself with astonishment how a man as intelligent as Marx could have conceived it.

The Pope had at least for an excuse the absolute truth which they claimed rested in their hands by the grace of the Holy Spirit and in which they were supposed to believe. Marx has not this excuse, and I shall, not insult him by thinking that he believes himself to have scientifically invented something which approaches absolute truth. But from the moment that the absolute does not exist, there cannot be any infallible dogma for the International, nor consequently any official political and economic theory, and our Congresses must never claim the role of General Church Councils, proclaiming obligatory principles for all adherents and believers. There exists only one law which is really obligatory for all members, individuals sections and federations in the International, of which this law constitutes the true and only basis. It is, in all its extension, in all its consequences and applications--the International solidarity of the toilers in all trades and in all countries in their economic struggle against the exploiters of labour. It is in the real organisation of this solidarity, by the spontaneous organisation of the working masses and by the absolutely free federation, powerful in proportion as it will be free, of the working masses of all languages and nations, and not in their unification by decrees and under the rod of any government whatever, that there resides the real and living unity of the International. That from this ever broader organisation of the militant solidarity of the proletariat against bourgeois exploitation there must issue, and in fact there does arise, the political struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; who can doubt? The Marxians and ourselves are unanimous on this point. But immediately there presents itself the question which separates us so profoundly from the Marxians.

We think that the necessarily revolutionary policy of the proletariat must have for its immediate and only object the destruction of States. We do not understand that anyone could speak of international solidarity when they want to keep States--unless they are dreaming of the Universal State, that is to say, universal slavery like the great Emperors and Popes--the State by its very nature being a rupture of this solidarity and consequently a permanent cause of war. Neither do we understand how anybody could speak of the freedom of the proletariat or of the real deliverance of the masses in the State and by the State. State means domination, and all domination presupposes the subjection of the masses and consequently their exploitation to the profit of some minority or other.

We do not admit, even as a revolutionary transition, either National Conventions, or Constituent

Assemblies, or so-called revolutionary dictatorships; because we are convinced that the revolutionary is only sincere, honest and real in the masses, and that when it is concentrated in the hands of some governing individuals, it naturally and inevitably becomes reaction.

The Marxians profess quite contrary ideas. As befits good Germans, they are worshipers of the power of the State, and necessarily also the prophets of political and social discipline, the champions of order established from above downwards, always in the name of universal suffrage and the sovereignty of the masses, to whom they reserve the happiness and honour of obeying chiefs, elected masters. The Marxians admit no other emancipation than that which they expect from their so-called People's States. They are so little the enemies of patriotism that their International, even, wears too often the colours of Pan-Germanism. Between the Marxian policy and the Bismarckian policy there no doubt exists a very appreciable difference, but between the Marxians and ourselves, there is an abyss. They are Governmentalists, we are out and out Anarchists.

Indeed, between these two tendencies no conciliation to-day is possible. Only the practical experience of social revolution, of great new historic experiences, the logic of events, can bring them sooner or later to a common solution; and strongly convinced of the rightness of our principle, we hope that then the Germans themselves--the workers of Germany and not their leaders--will finish by joining us in order to demolish those prisons of peoples, that are called States and to condemn politics, which indeed is nothing but the art of dominating and fleecing the masses.

At a pinch I can conceive that despots, crowned or uncrowned, could dream of the sceptre of the world; but what can be said of a friend of the proletariat, of a revolutionary who seriously claims that he desires the emancipation of the masses and who setting himself up as director and supreme arbiter of all the revolutionary movements which can burst forth in different countries, dares to dream of the subjection of the proletariat of all these countries to a single thought, hatched in his own brain.

I consider that Marx is a very serious revolutionary, if not always a very sincere one, and that he really wants to uplift the masses and I ask myself--Why it is that he does not perceive that the establishment of a universal dictatorship, whether collective or individual, of a dictatorship which would perform in some degree the task of chief engineer of the world revolution--ruling and directing the insurrectional movement of the masses in all countries as one guides a machine--that the establishment of such a dictatorship would suffice by itself alone to kill the revolution, or paralyse and pervert all the people's movements? What is the man, what is the group of individuals, however great may be their genius, who would dare to flatter themselves to be able to embrace and comprehend the infinite multitude of interests, of tendencies and actions, so diverse in each country, province, locality, trade, and of which the immense totality, united, but not made uniform, by one grand common aspiration and by some fundamental principles which have passed henceforth into the consciousness of the masses, will constitute the future social revolution?

And what is to be thought of an International Congress which in the so-called interests of this revolution, imposes on the proletariat of the whole civilised world a government invested with dictatorial power, with the inquisitorial and dictatorial rights of suspending regional federations, of proclaiming a ban against whole nations in the name of a so-called official principle, which is nothing else than Marx's own opinion, transformed by the vote of a fake majority into an absolute truth? What is to be thought of a Congress which, doubtless to render its folly still more patent, relegates to America this dictatorial governing body, after having composed it of men probably very honest, but obscure, sufficiently ignorant, and absolutely unknown to it. Our enemies the bourgeois would then be right when they laugh at our Congresses and when they claim that the International only fights old tyrannies in order to establish new ones, and that in order worthily to replace existing absurdities, it wishes to create another!

Chapter V

Social Revolution and the State

What Bismarck has done for the political and bourgeois world, Marx claims to do to-day^[15] for the Socialist world, among the proletariat of Europe; to replace French initiative by German initiative and domination; and as, according to him and his disciples, there is no German thought more advanced than his own, he believed the moment had come to have it triumph theoretically and practically in the International. Such was the only object of the Conference which he called, together in September 1871 in London. This Marxian thought is explicitly developed in the famous Manifesto of the refugee German Communists drafted and published in 1848. by Marx and Engels. It is the theory of the emancipation of the proletariat and of the organisation of labour by the State.

Its principal point is the conquest of political power by the working class. One can understand that men as indispensable as Marx and Engels should be the partisans of a programme which, consecrating and approving political power, opens the door to all ambitions. Since there will be political power there will necessarily be subjects, got up in Republican fashion, as citizens, it is true, but who will none the less be subjects, and who as such will be forced to obey--because without obedience, there is no power possible. It will be said in answer to this that they will obey not men but laws which they will have made themselves. To that I shall reply that everybody knows how much, in the countries which are freest and most democratic, but politically governed, the people make the laws, and what their obedience to these laws signifies. Whoever is not deliberately desirous of taking fictions for realities must recognise quite well that, even in such countries, the people really obey not laws which they make themselves, but laws which are made in their name, and that to obey these laws means nothing else to them than to submit to the arbitrary will of some guarding and governing minority or, what amounts to the same thing, to be freely slaves.

There is in this programme another expression which is profoundly antipathetic to us revolutionary Anarchists who frankly want the complete emancipation of the people; the expression to which I refer is the presentation of the proletariat, the whole society of toilers, as a "class" and not as a "mass". Do you know what that means? Neither more nor less than a new aristocracy, that of the workers of the factories and towns, to the exclusion of the millions who constitute the proletariat of the countryside and who in the anticipations of the Social Democrats of Germany will, in effect, become subjects of their great so-called People's State. "Class", "Power", "State", are three inseparable terms, of which. each necessary pre-supposes the two others and which all definitely are to be summed up by the words: the political subjection and the economic exploitation of the masses.

The Marxians think that just as in the 18th Century the bourgeoisie dethroned the nobility, to take its place and to absorb it slowly into its own body, sharing with it the domination and exploitation of the toilers in the towns as well as in the country, so the proletariat of the towns is called on to-day to dethrone the bourgeoisie, to absorb it and to share with it the domination and exploitation of the proletariat of the countryside; this last outcast of history, unless this latter later an revolts and demolishes all classes, denominations, powers, in a word, all States.

To me, however, the flower of the proletariat does not mean, as it does to the Marxians, the upper layer, the most civilised and comfortably off in the working world, that layer of semi-bourgeois workers, which is precisely the class the Marxians want to use to constitute their fourth governing class, and which is really capable of forming one if things are not set to rights in the interests of the great mass of the proletariat; for with its relative comfort and semi-bourgeois position, this upper layer of workers is unfortunately only too deeply penetrated with all the political and social prejudices and all the narrow aspirations and pretensions of the bourgeois. It can be truly said that this upper layer is the least socialist, the most individualist in all the proletariat.

By the flower of the proletariat, I mean above all, that great mass, those millions of non-civilised, disinherited, wretched and illiterates whom Messrs. Engels and Marx mean to subject to the paternal regime of a very strong government, to employ an expression used by Engels in a letter to our friend Cafiero. Without doubt, this will be for their own salvation, as of course all governments, as is well known, have been established solely in the interests of the masses themselves.[16] By the flower of the proletariat I mean precisely that eternal "meat" for governments, that great rabble of the people ordinarily designated by Messrs. Marx and Engels by the phrase at once picturesque and contemptuous of "lumpen proletariat", the "riff raff", that rabble which, being very nearly unpolluted by all bourgeois civilization carries in its heart, in its aspirations, in all necessities and the miseries of its collective position, all the germs of the Socialism of the future, and which alone is powerful enough to-day to inaugurate the Social Revolution and bring it to triumph.

Though differing from us in this respect also, the Marxians do not reject our programme absolutely. They only reproach us with wanting to hasten, to outstrip, the slow march of history and to ignore the scientific law of successive evolutions. Having had the thoroughly German nerve to proclaim in their worlds consecrated to the philosophical analysis of the past that the bloody defeat of the insurgent peasants of Germany and the triumph of the despotic States in the sixteenth century constituted a great revolutionary progress, they to-day have the nerve to satisfy themselves with establishing a new despotism to the so-called profit of the town-workers and to the detriment of the toilers in the country.

To support his programme of the conquest of political power, Marx has a very special theory which is, moreover, only a logical consequence of his whole system. The political condition of each country, says he, is always the product and the faithful expression of its economic situation; to change the former it is only necessary to transform the latter. According to Marx, ail the secret of historic evolution is there. He takes no account of other elements in history, such as the quite obvious reaction of political, juridical, and religious institutions on the economic situation. He says, "Poverty produces political slavery, the State," but he does not allow this expression to be turned around to say "Political slavery, the State, reproduces in its turn, and maintains poverty as a condition of its own existence; so that, in order to destroy poverty, it is necessary to destroy the State!" And, a strange thing in him who forbids his opponents to lay the blame on political slavery, the State, as an active cause of poverty, he commands his friends and disciples of the Social Democratic Party in Germany to consider the conquest of power and of political liberties as the preliminary condition absolutely necessary for economic emancipation.

Yet the sociologists of the school of Marx, men like Engels and Lassalle, object against us that the State is not at all the cause of the poverty of the people, of the degradation and servitude of the masses; but that the wretched condition of the masses, as well as the despotic power of the State are, on the contrary, both the one and the other, the effects of a more general cause, the products of an inevitable phase in the economic development of society, of a phase which, from the point of view of history, constitutes true progress, an immense step towards what they call the social revolution. To such a degree, in fact, that Lassalle did not hesitate loudly to proclaim that the defeat of the formidable revolt of the peasants in Germany in the sixteenth century--a deplorable defeat if ever there was one, from which dates the centuries-old slavery of the Germans--and the triumph of the despotic and centralised State which was the necessary consequence of it, constituted a real triumph for this revolution; because the peasants, say the Marxians, are the natural representatives of reaction, whilst the modern military and bureaucratic State--a product and inevitable accompaniment of the social revolution, which, starting from the second half of the sixteenth century commenced the slow, but always progressive trans--formation of the ancient feudal and land economy into the production of wealth, or, what comes to the same thing, into the exploitation of the labour of the people by capital--this State was an essential condition of this revolution.

One can understand how Engels, driven on by the same illogic, in a letter addressed to one of our friends, Carlo Cafiero, was able to say, without the least irony, but on the contrary, very seriously, that Bismarck as well as King Victor Emmanuel II had rendered immense services to the revolution,

both of them having created political centralisation in their respective countries.

Likewise Marx completely ignores a most important element in the historic development of humanity, that is, the temperament and particular character of each race and each people, a temperament and character which are naturally themselves the product of a multitude of ethnographical, climatological, economic, as well as historic causes, but which, once produced, exercise, even apart from and independent of the economic conditions of each country, a considerable influence on its destinies, and even on the development of its economic forces. Among these elements, and these so to say natural traits, there is one whose action is completely decisive in the particular history of each people; it is the intensity of the instinct of revolt, and by the same token, of liberty, with which it is endowed or which it has conserved. This instinct is a fact which is completely primordial and animal; one finds it in different degrees in every living being, and the energy, the vital power of each is to be measured by its intensity. In man, besides the economic needs which urge him on, this instinct becomes the most powerful agent of all human emancipations. And as it is a matter of temperament, not of intellectual and moral culture, although ordinarily it evokes one and the other, it sometimes happens that civilised peoples possess it only in a feeble degree, whether it is that it has been exhausted during their previous development, or whether the very nature of their civilisation has depraved them, or whether, finally, they were originally less endowed with it than were others.

Such has been in all its past, such is still today the Germany of the nobles and the bourgeoisie. The German proletariat, a victim for centuries of one and the other, can it be made jointly responsible for the spirit of conquest which manifests itself to-day in the upper classes of this nation? In actual fact, undoubtedly, no. For a conquering people is necessarily a slave people, and the slaves are always the proletariat. Conquest is therefore completely opposed to their interests and liberty. But they are jointly responsible for it in spirit, and they will remain jointly responsible as long as they do not understand that this Pan-German State, this Republican and so-called People's State, which is promised them in a more or less near future, would be nothing else, if it could ever be realised, than a new form of very hard slavery for the proletariat.

Up to the present, at least, they do not seem to have understood it, and none of their chiefs, orators, or publicists, has given himself the trouble to explain it to them. They are all trying, on the contrary, to inveigle the proletariat along a path where they will meet with nothing but the animadversion of the world and their own enslavement; and, as long as, obeying the directions of these leaders, they pursue this frightful illusion of a People's State, certainly the proletariat will not have the initiative for social revolution. This Revolution will come to it from outside, probably from the Mediterranean countries, and then yielding to the universal contagion, the German proletariat will unloose its passions and will overthrow at one stroke the dominion of its tyrants and of its so-called emancipator.

The reasoning of Marx leads to absolutely opposite results. Taking into consideration nothing but the one economic question, he says to himself that the most advanced countries and consequently the most capable of making a social revolution are those in which modern Capitalist production has reached its highest degree of development. It is they that, to the exclusion of all others, are the civilised countries, the only ones called on to initiate and direct this revolution. This revolution will consist in the expropriation, whether by peaceful succession or by violence, of the present property-owners and capitalists and in the appropriation of all lands and all capital by the State, which in order to fulfill its great economic as well as political mission must necessarily be very powerful and very strongly centralised. The State will administer and direct the cultivation of the land by means of its salaried officers commanding armies of rural toilers, organised and disciplined for this cultivation. At the same time, on the ruin of all the existing banks it will establish a single bank, financing all labour and all national commerce.

One can understand that, at first sight, such a simple plan of organisation--at least in appearance--could seduce the imagination of workers more eager for justice and equality than for liberty and

foolishly fancying that these two can exist without liberty--as if to gain and consolidate justice and equality, one could rely on other people, and on ruling groups above all, however much they may claim to be elected and controlled by the people. In reality it would be for the proletariat a barrack regime, where the standardised mass of men and women workers would wake, sleep, work and live to the beat of the drum; for the clever and the learned a privilege of governing; and for the mercenary minded, attracted by the immensity, of the international speculations of the national banks, a vast field of lucrative jobbery.

At home it will be slavery, in foreign affairs a truceless war; unless all the peoples of the "inferior" races, Latin or Slav, the one tired of the bourgeois civilisation, the other almost ignorant of it and despising it by instinct, unless these peoples resign themselves to submit to the yoke of an essentially bourgeois nation and a State all the more despotic because it will call itself the People's State.

The social revolution, as the Latin and Slav toilers picture it to themselves, desire it and hope for it, is infinitely broader than that promised them by the German or Marxian programme. It is not for them a question of the emancipation parsimoniously measured out and only realisable at a very distant date, of the working class, but the complete and real emancipation of all the proletariat, not only of some countries but of all nations, civilised and uncivilised--a new civilisation, genuinely of the people, being destined to commence by this act of universal emancipation.

And the first word of this emancipation can be none other than "Liberty", not that political, bourgeois liberty, so much approved and recommended as a preliminary object of conquest by Marx and his adherents, but the great human liberty, which, destroying all the dogmatic, metaphysical, political and juridical fetters by which everybody to-day is loaded down, will give to everybody, collectivities as well as individuals, full autonomy in their activities and their development, delivered once and for all from all inspectors, directors and guardians.

The second word of this emancipation is solidarity, not the Marxian solidarity from above downwards by some government or other, either by ruse or by force, on the masses of the people; not that solidarity of all which is the negation of the liberty of each, and which by that very fact becomes a falsehood, a fiction, having slavery as the reality behind it; but that solidarity which is on the contrary the confirmation and the realisation of every liberty, having its origin not in any political law whatsoever, but in the inherent collective nature of man, in virtue of which no man is free if all the men who surround him and who exercise the least influence, direct or indirect, on his life are not so equally. This truth is to be found magnificently expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man drafted by Robespierre, and which proclaims that the slavery of the least of men is the slavery of all.

The solidarity which we ask, far from being the result of any artificial or authoritarian organisation whatsoever, can only be the spontaneous product of social life, economic as well as moral; the result of the free federation of common interests, aspirations and tendencies. It has for essential bases, equality, collective labour--becoming obligatory for each not by the force of law, but by the force of facts--and collective property; as a directing light, experience--that is to say the practice of the collective life; knowledge and learning; and as a final goal the establishment of Humanity, and consequently the ruin of all States.

There is the ideal, not divine, not metaphysical but human and practical, which alone corresponds to the modern aspirations of the Latin and Slav peoples. They want complete liberty, complete solidarity, complete equality in a word, they want only Humanity and they will not be satisfied, even on the score of its being provisional and transitory, with anything less than that. The Marxians will denounce their aspirations as folly; that has been done over a long period, that has not turned them from their goal, and they will never change the magnificence of that goal for the completely bourgeois platitudes of Marxian Socialism.

Their ideal is practical in this sense, that its realisation will be much less difficult than that of the

Marxian idea, which, besides the poverty of its objective, presents also the grave inconvenience of being absolutely impracticable. It will not be the first time that clever men, rational and advocates of things practical and possible, will be recognised for Utopians, and that those who are called Utopians to-day will be recognised as practical men to-morrow. The absurdity of the Marxian system consists precisely in the hope that by inordinately narrowing down the Socialist programme so as to make it acceptable to the bourgeois Radicals,[17] it will transform the latter into unwitting and involuntary servants of the social revolution. There is a great error there; all the experience of history demonstrates to us that an alliance concluded between two different parties always turns to the advantage of the more reactionary of the two parties; this alliance necessarily enfeebles the more progressive party, by diminishing and distorting its programme, by destroying its moral strength, its confidence in itself, whilst a reactionary party, when it is guilty of falsehood is always and more than ever true to itself.

As for me, I do not hesitate to say that all the Marxist flirtations with the Radicalism, whether reformist or revolutionary, of the bourgeois, can have no other result than the demoralisation and disorganisation of the rising power of the proletariat, and consequently a new consolidation of the established power of the bourgeoisie.

Chapter VI

Political Action and the Workers

In Germany, Socialism is already beginning to be a formidable power,[18] despite restrictive and oppressive laws. The workers' parties[19] are frankly Socialist--in the sense that they want a Socialistic reform of the relations between capital and labour, and that they consider that to obtain this reform, the State must first of all be reformed, and that if it will not suffer itself to be reformed peaceably, it must be reformed by political revolution. This political revolution, they maintain, must precede the social revolution, but I consider this a fatal error, as such a revolution would necessarily be a bourgeois revolution and would produce only a bourgeois socialism, that is to say it would lead to a new exploitation, more cunning and hypocritical, but not less oppressive than the present.

This idea of a political revolution preceding a social revolution has opened wide the doors of the Social Democratic Party to all the Radical democrats; who are very little Socialists. And the leaders of the Party have, against the instincts of the workers themselves, brought into close association with the bourgeois democrats of the People's Party [the Liberals], which is quite hostile to Socialism, as its Press and politicians demonstrate. The leaders of this People's party, however, have observed that these anti-Socialist utterances displeased the workers, and they modified the tone for they need the workers' assistance in their political aims, just as it has always been the all-powerful arm of the people and then filch the profits for themselves. Thus these Popular democrats have now become "Socialists" of a sort. But the "Socialism" does not go beyond the harmless dreams of bourgeois co-operativism.

At a Congress in Eisenach, in August, 1869, there were negotiations between the representatives of the two parties, worker and democrat, and these resulted in a programme which definitely constituted the Social Democratic Labour Party. This programme is a compromise between the Socialist and revolutionary programme of the International as determined by the Congresses of Brussels and Basel, and the programme of bourgeois democracy. This new programme called for a "free People's State", wherein all class domination and all exploitation would be abolished. Political liberty was declared to be the most urgently needed condition for the economic emancipation of the working classes. Consequently the social question was inseparable from the political question. Its

solution was possible only in a democratic State. The Party was declared to be associated with the International. Some immediate objectives were set out: manhood suffrage, referenda, free and compulsory education, separation of Church and State, liberty of the Press, State aid to workers' co-operatives.

This programme expresses not the Socialist and revolutionary aspirations of the workers, but the policy of the leaders. There is a direct contradiction between the programme of the International, and the purely national programme set out above, between the socialist solidarity of Labour and the political patriotism of the National State. Thus the Social Democrats find themselves in the position of being united with their bourgeois compatriots against the workers of a foreign country; and their patriotism has vanquished them Socialism. Slaves themselves of the German Government, they fulminate against the French Government as tyrants. The only difference between Bismarck and Napoleon III was that the one was a successful and the other an unsuccessful scoundrel, one was a scoundrel, and the other a scoundrel and a half.

The German Socialists' idea of a Free State is a contradiction in terms, an unrealisable dream. Socialism implying the destruction of the State, those who support the State must renounce Socialism; must sacrifice the economic emancipation of the masses to the political power of some privileged party--and in this case it will be bourgeois democracy.

The programme of the Social Democrats really implies that they rust the bourgeois democrats to help the workers to achieve a Social revolution, after the workers have helped the bourgeois to achieve a political revolution. The way they have swallowed bourgeois ideas is shown by the list of immediate objectives, which except for the last, comprise the well-known programme of bourgeois democracy. And in fact these immediate objectives have become their real objectives, so that they have lent the Social Democratic Party to become a mere tool in the hands of the bourgeois democrats.

Does Marx himself sincerely want the antagonism of class against class, that antagonism which renders absolutely impossible any participation of the masses in the political action of the State? For this action, considered apart from the bourgeoisie, is not practicable: it is only possible when it develops in conjunction with some party of that class and lets itself be directed by the bourgeois. Marx cannot be ignorant of that, and besides, what is going on to-day in Geneva, Zurich, Basel, and all over Germany, ought to open his eyes on this point, if he had closed them, which, frankly, I do not believe. It is impossible for me to believe it after having read the speech he delivered recently at Amsterdam, in which he said that in certain countries, perhaps in Holland itself, the social question could be resolved peacefully, legally, without force, in a friendly fashion, which can mean nothing but this: it can be resolved by a series of successive, pacific, voluntary and judicious compromises, between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Mazzini never said anything different from that.[20]

Mazzini and Marx are agreed on this point of capital importance, that the great social reforms which are to emancipate the proletariat cannot be realised except in a great democratic, Republican, very powerful and strongly centralised State, which for the proper well-being of the people, in order to be able to give them education and social welfare, must impose on them, by means of their own vote, a very strong government.[21]

I maintain that if ever the Marxian party, that of so-called Social Democracy, continues to pursue the course of political demands, it will see itself forced to condemn, sooner or later, that of economic demands, the course of strike action, so incompatible are these two courses in reality.

It is always the same German temperament and the same logic which leads the Marxists directly and fatally into what we call Bourgeois Socialism and to the conclusion of a new political pact between the bourgeois who are Radicals, or who are forced to become such and the "intelligent", respectable, that is to say, duly bourgeoisified minority of the town proletariat to the detriment of the mass of the proletariat, not only in the country, but in the towns also.

Such is the true meaning of workers' candidatures to the Parliaments of existing States, and that of the conquest of political power by the working class. For even from the point of view of only the town proletariat to whose exclusive profit it is desired to take possession of political power, is it not clear that the popular nature of this power will never be anything else than fiction? It will be obviously impossible for some hundreds of thousands or even some tens of thousands or indeed for only a few thousand men to effectively exercise this power. They will necessarily exercise it by proxy, that is to say, entrust it to a group of men elected by themselves to represent and govern them, which will cause them without fail to fall back again into all the falsehoods and servitudes of the representative or bourgeois regime. After a brief moment of liberty or revolutionary orgy, citizens of a new State, they will awake to find themselves slaves, playthings and victims of new power-lusters. One can understand how and why clever politicians should attach themselves with great passion to a programme which opens such a wide horizon to their ambition; but that serious workers, who bear in the hearts like a living flame the sentiment of solidarity with their companions in slavery and wretchedness the whole world over, and who desire to emancipate themselves not to the detriment of all but by the emancipation of all, to be free themselves with all and not to become tyrants in their turn; that sincere toilers could become enamoured of such a programme, that is much more difficult to understand.

But then, I have a firm confidence that in a few years the German workers themselves, recognising the fatal consequences of a theory which can only favour the ambition of their bourgeois chiefs or indeed that of some exceptional workers who seek to climb on the shoulders of their comrades in order to become dominating and exploiting bourgeois in their turn--I have confidence that the German workers will reject this theory with contempt and wrath, and that they will embrace the true programme of working-class emancipation, that of the destruction of States, with as much passion as do to-day the workers of the great Mediterranean countries, France, Spain, Italy, as well as the Dutch and Belgian workers.

Meanwhile we recognise the perfect right of the German workers to go the way that seems to them best, provided that they allow us the same liberty. We recognise even that it is very possible that by all their history, their particular nature, the state of their civilisation and their whole situation to-day, they are forced to go this way. Let then the German, American and English toilers try to win political power since they desire to do so. But let them allow the toilers of other countries to march with the same energy to the destruction of all political power. Liberty for all, and a natural respect for that liberty; such are the essential conditions of international solidarity.

The German Social Democratic Labour Party founded in 1869 by Liebknecht and Bebel, under the auspices of Marx, announced in its programme that the conquest of political power was the preliminary condition of the economic emancipation of the proletariat, and that consequently the immediate object of the party must be the organisation of a widespread legal agitation for the winning of universal suffrage and of all other political rights; its final aim, the establishment of the great pan-German and so-called People's State.

Between this tendency and that of the Alliance [Bakunin's organisation] which rejected all political action, not having as immediate and direct objective the triumph of the workers over Capitalism, and as a consequence, the abolition of the State, there exists the same difference, the same abyss, as between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The Alliance, taking the programme of the International seriously, had rejected contemptuously all compromise with bourgeois politics, in however Radical and Socialist a guise it might do itself up, advising the proletariat as the only way of real emancipation, as the only policy truly salutary for them, the exclusively negative policy of the demolition of political institutions, of political power, of government in general, of the State, and as a necessary consequence the international organisation of the scattered forces of the proletariat into revolutionary power directed against all the established powers of the bourgeoisie.

The Social Democrats of Germany, quite on the contrary, advised the workers so unfortunate as to listen to them, to adopt, as the immediate objective of their association, legal agitation for the

preliminary conquest of political rights; they thus subordinate the movement for economic emancipation to the movement first of all exclusively political, and by this obvious reversal of the whole programme of the International, they have filled in at a single stroke the abyss they had opened between proletariat and bourgeoisie. They have done more than that, they have tied the proletariat in tow with the bourgeoisie. For it is evident that all this political movement so boosted by the German Socialists, since it must precede the economic revolution, can only be directed by the bourgeois, or what will be still worse, by workers transformed into bourgeois by their ambition and vanity, and, passing in reality over the head of the proletariat, like all its predecessors, this movement will not fail once more to condemn the proletariat to be nothing but a blind instrument inevitably sacrificed in the struggle of the different bourgeois parties between themselves for the conquest of political power, that is to say, for the power and right to dominate the masses and exploit them. To whomsoever doubts it, we should only have to show what is happenings in Germany, where the organs of Social Democracy sing hymns of joy on seeing a Congress (at Eisenach) of professors of bourgeois political economy recommending the proletariat of Germany to the high and paternal protection of States and in the parts of Switzerland where the Marxian programme prevails, at Geneva, Zurich, Basel, where the International has descended to the point of being no longer anything more than a sort of electoral box for the profit of the Radical bourgeois. These incontestable facts seem to me to be more eloquent than any words.

They are real and logical in this sense that they are a natural effect of the triumph of Marxian propaganda. And it is for that reason that we fight the Marxian theories to the death, convinced that if they could triumph throughout the International, they would certainly not fail to kill at least its spirit everywhere, as they have already done in very great part in the countries just mentioned.

The instinctive passion of the masses for economic equality is so great that if they could hope to receive it from the hands of despotism, they would indubitably and without much reflection do as they have often done before, and deliver themselves to despotism. Happily, historic experience has been of some service even with the masses. To-day, they are beginning everywhere to understand that no despotism has nor can have, either the will or the power to give them economic equality. The programme of the International is very happily explicit on this question. The emancipation of the toilers can be the work only of the toilers themselves.

Is it not astonishing that Marx has believed it possible to graft on this nevertheless so precise declaration, which he probably drafted himself, his scientific Socialism? That is to say, the organisation and the government of the new society by Socialistic scientists and professors--the worst of all despotic government!

But thanks to this great beloved "riff raff" of the common people, who will oppose themselves, urged on, by an instinct invincible as well as just, to all the governmentalist fancies of this little working-class minority already properly disciplined and marshaled to become the myrmidons of a new despotism, the scientific Socialism of Marx will always remain as a Marxian dream. This new experience, more dismal perhaps than all past experiences, will be spared society, because the proletariat in general, and in all countries is animated to-day by a profound distrust against what is political and against all the politicians in the world, whatever their party colour, all of them having equally deceived, oppressed, exploited--the reddest Republicans just as much as the most absolutist Monarchists.

Appendix

In I. Berlin's Karl Marx: His Life and Environment (Home University Library) are reprinted some passages of Bakunin's writing which I have not seen elsewhere and which emphasise his views on the State, and other passages on the character of Marx. The first selection is as follows:

"We revolutionary anarchists are the enemies of all forms of State and State organisations ... we think that all State rule, all governments being by their very nature placed outside the mass of the people, must necessarily seek to subject it to customs and purposes entirely foreign to it. We therefore declare ourselves to be foes ... of all State organisations as such, and believe that the people can only be happy and free, when, organised from below by means of its own autonomous and completely free associations, without the supervision of any guardians, it will create its own life."

"We believe power corrupts those who wield it as much as those who are forced to obey it. Under its corrosive influence some become greedy and ambitious tyrants, exploiting society in their own interest, or in that of their class, while others are turned into abject slaves. Intellectuals, positivists,[22] doctrinaires, all those who put science before life ... defend the idea of the state as being the only possible salvation of society--quite logically since from their false premises that thought comes before life, that only abstract theory can form the starting point of social practice ... they draw the inevitable conclusion that since such theoretical knowledge is at present possessed by very few, these few must be put in possession of social life, not only to inspire, but to direct all popular movements, and that no sooner is the revolution over than a new social organisation must at once be set up; not a free association of popular bodies ... working in accordance with the needs and instincts of the people, but a centralised dictatorial power, concentrated in the hands of this academic minority, as if they really expressed the popular will. ... The difference between such revolutionary dictatorship and the modern State is only one of external trappings. In substance both are a tyranny of the minority over a majority in the name of the people--in the name of the stupidity of the many and the superior wisdom of the few; and so they are equally reactionary, devising to secure political and economic privilege to the ruling minority and the ... enslavement of the masses, to destroy the present order only to erect their own rigid dictatorship on its ruins." (pp. 205-6)

footnotes

(use the "go back" function of your browser to return to the text)

1. That is, the Marxians.
2. i.e., 1871.
3. Historical Materialism.
4. Lassalle lived 1825-64; a brilliant demagogue, he popularised (or vulgarised) Marx's teachings and launched the Social Democratic Movement in Germany. His organisation, the General Association of German Workers, united with the Marxists in 1875.
5. Bakunin's use of the term "supreme end of history" (in the sense of aim or objective), must not be taken to have a teleological signification, that is, taken to mean that he considered that the nature of things is such that there is a cosmic aim or purpose which informs the whole cosmic activity. Such a theory inevitably involves the notion of some directive intelligence behind Nature, and this, as a materialist, Bakunin absolutely denied. He means by "supreme end of history" simply the ideal at which the human race should aim, as defined by him a few lines further on in the text. As he said in another passage of his works, man is part of universal Nature and cannot fight against it; "But by studying its laws, by identifying himself in some sort with them, transforming them by a psychological process proper to his brain, into ideas and human convictions, he emancipates himself from the triple yoke imposed on him firstly by external Nature, then by his own individual inward Nature, and finally by the society of which he is the product." (Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx, p. 337.)
6. Bakunin wrote some years before Pasteur's discovery of a cure for this disease.
7. This, of course, is an exaggeration on Bakunin's part. Such vandalism was not common. It was the political convulsions, barbarian invasions, and endless wars, foreign and civil, that

- caused the decline of culture. The Christians tended to neglect and ignore the classical culture rather than persecute it. Of course, it is true that the decline and practical extinction of the ancient culture greatly impaired intellectual progress.
8. Babeuf (1762-97) formed conspiracy of "Equals" to seize power in France and introduce an authoritarian equalitarian Communism. Plot discovered and conspirators executed.
 9. Blanc, Louis (1811-82) advocated State Socialism in France, particularly in the period 1840-50.
 10. Written in September, 1870.
 11. Thiers, Adolphe (1797-1877), President of the Third Republic in 1871-3. He was primarily responsible for the ruthless suppression of the Paris Commune.
 12. It should be kept in mind in reading this and the paragraphs concerning the United States, that they were written in 1867 not long after the close of the Civil War. At that time it was not as easy to see as it is now, that the Republican Party was not really a "Party of Liberation" but the Party of Industrial Capitalism, and that the Civil War was fought, not to "emancipate the slaves" but merely to decide whether they should continue as chattel slaves or change their status to that of wage-slaves.
 13. A satiric allusion to the reference to Marx by Sorge, the German- American delegate, at the Hague Conference.
 14. Compare James Burnham's theory in his *Managerial Revolution*.
 15. i.e., 1872.
 16. This sentence is, of course, purely ironical.
 17. Radicals--the more progressive wing of the Liberals, and standing for social reform and political equalitarianism, but not for the abolition of private property, or of the wage system. Hence they were not Socialists. The Labour Party of to-day has inherited much of their policy.
 18. Written in September, 1870.
 19. The Marxists and the Lassalleans. They united in 1875.
 20. In a previous passage, Bakunin had said that Mazzini, like the Marxists, wanted to use the people's strength whereby to gain political power.
 21. This is essentially the line put forward to-day by Labour politicians, especially when, in Australia, they are asking for increased powers for the Federal Government.
 22. Followers of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) founder of the science of Sociology. In his later writings Comte advocated a Religion of Humanity, to be led by a sort of agnostic secular priesthood consisting of scientific intellectuals, who would act as the moral and spiritual guides of a new social order.

Power Corrupts The Best

by **Michael Bakunin (1867)**

The State is nothing else but this domination and exploitation regularised and systemised. We shall attempt to demonstrate it by examining the consequence of the government of the masses of the people by a minority, at first as intelligent and as devoted as you like, in an ideal State, founded on a free contract.

Suppose the government to be confined only to the best citizens. At first these citizens are privileged not by right, but by fact. They have been elected by the people because they are the most intelligent, clever, wise, and courageous and devoted. Taken from the mass of the citizens, who are regarded as all equal, they do not yet form a class apart, but a group of men privileged only by nature and for that reason singled out for election by the people. Their number is necessarily very limited, for in all times and countries the number of men endowed with qualities so remarkable that they automatically command the unanimous respect of a nation is, as experience teaches us, very small. Therefore, under pain of making a bad choice, the people will always be forced to choose its rulers from amongst them.

Here, then, is society divided into two categories, if not yet to say two classes, of which one, composed of the immense majority of the citizens, submits freely to the government of its elected leaders, the other, formed of a small number of privileged natures, recognised and accepted as such by the people, and charged by them to govern them. Dependent on popular election, they are at first distinguished from the mass of the citizens only by the very qualities which recommended them to their choice and are naturally, the most devoted and useful of all. They do not yet assume to themselves any privilege, any particular right, except that of exercising, insofar as the people wish it, the special functions with which they have been charged. For the rest, by their manner of life, by the conditions and means of their existence, they do not separate themselves in any way from all the others, so that a perfect equality continues to reign among all. Can this equality be long maintained? We claim that it cannot and nothing is easier to prive it.

Nothing is more dangerous for man's private morality than the habit of command. The best man, the most intelligent, disinterested, generous, pure, will infallibly and always be spoiled at this trade. Two sentiments inherent in power never fail to produce this demoralisation; they are: contempt for the masses and the overestimation of one's own merits.

"The masses" a man says to himself, "recognising their incapacity to govern on their own account, have elected me their chief. By that act they have publicly proclaimed their inferiority and my superiority. Among this crowd of men, recognising hardly any equals of myself, I am alone capable of directing public affairs. The people have need of me; they cannot do without my services, while I, on the contrary, can get along all right by myself; they, therefore, must obey me for their own security, and in condescending to obey them, I am doing them a good turn.

Is there not something in all that to make a man lose his head and his heart as well, and become mad with pride? It is thus that power and the habit of command become for even the most intelligent and virtuous men, a source of aberration, both intellectual and moral.

Revolutionary Catechism

by Michael Bakunin

1866

II. Replacing the cult of God by respect and love of humanity, we proclaim human reason as the only criterion of truth; human conscience as the basis of justice; individual and collective freedom as the only source of order in society.

III. Freedom is the absolute right of every adult man and woman to seek no other sanction for their acts than their own conscience and their own reason, being responsible first to themselves and then to the society which they have voluntarily accepted.

IV. It is not true that the freedom of one man is limited by that of other men. Man is really free to the extent that his freedom, fully acknowledged and mirrored by the free consent of his fellowmen, finds confirmation and expansion in their liberty. Man is truly free only among equally free men; the slavery of even one human being violates humanity and negates the freedom of all.

V. The freedom of each is therefore realizable only in the equality of all. The realization of freedom through equality, in principle and in fact, is justice.

VI. If there is one fundamental principle of human morality, it is freedom. To respect the freedom of your fellowman is duty; to love, help, and serve him is virtue.

VII. Absolute rejection of every authority including that which sacrifices freedom for the convenience of the state. Primitive society had no conception of freedom; and as society evolved, before the full awakening of human rationality and freedom, it passed through a stage controlled by human and divine authority. The political and economic structure of society must now be reorganized on the basis of freedom. Henceforth, order in society must result from the greatest possible realization of individual liberty, as well as of liberty on all levels of social organization.

VIII. The political and economic organization of social life must not, as at present, be directed from the summit to the base --the center to the circumference--imposing unity through forced centralization. On the contrary, it must be reorganized to issue from the base to the summit--from the circumference to the center--according to the principles of free association and federation.

IX. Political organization. It is impossible to determine a concrete, universal, and obligatory norm for the internal development and political organization of every nation. The life of each nation is subordinated to a plethora of different historical, geographical, and economic conditions, making it impossible to establish a model of organization equally valid for all. Any such attempt would be absolutely impractical. It would smother the richness and spontaneity of life which flourishes only in infinite diversity and, what is more, contradict the most fundamental principles of freedom. However, without certain absolutely essential conditions the practical realization of freedom will be forever impossible.

These conditions are:

A. The abolition of all state religions and all privileged churches, including those partially maintained or supported by state subsidies. Absolute liberty of every religion to build temples to their gods, and to pay and support their priests.

B. The churches considered as religious / corporations must never enjoy the same political rights

accorded to the productive associations; nor can they be entrusted with the education of children; for they exist merely to negate morality and liberty and to profit from the lucrative practice of witchcraft.

C. Abolition of monarchy; establishment of a commonwealth.

D. Abolition of classes, ranks, and privileges; absolute equality of political rights for all men and women; universal suffrage. [Not in the state, but in the units of the new society. Note by Max Nettlau]

E. Abolition, dissolution, and moral, political, and economic dismantling of the all-pervasive, regimented, centralized State, the alter ego of the Church, and as such, the permanent cause of the impoverishment, brutalization, and enslavement of the multitude. This naturally entails the following: Abolition of all state universities: public education must be administered only by the communes and free associations. Abolition of the state judiciary: all judges must be elected by the people. Abolition of all criminal, civil, and legal codes now administered in Europe: because the code of liberty can be created only by liberty itself. Abolition of banks and all other institutions of state credit. Abolition of all centralized administration, of the bureaucracy, of all permanent armies and state police.

F. Immediate direct election of all judicial and civil functionaries as well as representatives (national, provincial, and communal delegates) by the universal suffrage of both sexes.

G. The internal reorganization of each country on the basis of the absolute freedom of individuals, of the productive associations, and of the communes. Necessity of recognizing the right of secession: every individual, every association, every commune, every region, every nation has the absolute right to self-determination, to associate or not to associate, to ally themselves with whomever they wish and repudiate their alliances without regard to so-called historic rights [rights consecrated by legal precedent] or the convenience of their neighbors. Once the right to secede is established, secession will no longer be necessary. With the dissolution of a "unity" imposed by violence, the units of society will be drawn to unite by their powerful mutual attraction and by inherent necessities. Consecrated by liberty, these new federations of communes, provinces, regions, and nations will then be truly strong, productive, and indissoluble.

H. Individual rights. The right of every man and woman, from birth to adulthood, to complete upkeep, clothes, food, shelter, care, guidance, education (public schools, primary, secondary, higher education, artistic, industrial, and scientific), all at the expense of society.

2. The equal right of adolescents, while freely choosing their careers, to be helped and to the greatest possible extent supported by society. After this, society will exercise no authority or supervision over them except to respect, and if necessary defend, their freedom and their rights.

3. The freedom of adults of both sexes must be absolute and complete, freedom to come and go, to voice all opinions, to be lazy or active, moral or immoral, in short, to dispose of one's person or possessions as one pleases, being accountable to no one. Freedom to live, be it honestly, by one's own labor, even at the expense of individuals who voluntarily tolerate one's exploitation.

4. Unlimited freedom of propaganda, speech, press, public or private assembly, with no other restraint than the natural salutary power of public opinion. Absolute freedom to organize associations even for allegedly immoral purposes including even those associations which advocate the undermining (or destruction) of individual and public freedom.

5. Freedom can and must be defended only by freedom: to advocate the restriction of freedom on the pretext that it is being defended is a dangerous delusion. As morality has no other source, no other object, no other stimulant than freedom, all restrictions of liberty in order to protect morality have always been to the detriment of the latter. Psychology, statistics, and all history prove that individual and social immorality are the inevitable consequences of a false private and public education, of the degeneration of public morality and the corruption of public opinion, and above

all, of the vicious organization of society. An eminent Belgian statistician [Quetelet] points out that society opens the way for the crimes later committed by malefactors. It follows that all attempts to combat social immorality by rigorous legislation which violates individual freedom must fail. Experience, on the contrary, demonstrates that a repressive and authoritarian system, far from preventing, only increases crime; that public and private morality falls or rises to the extent that individual liberty is restricted or enlarged. It follows that in order to regenerate society, we must first completely uproot this political and social system founded on inequality, privilege, and contempt for humanity. After having reconstructed society on the basis of the most complete liberty, equality, and justice--not to mention work for all and an enlightened education inspired by respect for man--public opinion will then reflect the new humanity and become a natural guardian of the most absolute liberty [and public order. Ed.].

6. Society cannot, however, leave itself completely defenseless against vicious and parasitic individuals. Work must be the basis of all political rights. The units of society, each within its own jurisdiction, can deprive all such antisocial adults of political rights (except the old, the sick, and those dependent on private or public subsidy) and will be obliged to restore their political rights as soon as they begin to live by their own labor.

7. The liberty of every human being is inalienable and society will never require any individual to surrender his liberty or to sign contracts with other individuals except on the basis of the most complete equality and reciprocity. Society cannot forcibly prevent any man or woman so devoid of personal dignity as to place him or herself in voluntary servitude to another individual; but it can justly treat such persons as parasites, not entitled to the enjoyment of political liberty, though only for the duration of their servitude.

8. Persons losing their political rights will also lose custody of their children. Persons who violate voluntary agreements, steal, inflict bodily harm, or above all, violate the freedom of any individual, native or foreigner, will be penalized according to the laws of society. Individuals condemned by the laws of any and every association (commune, province, region, or nation) reserve the right to escape punishment by declaring that they wish to resign from that association. But in this case, the association will have the equal right to expel him and declare him outside its guarantee and protection.

I. Rights of association [federalism]. The cooperative workers' associations are a new fact in history. At this time we can only speculate about, but not determine, the immense development that they will doubtlessly exhibit in the new political and social conditions of the future. It is possible and even very likely that they will someday transcend the limits of towns, provinces, and even states. They may entirely reconstitute society, dividing it not into nations but into different industrial groups, organized not according to the needs of politics but to those of production. But this is for the future. Be that as it may, we can already proclaim this fundamental principle: irrespective of their functions or aims, all associations, like all individuals, must enjoy absolute freedom. Neither society, nor any part of society--commune, province, or nation --has the right to prevent free individuals from associating freely for any purpose whatsoever: political, religious, scientific, artistic, or even for the exploitation or corruption of the naive or alcoholics, provided that they are not minors. To combat charlatans and pernicious associations is the special affair of public opinion. But society is obliged to refuse to guarantee civic rights of any association or collective body whose aims or rules violate the fundamental principles of human justice. Individuals shall not be penalized or deprived of their full political and social rights solely for belonging to such unrecognized societies. The difference between the recognized and unrecognized associations will be the following: the juridically recognized associations will have the right to the protection of the community against individuals or recognized groups who refuse to fulfill their voluntary obligations. The juridically unrecognized associations will not be entitled to such protection by the community and none of their agreements will be regarded as binding.

The division of a country into regions, provinces, districts, and communes, as in France, will

naturally depend on the traditions, the specific circumstances, and the particular nature of each country. We can only point out here the two fundamental and indispensable principles which must be put into effect by any country seriously trying to organize a free society. First: all organizations must proceed by way of federation from the base to the summit, from the commune to the coordinating association of the country or nation. Second: there must be at least one autonomous intermediate body between the commune and the country, the department, the region, or the province. Without such an autonomous intermediate body, the commune (in the strict sense of the term) would be too isolated and too weak to be able to resist the despotic centralistic pressure of the State, which will inevitably (as happened twice in France) restore to power a despotic monarchical regime. Despotism has its source much more in the centralized organization of the State, than in the despotic nature of kings.

K. The basic unit of all political organization in each country must be the completely autonomous commune, constituted by the majority vote of all adults of both sexes. No one shall have either the power or the right to interfere in the internal life of the commune. The commune elects all functionaries, lawmakers, and judges. It administers the communal property and finances. Every commune should have the incontestable right to create, without superior sanction, its own constitution and legislation. But in order to join and become an integral part of the provincial federation, the commune must conform its own particular charter to the fundamental principles of the provincial constitution and be accepted by the parliament of the province. The commune must also accept the judgments of the provincial tribunal and any measures ordered by the government of the province. (All measures of the provincial government must be ratified by the provincial parliament.) Communes refusing to accept the provincial laws will not be entitled to its benefits.

L. The province must be nothing but a free federation of autonomous communes. The provincial parliament could be composed either of a single chamber with representatives of each of the communes or of two chambers, the other representing the population of the province, independent of the communes. The provincial parliament, without interfering in any manner whatsoever in the internal decisions of the communes will formulate the provincial constitution (based on the principles of this catechism). This constitution must be accepted by all communes wishing to participate in the provincial parliament. The provincial parliament will enact legislation defining the rights and obligations of individuals, communes, and associations in relation to the provincial federation, and the penalties for violations of its laws. It will reserve, however, the right of the communes to diverge on secondary points, though not on fundamentals.

The provincial parliament, in strict accordance with the Charter of the Federation of Communes, will define the rights and obligations existing between the communes, the parliament, the judicial tribunal, and the provincial administration. It will enact all laws affecting the whole province, pass on resolutions or measures of the national parliament, without, however, violating the autonomy of the communes and the province. Without interfering in the internal administration of the communes, it will allot to each commune its share of the provincial or national income, which will be used by the commune as its members decide. The provincial parliament will ratify or reject all policies and measures of the provincial administration which will, of course, be elected by universal suffrage. The provincial tribunal (also elected by universal suffrage) will adjudicate, without appeal, all disputes between communes and individuals, communes and communes, and communes and the provincial administration or parliament. [These arrangements will thus] lead not to dull, lifeless uniformity, but to a real living unity, to the enrichment of communal life. A unity will be created which reflects the needs and aspirations of the communes; in short, we will have individual and collective freedom. This unity cannot be achieved by the compulsion or violence of provincial power, for even truth and justice when coercively imposed must lead to falsehood and iniquity.

The nation must be nothing but a federation of autonomous provinces. [The organizational relations between the provinces and the nation will, in general, be the same as those between the communes and the province--Nettlau]

N. Principles of the International Federation. The union of nations comprising the International Federation will be based on the principles outlined above. It is probable, and strongly desired as well, that when the hour of the People's Revolution strikes again, every nation will unite in brotherly solidarity and forge an unbreakable alliance against the coalition of reactionary nations. This alliance will be the germ of the future Universal Federation of Peoples which will eventually embrace the entire world. The International Federation of revolutionary peoples, with a parliament, a tribunal, and an international executive committee, will naturally be based on the principles of the revolution. Applied to international polity these principles are:

1. Every land, every nation, every people, large or small, weak or strong, every region, province, and commune has the absolute right to self-determination, to make alliances, unite or secede as it pleases, regardless of so called historic rights and the political, commercial, or strategic ambitions of States. The unity of the elements of society, in order to be genuine, fruitful, and durable, must be absolutely free: it can emerge only from the internal needs and mutual attractions of the respective units of society....

2. Abolition of alleged historic right and the horrible right of conquest.

3. Absolute rejection of the politics of aggrandizement, of the power and the glory of the State. For this is a form of politics which locks each country into a self-made fortress, shutting out the rest of humanity, organizing itself into a closed world, independent of all human solidarity, finding its glory and prosperity in the evil it can do to other countries. A country bent on conquest is necessarily a country internally enslaved.

The glory and grandeur of a nation lie only in the development of its humanity. Its strength and inner vitality are measured by the degree of its liberty.

The well-being and the freedom of nations as well as individuals are inextricably interwoven. Therefore, there must be free commerce, exchange, and communication among all federated countries, and abolition of frontiers, passports, and customs duties [tariffs]. Every citizen of a federated country must enjoy the same civic rights and it must be easy for him to acquire citizenship and enjoy political rights in all other countries adhering to the same federation. If liberty is the starting point, it will necessarily lead to unity. But to go from unity to liberty is difficult, if not impossible; even if it were possible, it could be done only by destroying a spurious "unity" imposed by force....

No federated country shall maintain a permanent standing army or any institution separating the soldier from the civilian. Not only do permanent armies and professional soldiers breed internal disruption, brutalization, and financial ruin, they also menace the independence and well-being of other nations. All able-bodied citizens should, if necessary, take up arms to defend their homes and their freedom. Each country's military defense and equipment should be organized locally by the commune, or provincially, somewhat like the militias in Switzerland or the United States of America [circa 1860-7].

8. The International Tribunal shall have no other function than to settle, without appeal, all disputes between nations and their respective provinces. Differences between two federated countries shall be adjudicated, without appeal, only by the International Parliament, which, in the name of the entire revolutionary federation, will also formulate common policy and make war, if unavoidable, against the reactionary coalition.

9. No federated nation shall make war against another federated country. If there is war and the International Tribunal has pronounced its decision, the aggressor must submit. If this doesn't occur, the other federated nations will sever relations with it and, in case of attack by the aggressor, unite to repel invasion.

10. All members of the revolutionary federation must actively take part in approved wars against a nonfederated state. If a federated nation declares unjust war on an outside State against the advice

of the International Tribunal, it will be notified in advance that it will have to do so alone.

11. It is hoped that the federated states will eventually give up the expensive luxury of separate diplomatic representatives to foreign states and arrange for representatives to speak in the name of all the federated States.

12. Only nations or peoples accepting the principles outlined in this catechism will be admitted to the federation.

Social Organization. Without political equality there can be no real political liberty, but political equality will be possible only when there is social and economic equality.

A. Equality does not imply the leveling of individual differences, nor that individuals should be made physically, morally, or mentally identical. Diversity in capacities and powers--those differences between races, nations, sexes, ages, and persons--far from being a social evil, constitutes, on the contrary, the abundance of humanity. Economic and social equality means the equalization of personal wealth, but not by restricting what a man may acquire by his own skill, productive energy, and thrift.

B. Equality and justice demand only a society so organized that every single human being will--from birth through adolescence and maturity--have therein equal means, first for maintenance and education, and later, for the exercise of all his natural capacities and aptitudes. This equality from birth that justice demands for everyone will be impossible as long as the right of inheritance continues to exist.

D. Abolition of the right of inheritance. Social inequality --inequality of classes, privileges, and wealth-- not by right but in fact, will continue to exist until such time as the right of inheritance is abolished. It is an inherent social law that de facto inequality inexorably produces inequality of rights; social inequality leads to political inequality. And without political equality--in the true, universal, and libertarian sense in which we understand it--society will always remain divided into two unequal parts. The first, which comprises the great majority of mankind, the masses of the people, will be oppressed by the privileged, exploiting minority. The right of inheritance violates the principle of freedom and must be abolished.

G. When inequality resulting from the right of inheritance is abolished, there will still remain inequalities [of wealth] due to the diverse amounts of energy and skill possessed by individuals. These inequalities will never entirely disappear, but will become more and more minimized under the influence of education and of an egalitarian social organization, and, above all, when the right of inheritance no longer burdens the coming generations.

H. Labor being the sole source of wealth, everyone is free to die of hunger, or to live in the deserts or the forests among savage beasts, but whoever wants to live in society must earn his living by his own labor, or be treated as a parasite who is living on the labor of others.

I. Labor is the foundation of human dignity and morality. For it was only by free and intelligent labor that man, overcoming his own bestiality, attained his humanity and sense of justice, changed his environment, and created the civilized world. The stigma which, in the ancient as well as the feudal world, was attached to labor, and which to a great extent still exists today, despite all the hypocritical phrases about the "dignity of labor"--this stupid prejudice against labor has two sources: the first is the conviction, so characteristic of the ancient world, that in order to give one part of society the opportunity and the means to humanize itself through science, the arts, philosophy, and the enjoyment of human rights, another part of society, naturally the most numerous, must be condemned to work as slaves. This fundamental institution of ancient civilization was the cause of its downfall.

The city, corrupted and disorganized on the one hand by the idleness of the privileged citizens, and undermined on the other by the imperceptible but relentless activity of the disinherited world of slaves who, despite their slavery, through common labor developed a sense of mutual aid and

solidarity against oppression, collapsed under the blows of the barbarian peoples.

Christianity, the religion of the slaves, much later destroyed ancient forms of slavery only to create a new slavery. Privilege, based on inequality and the right of conquest and sanctified by divine grace, again separated society into two opposing camps: the "rabble" and the nobility, the serfs and the masters. To the latter was assigned the noble profession of arms and government; to the serfs, the curse of forced labor. The same causes are bound to produce the same effects; the nobility, weakened and demoralized by depraved idleness, fell in 1789 under the blows of the revolutionary serfs and workers. The [French] Revolution proclaimed the dignity of labor and enacted the rights of labor into law. But only in law, for in fact labor remained enslaved. The first source of the degradation of labor, namely, the dogma of the political inequality of men, was destroyed by the Great Revolution. The degradation must therefore be attributed to a second source, which is nothing but the separation which still exists between manual and intellectual labor, which reproduces in a new form the ancient inequality and divides the world into two camps: the privileged minority, privileged not by law but by capital, and the majority of workers, no longer captives of the law but of hunger.

The dignity of labor is today theoretically recognized, and public opinion considers it disgraceful to live without working. But this does not go to the heart of the question. Human labor, in general, is still divided into two exclusive categories: the first --solely intellectual and managerial--includes the scientists, artists, engineers, inventors, accountants, educators, governmental officials, and their subordinate elites who enforce labor discipline. The second group consists of the great mass of workers, people prevented from applying creative ideas or intelligence, who blindly and mechanically carry out the orders of the intellectual managerial elite. This economic and social division of labor has disastrous consequences for members of the privileged classes, the masses of the people, and for the prosperity, as well as the moral and intellectual development, of society as a whole.

For the privileged classes a life of luxurious idleness gradually leads to moral and intellectual degeneration. It is perfectly true that a certain amount of leisure is absolutely necessary for the artistic, scientific, and mental development of man; creative leisure followed by the healthy exercise of daily labor, one that is well earned and is socially provided for all according to individual capacities and preferences. Human nature is so constituted that the propensity for evil is always intensified by external circumstances, and the morality of the individual depends much more on the conditions of his existence and the environment in which he lives than on his own will. In this respect, as in all others, the law of social solidarity is essential: there can be no other moralizer for society or the individual than freedom in absolute equality. Take the most sincere democrat and put him on the throne; if he does not step down promptly, he will surely become a scoundrel. A born aristocrat (if he should, by some happy chance, be ashamed of his aristocratic lineage and renounce privileges of birth) will yearn for past glories, be useless in the present, and passionately oppose future progress. The same goes for the bourgeois: this dear child of capital and idleness will waste his leisure in dishonesty, corruption, and debauchery, or serve as a brutal force to enslave the working class, who will eventually unleash against him a retribution even more horrible than that of 1793.

The evils that the worker is subjected to by the division of labor are much easier to determine: forced to work for others because he is born to poverty and misery, deprived of all rational upbringing and education, morally enslaved by religious influence. He is catapulted into life, defenseless, without initiative and without his own will. Driven to despair by misery, he sometimes revolts, but lacking that unity with his fellow workers and that enlightened thought upon which power depends, he is often betrayed and sold out by his leaders, and almost never realizes who or what is responsible for his sufferings. Exhausted by futile struggles, he falls back again into the old slavery.

This slavery will last until capitalism is overthrown by the collective action of the workers. They

will be exploited as long as education (which in a free society will be equally available to all) is the exclusive birthright of the privileged class; as long as this minority monopolizes scientific and managerial work and the people--reduced to the status of machines or beasts of burden--are forced to perform the menial tasks assigned to them by their exploiters. This degradation of human labor is an immense evil, polluting the moral, intellectual, and political institutions of society. History shows that an uneducated multitude whose natural intelligence is suppressed and who are brutalized by the mechanical monotony of daily toil, who grope in vain for any enlightenment, constitutes a mindless mob whose blind turbulence threatens the very existence of society itself.

The artificial separation between manual and intellectual labor must give way to a new social synthesis. When the man of science performs manual labor and the man of work performs intellectual labor, free intelligent work will become the glory of mankind, the source of its dignity and its rights.

K. Intelligent and free labor will necessarily be collective labor. Each person will, of course, be free to work alone or collectively. But there is no doubt that (outside of work best performed individually) in industrial and even scientific or artistic enterprises, collective labor will be preferred by everyone. For association marvelously multiplies the productive capacity of each worker; hence, a cooperating member of a productive association will earn much more in much less time. When the free productive associations (which will include members of cooperatives and labor organizations) voluntarily organize according to their needs and special skills, they will then transcend all national boundaries and form an immense worldwide economic federation. This will include an industrial parliament, supplied by the associations with precise and detailed global-scale statistics; by harmonizing supply and demand the parliament will distribute and allocate world industrial production to the various nations. Commercial and industrial crises, stagnation (unemployment), waste of capital, etc., will no longer plague mankind; the emancipation of human labor will regenerate the world.

L. The land, and all natural resources, are the common property of everyone, but will be used only by those who cultivate it by their own labor. Without expropriation, only through the powerful pressure of the worker's associations, capital and the tools of production will fall to those who produce wealth by their own labor. [Bakunin means that private ownership of production will be permitted only if the owners do the actual work and do not employ anyone. He believed that collective ownership would gradually supersede private ownership.]

M. Equal political, social, and economic rights, as well as equal obligations for women.

N. Abolition not of the natural family but of the legal family founded on law and property. Religious and civil marriage to be replaced by free marriage. Adult men and women have the right to unite and separate as they please, nor has society the right to hinder their union or to force them to maintain it. With the abolition of the right of inheritance and the education of children assured by society, all the legal reasons for the irrevocability of marriage will disappear. The union of a man and a woman must be free, for a free choice is the indispensable condition for moral sincerity. In marriage, man and woman must enjoy absolute liberty. Neither violence nor passion nor rights surrendered in the past can justify an invasion by one of the liberty of another, and every such invasion shall be considered a crime.

O. From the moment of pregnancy to birth, a woman and her children shall be subsidized by the communal organization. Women who wish to nurse and wean their children shall also be subsidized.

P. Parents shall have the right to care for and guide the education of their children, under the ultimate control of the commune which retains the right and the obligation to take children away from parents who, by example or by cruel and inhuman treatment, demoralize or otherwise hinder the physical and mental development of their children.

Q. Children belong neither to their parents nor to society. They belong to themselves and to their

own future liberty. Until old enough to take care of themselves, children must be brought up under the guidance of their elders. It is true that parents are their natural tutors, but since the very future of the commune itself depends upon the intellectual and moral training it gives to children, the commune must be the tutor. The freedom of adults is possible only when the free society looks after the education of minors.

R. The secular school must replace the Church, with the difference that while religious indoctrination perpetuates superstition and divine authority, the sole purpose of secular public education is the gradual, progressive initiation of children into liberty by the triple development of their physical strength, their minds, and their will. Reason, truth, justice, respect for fellowmen, the sense of personal dignity which is inseparable from the dignity of others, love of personal freedom and the freedom of all others, the conviction that work is the base and condition for rights--these must be the fundamental principles of all public education. Above all, education must make men and inculcate human values first, and then train specialized workers. As the child grows older, authority will give way to more and more liberty, so that by adolescence he will be completely free and will forget how in childhood he had to submit unavoidably to authority. Respect for human worth, the germ of freedom, must be present even while children are being severely disciplined. The essence of all moral education is this: inculcate children with respect for humanity and you will make good men....

S. Having reached the age of adulthood, the adolescent will be proclaimed autonomous and free to act as he deems best. In exchange, society will expect him to fulfill only these three obligations: that he remain free, that he live by his own labor, and that he respect the freedom of others. And, as the crimes and vices infecting present society are due to the evil organization of society, it is certain that in a society based on reason, justice, and freedom, on respect for humanity and on complete equality, the good will prevail and the evil will be a morbid exception, which will diminish more and more under the pervasive influence of an enlightened and humanized public opinion.

T. The old, sick, and infirm will enjoy all political and social rights and be bountifully supported at the expense of society.

XI. Revolutionary policy. It is our deep-seated conviction that since the freedom of all nations is indivisible, national revolutions must become international in scope. Just as the European and world reaction is unified, there should no longer be isolated revolutions, but a universal, worldwide revolution. Therefore, all the particular interests, the vanities, pretensions, jealousies, and hostilities between and among nations must now be transformed into the unified, common, and universal interest of the revolution, which alone can assure the freedom and independence of each nation by the solidarity of all. We believe also that the holy alliance of the world counterrevolution and the conspiracy of kings, clergy, nobility, and the bourgeoisie, based on enormous budgets, on permanent armies, on formidable bureaucracies, and equipped with all the monstrous apparatus of modern centralized states, constitutes an overwhelming force; indeed, that this formidable reactionary coalition can be destroyed only by the greater power of the simultaneous revolutionary alliance and action of all the people of the civilized world, that against this reaction the isolated revolution of a single people will never succeed. Such a revolution would be folly, a catastrophe for the isolated country and would, in effect, constitute a crime against all the other nations. It follows that the uprising of a single people must have in view not only itself, but the whole world. This demands a worldwide program, as large, as profound, as true, as human, in short, as all embracing as the interests of the whole world. And in order to energize the passions of all the popular masses of Europe, regardless of nationality, this program can only be the program of the social and democratic revolution.

Briefly stated, the objectives of the social and democratic revolution are: Politically: the abolition of the historic rights of states, the rights of conquest, and diplomatic rights [statist international law. TR.]. It aims at the full emancipation of individuals and associations from divine and human bondage; it seeks the absolute destruction of all compulsory unions, and all agglomerations of

communes into provinces and conquered countries into the State. Finally, it requires the radical dissolution of the centralized, aggressive, authoritarian State, including its military, bureaucratic, governmental, administrative, judicial, and legislative institutions. The revolution, in short, has this aim: freedom for all, for individuals as well as collective bodies, associations, communes, provinces, regions, and nations, and the mutual guarantee of this freedom by federation.

Socially: it seeks the confirmation of political equality by economic equality. This is not the removal of natural individual differences, but equality in the social rights of every individual from birth; in particular, equal means of subsistence, support, education, and opportunity for every child, boy or girl, until maturity, and equal resources and facilities in adulthood to create his own well-being by his own labor.

Rousseau's Theory of the State

by Michael Bakunin

. . . We have said that man is not only the most individualistic being on earth -- he is also the most social. It was a great mistake on the part of Jean Jacques Rousseau to have thought that primitive society was established through a free agreement among savages. But Jean Jacques is not the only one to have said this. The majority of jurists and modern publicists, either of the school of Kant or any other individualist and liberal school, those who do not accept the idea of a society founded upon the divine right of the theologians nor of a society determined by the Hegelian school as a more or less mystical realisation of objective morality, nor of the naturalists' concept of a primitive animal society, all accept, nolens volens, and for lack of any other basis, the tacit agreement or contract as their starting point.

According to the theory of the social contract primitive men enjoying absolute liberty only in isolation are antisocial by nature. When forced to associate they destroy each other's freedom. If this struggle is unchecked it can lead to mutual extermination. In order not to destroy each other completely, they conclude a contract, formal or tacit, whereby they surrender some of their freedom to assure the rest. This contract becomes the foundation of society, or rather of the State, for we must point out that in this theory there is no place for society; only the State exists, or rather society is completely absorbed by the State.

Society is the natural mode of existence of the human collectivity, independent of any contract. It governs itself through the customs or the traditional habits, but never by laws. It progresses slowly, under the impulsion it receives from individual initiatives and not through the thinking or the will of the law-giver. There are a good many laws which govern it without its being aware of them, but these are natural laws, inherent in the body social, just as physical laws are inherent in material bodies. Most of these laws remain unknown to this day; nevertheless, they have governed human society ever since its birth, independent of the thinking and the will of the men composing the society. Hence they should not be confused with the political and juridical laws proclaimed by some legislative power, laws that are supposed to be the logical sequelae of the first contract consciously formed by men.

The state is in no wise an immediate product of nature. Unlike society, it does not precede the awakening of reason in men. The liberals say that the first state was created by the free and rational will of men; the men of the right consider it the work of God. In either case it dominates society and tends to absorb it completely.

One might rejoin that the State, representing as it does the public welfare or the common interest of all, curtails a part of the liberty of each only for the sake of assuring to him all the remainder. But this remainder may be a form of security; it is never liberty. Liberty is indivisible; one cannot curtail a part of it without killing all of it. This little part you are curtailing is the very essence of my liberty; it is all of it. Through a natural, necessary, and irresistible movement, all of my liberty is concentrated precisely in the part, small as it may be, which you curtail. It is the story of Bluebeard's wife, who had an entire palace at her disposal, with full and complete liberty to enter everywhere, to see and to touch everything, except for one dreadful little chamber which her terrible husband's sovereign will had forbidden her to open on pain of death. Well, she turned away from all the splendours of the palace, and her entire being concentrated on the dreadful little chamber. She opened that forbidden door, for good reason, since her liberty depended on her doing so, while the prohibition to enter was a flagrant violation of precisely that liberty. It is also the story of Adam and

Eve's fall. The prohibition to taste the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for no other reason than that such was the will of the Lord, was an act of atrocious despotism on the part of the good Lord. Had our first parents obeyed it, the entire human race would have remained plunged in the most humiliating slavery. Their disobedience has emancipated and saved us. Theirs, in the language of mythology, was the first act of human liberty.

But, one might say, could the State, the democratic State, based upon the free suffrage of all its citizens, be the negation of their liberty? And why not? That would depend entirely on the mission and the power that the citizens surrendered to the State. A republican State, based upon universal suffrage, could be very despotic, more despotic even than the monarchical State, if, under the pretext of representing everybody's will, it were to bring down the weight of its collective power upon the will and the free movement of each of its members.

However, suppose one were to say that the State does not restrain the liberty of its members except when it tends toward injustice or evil. It prevents its members from killing each other, plundering each other, insulting each other, and in general from hurting each other, while it leaves them full liberty to do good. This brings us back to the story of Bluebeard's wife, or the story of the forbidden fruit: what is good? what is evil?

From the standpoint of the system we have under examination, the distinction between good and evil did not exist before the conclusion of the contract, when each individual stayed deep in the isolation of his liberty or of his absolute rights, having no consideration for his fellowmen except those dictated by his relative weakness or strength; that is, his own prudence and self^{^^}interest. At that time, still following the same theory, egotism was the supreme law, the only right. The good was determined by success, failure was the only evil, and justice was merely the consecration of the fait accompli, no matter how horrible, how cruel or infamous, exactly as things are now in the political morality which prevails in Europe today.

The distinction between good and evil, according to this system, commences only with the conclusion of the social contract. Thereafter, what was recognised as constituting the common interest was proclaimed as good, and all that was contrary to it as evil. The contracting members, on becoming citizens, and bound by a more or less solemn undertaking, thereby assumed an obligation: to subordinate their private interests to the common good, to an interest inseparable from all others. Their own rights were separated from the public right, the sole representative of which, the State, was thereby invested with the power to repress all illegal revolts of the individual, but also with the obligation to protect each of its members in the exercise of his rights insofar as these were not contrary to the common right.

We shall now examine what the State, thus constituted, should be in relation to other states, its peers, as well as in relation to its own subject populations. This examination appears to us all the more interesting and useful because the State, as it is here defined, is precisely the modern State insofar as it has separated itself from the religious idea -- the secular or atheist State proclaimed by modern publicists. Let us see, then: of what does its morality consist? It is the modern State, we have said, at the moment when it has freed itself from the yoke of the Church, and when it has, consequently, shaken off the yoke of the universal or cosmopolitan morality of the Christian religion; at the moment when it has not yet been penetrated by the humanitarian morality or idea, which, by the way, it could never do without destroying itself; for, in its separate existence and isolated concentration, it would be too narrow to embrace, to contain the interests and therefore the morality of all mankind.

Modern states have reached precisely this point. Christianity serves them only as a pretext or a phrase or as a means of deceiving the idle mob, for they pursue goals which have nothing to do with religious sentiments. The great statesmen of our days, the Palmerstons, the Muravievs, the Cavours, the Bismarcks, the Napoleons, had a good laugh when people took their religious pronouncements seriously. They laughed harder when people attributed humanitarian sentiments, considerations, and intentions to them, but they never made the mistake of treating these ideas in public as so much

nonsense. Just what remains to constitute their morality? The interest of the State, and nothing else. From this point of view, which, incidentally, with very few exceptions, has been that of the statesmen, the strong men of all times and of all countries from this point of view, I say, whatever conduces to the preservation, the grandeur and the power of the State, no matter how sacrilegious or morally revolting it may seem, that is the good. And conversely, whatever opposes the State's interests, no matter how holy or just otherwise, that is evil. Such is the secular morality and practice of every State.

It is the same with the State founded upon the theory of the social contract. According to this principle, the good and the just commence only with the contract; they are, in fact, nothing but the very contents and the purpose of the contract; that is, the common interest and the public right of all the individuals who have formed the contract among themselves, with the exclusion of all those who remain outside the contract. It is; consequently, nothing but the greatest satisfaction given to the collective egotism of a special and restricted association, which, being founded upon the partial sacrifice of the individual egotism of each of its members, rejects from its midst, as strangers and natural enemies, the immense majority of the human species, whether or not it may be organised into analogous organisation.

The existence of one sovereign, exclusionary State necessarily supposes the existence and, if need be, provokes the formation of other such States, since it is quite natural that individuals who find themselves outside it and are threatened by it in their existence and in their liberty, should, in their turn, associate themselves against it. We thus have humanity divided into an indefinite number of foreign states, all hostile and threatened by each other. There is no common right, no social contract of any kind between them; otherwise they would cease to be independent states and become the federated members of one great state. But unless this great state were to embrace all of humanity, it would be confronted with other great states, each federated within, each maintaining the same posture of inevitable hostility. War would still remain the supreme law, an unavoidable condition of human survival.

Every state, federated or not, would therefore seek to become the most powerful. It must devour lest it be devoured, conquer lest it be conquered, enslave lest it be enslaved, since two powers, similar and yet alien to each other, could not coexist without mutual destruction.

The State, therefore, is the most flagrant, the most cynical, and the most complete negation of humanity. It shatters the universal solidarity of all men on the earth, and brings some of them into association only for the purpose of destroying, conquering, and enslaving all the rest. It protects its own citizens only; it recognises human rights, humanity, civilisation within its own confines alone. Since it recognises no rights outside itself, it logically arrogates to itself the right to exercise the most ferocious inhumanity toward all foreign populations, which it can plunder, exterminate, or enslave at will. If it does show itself generous and humane toward them, it is never through a sense of duty, for it has no duties except to itself in the first place, and then to those of its members who have freely formed it, who freely continue to constitute it or even, as always happens in the long run, those who have become its subjects. As there is no international law in existence, and as it could never exist in a meaningful and realistic way without undermining to its foundations the very principle of the absolute sovereignty of the State, the State can have no duties toward foreign populations. Hence, if it treats a conquered people in a humane fashion, if it plunders or exterminates it halfway only, if it does not reduce it to the lowest degree of slavery, this may be a political act inspired by prudence, or even by pure magnanimity, but it is never done from a sense of duty, for the State has an absolute right to dispose of a conquered people at will.

This flagrant negation of humanity which constitutes the very essence of the State is, from the standpoint of the State, its supreme duty and its greatest virtue. It bears the name patriotism, and it constitutes the entire transcendent morality of the State. We call it transcendent morality because it usually goes beyond the level of human morality and justice, either of the community or of the private individual, and by that same token often finds itself in contradiction with these. Thus, to

offend, to oppress, to despoil, to plunder, to assassinate or enslave one's fellowman is ordinarily regarded as a crime. In public life, On the other hand, from the standpoint of patriotism, when these things are done for the greater glory of the State, for the preservation or the extension of its power, it is all transformed into duty and virtue. And this virtue, this duty, are obligatory for each patriotic citizen; everyone is supposed to exercise them not against foreigners only but against one's own fellow citizens, members or subjects of the State like himself, whenever the welfare of the State demands it.

This explains why, since the birth of the State, the world of politics has always been and continues to be the stage for unlimited rascality and brigandage, brigandage and rascality which, by the way, are held in high esteem, since they are sanctified by patriotism, by the transcendent morality and the supreme interest of the State. This explains why the entire history of ancient and modern states is merely a series of revolting crimes; why kings and ministers, past and present, of all times and all countries -- statesmen, diplomats, bureaucrats, and warriors -- if judged from the standpoint of simple morality and human justice, have a hundred, a thousand times over earned their sentence to hard labour or to the gallows. There is no horror, no cruelty, sacrilege, or perjury, no imposture, no infamous transaction, no cynical robbery, no bold plunder or shabby betrayal that has not been or is not daily being perpetrated by the representatives of the states, under no other pretext than those elastic words, so convenient and yet so terrible: "for reasons of state."

These are truly terrible words, for they have corrupted and dishonoured, within official ranks and in society's ruling classes, more men than has even Christianity itself. No sooner are these words uttered than all grows silent, and everything ceases; honesty, honour, justice, right, compassion itself ceases, and with it logic and good sense. Black turns white, and white turns black. The lowest human acts, the basest felonies, the most atrocious crimes become meritorious acts.

The great Italian political philosopher Machiavelli was the first to use these words, or at least the first to give them their true meaning and the immense popularity they still enjoy among our rulers today. A realistic and positive thinker if there ever was one, he was the first to understand that the great and powerful states could be founded and maintained by crime alone -- by many great crimes, and by a radical contempt for all that goes under the name of honesty. He has written, explained, and proven these facts with terrifying frankness. And, since the idea of humanity was entirely unknown in his time; since the idea of fraternity -- not human but religious -- as preached by the Catholic Church, was at that time, as it always has been, nothing but a shocking irony, belied at every step by the Church's own actions; since in his time no one even suspected that there was such a thing as popular right, since the people had always been considered an inert and inept mass, the flesh of the State to be moulded and exploited at will, pledged to eternal obedience; since there was absolutely nothing in his time, in Italy or elsewhere, except for the State -- Machiavelli concluded from these facts, with a good deal of logic, that the State was the supreme goal of all human existence, that it must be served at any cost and that, since the interest of the State prevailed over everything else, a good patriot should not recoil from any crime in order to serve it. He advocates crime, he exhorts to crime, and makes it the sine qua non of political intelligence as well as of true patriotism. Whether the State bear the name of a monarchy or of a republic, crime will always be necessary for its preservation and its triumph. The State will doubtless change its direction and its object, but its nature will remain the same: always the energetic, permanent violation of justice, compassion, and honesty, for the welfare of the State.

Yes, Machiavelli is right. We can no longer doubt it after an experience of three and a half centuries added to his own experience. Yes, so all history tells us: while the small states are virtuous only because of their weakness, the powerful states sustain themselves by crime alone. But our conclusion will be entirely different from his, for a very simple reason. We are the children of the Revolution, and from it we have inherited the religion of humanity, which we must found upon the ruins of the religion of divinity. We believe in the rights of man, in the dignity and the necessary emancipation of the human species. We believe in human liberty and human fraternity founded upon justice. In a word, we believe in the triumph of humanity upon the earth. But this triumph,

which we summon with all our longing, which we want to hasten with all our united efforts -- since it is by its very nature the negation of the crime which is intrinsically the negation of humanity -- this triumph cannot be achieved until crime ceases to be what it now is more or less everywhere today, the real basis of the political existence of the nations absorbed and dominated by the ideas of the State. And since it is now proven that no state could exist without committing crimes, or at least without contemplating and planning them, even when its impotence should prevent it from perpetrating crimes, we today conclude in favour of the absolute need of destroying the states. Or, if it is so decided, their radical and complete transformation so that, ceasing to be powers centralised and organised from the top down, by violence or by authority of some principle, they may recognise -- with absolute liberty for all the parties to unite or not to unite, and with liberty for each of these always to leave a union even when freely entered into -- from the bottom up, according to the real needs and the natural tendencies of the parties, through the free federation of individuals, associations, communes, districts, provinces, and nations within humanity.

Such are the conclusions to which we are inevitably led by an examination of the external relations which the so-called free states maintain with other states. Let us now examine the relations maintained by the State founded upon the free contract arrived at among its own citizens or subjects.

We have already observed that by excluding the immense majority of the human species from its midst, by keeping this majority outside the reciprocal engagements and duties of morality, of justice, and of right, the State denies humanity and, using that sonorous word patriotism, imposes injustice and cruelty as a supreme duty upon all its subjects. It restricts, it mutilates, it kills humanity in them, so that by ceasing to be men, they may be solely citizens -- or rather, and more specifically, that through the historic connection and succession of facts, they may never rise above the citizen to the height of being man.

We have also seen that every state, under pain of destruction and fearing to be devoured by its neighbour states, must reach out toward omnipotence, and, having become powerful, must conquer. Who speaks of conquest speaks of peoples conquered, subjugated, reduced to slavery in whatever form or denomination. Slavery, therefore, is the necessary consequence of the very existence of the State.

Slavery may change its form or its name -- its essence remains the same. Its essence may be expressed in these words: to be a slave is to be forced to work for someone else, just as to be a master is to live on someone else's work. In antiquity, just as in Asia and in Africa today, as well as even in a part of America, slaves were, in all honesty, called slaves. In the Middle Ages, they took the name of serfs: nowadays they are called wage earners. The position of this latter group has a great deal more dignity attached to it, and it is less hard than that of slaves, but they are nonetheless forced, by hunger as well as by political and social institutions, to maintain other people in complete or relative idleness, through their own exceedingly hard labour. Consequently they are slaves. And in general, no state, ancient or modern, has ever managed or will ever manage to get along without the forced labour of the masses, either wage earners or slaves, as a principal and absolutely necessary foundation for the leisure, the liberty, and the civilisation of the political class: the citizens. On this point, not even the United States of North America can as yet be an exception.

Such are the internal conditions that necessarily result for the State from its objective stance, that is, its natural, permanent, and inevitable hostility toward all the other states. Let us now see the conditions resulting directly for the State's citizens from that free contract by which they supposedly constituted themselves into a State.

The State not only has the mission of guaranteeing the safety of its members against any attack coming from without; it must also defend them within its own borders, some of them against the others, and each of them against himself. For the State -- and this is most deeply characteristic of it, of every state, as of every theology -- presupposes man to be essentially evil and wicked. In the State we are now examining, the good, as we have seen, commences only with the conclusion of the

social contract and, consequently, is merely the product and very content of this contract. The good is not the product of liberty. On the contrary, so long as men remain isolated in their absolute individuality, enjoying their full natural liberty to which they recognise no limits but those of fact, not of law, they follow one law only, that of their natural egotism. They offend, maltreat, and rob each other; they obstruct and devour each other, each to the extent of his intelligence, his cunning, and his material resources, doing just as the states do to one another. By this reasoning, human liberty produces not good but evil; man is by nature evil. How did he become evil? That is for theology to explain. The fact is that the Church, at its birth, finds man already evil, and undertakes to make him good, that is, to transform the natural man into the citizen.

To this one may rejoin that, since the State is the product of a contract freely concluded by men, and since the good is the product of the State, it follows that the good is the product of liberty! Such a conclusion would not be right at all. The State itself, by this reasoning, is not the product of liberty; it is, on the contrary, the product of the voluntary sacrifice and negation of liberty. Natural men, completely free from the sense of right but exposed, in fact, to all the dangers which threaten their security at every moment, in order to assure and safeguard this security, sacrifice, or renounce more or less of their own liberty, and, to the extent that they have sacrificed liberty for security and have thus become citizens, they become the slaves of the State. We are therefore right in affirming that, from the viewpoint of the State, the good is born not of liberty but rather of the negation of liberty.

Is it not remarkable to find so close a correspondence between theology, that science of the Church, and politics, that science of the State; to find this concurrence of two orders of ideas and of realities, outwardly so opposed, nevertheless holding the same conviction: that human liberty must be destroyed if men are to be moral, if they are to be transformed into saints (for the Church) or into virtuous citizens (for the State)? Yet we are not at all surprised by this peculiar harmony, since we are convinced, and shall try to prove, that politics and theology are two sisters issuing from the same source and pursuing the same ends under different names; and that every state is a terrestrial church, just as every church, with its own heaven, the dwelling place of the blessed and of the immortal God, is but a celestial state.

Thus the State, like the Church, starts out with this fundamental supposition, that men are basically evil, and that, if delivered up to their natural liberty, they would tear each other apart and offer the spectacle of the most terrifying anarchy, where the stronger would exploit and slaughter the weaker -- quite the contrary of what goes on in our model states today, needless to say! The State sets up the principle that in order to establish public order, there is need of a superior authority; in order to guide men and repress their evil passions, there is need of a guide and a curb.

. . . In order to assure the observance of the principles and the administration of laws in any human society whatsoever, there has to be a vigilant, regulating, and, if need be, repressive power at the head of the State. It remains for us to find out who should and who could exercise such power.

For the State founded upon divine right and through the intervention of any God whatever, the answer is simple enough; the men to exercise such power would be the priests primarily, and secondarily the temporal authorities consecrated by the priests. For the State founded on the free social contract, the answer would be far more difficult. In a pure democracy of equals -- all of whom are, however, considered incapable of self-restraint on behalf of the common welfare, their liberty tending naturally toward evil -- who would be the true guardian and administrator of the laws, the defender of justice and of public order against everyone's evil passions? In a word, who would fulfil the functions of the State?

The best citizens, would be the answer, the most intelligent and the most virtuous, those who understand better than the others the common interests of society and the need, the duty, of everyone to subordinate his own interests to the common good. It is, in fact; necessary for these men to be as intelligent as they are virtuous; if they were intelligent but lacked virtue, they might very well use the public welfare to serve their private interests, and if they were virtuous but lacked intelligence, their good faith would not be enough to save the public interest from their errors. It is

therefore necessary, in order that a republic may not perish, that it have available throughout its duration a continuous succession of many citizens possessing both virtue and intelligence.

But this condition cannot be easily or always fulfilled. In the history of every country, the epochs that boast a sizeable group of eminent men are exceptional, and renowned through the centuries. Ordinarily, within the precincts of power, it is the insignificant, the mediocre, who predominate, and often, as we have observed in history, it is vice and bloody violence that triumph. We may therefore conclude that if it were true, as the theory of the so-called rational or liberal State clearly postulates, that the preservation and durability of every political society depend upon a succession of men as remarkable for their intelligence as for their virtue, there is not one among the societies now existing that would not have ceased to exist long ago. If we were to add to this difficulty, not to say impossibility, those which arise from the peculiar demoralisation attendant upon power, the extraordinary temptations to which all men who hold power in their hands are exposed, the ambitions, rivalries, jealousies, the gigantic cupidities by which particularly those in the highest positions are assailed by day and night, and against which neither intelligence nor even virtue can prevail, especially the highly vulnerable virtue of the isolated man, it is a wonder that so many societies exist at all. But let us pass on.

Let us assume that, in an ideal society, in each period, there were a sufficient number of men both intelligent and virtuous to discharge the principal functions of the State worthily. Who would seek them out, select them, and place the reins of power in their hands? Would they themselves, aware of their intelligence and their virtue, take possession of the power? This was done by two sages of ancient Greece, Cleobulus and Periander; notwithstanding their supposed great wisdom, the Greeks applied to them the odious name of tyrants. But in what manner would such men seize power? By persuasion, or perhaps by force? If they used persuasion, we might remark that he can best persuade who is himself persuaded, and the best men are precisely those who are least persuaded of their own worth. Even when they are aware of it, they usually find it repugnant to press their claim upon others, while wicked and mediocre men, always satisfied with themselves, feel no repugnance in glorifying themselves. But let us even suppose that the desire to serve their country had overcome the natural modesty of truly worthy men and induced them to offer themselves as candidates for the suffrage of their fellow citizens. Would the people necessarily accept these in preference to ambitious, smooth-tongued, clever schemers? If, on the other hand, they wanted to use force, they would, in the first place, have to have available a force capable of overcoming the resistance of an entire party. They would attain their power through civil war which would end up with a disgruntled opposition party, beaten but still hostile. To prevail, the victors would have to persist in using force. Accordingly the free society would have become a despotic state, founded upon and maintained by violence, in which you might possibly find many things worthy of approval -- but never liberty.

If we are to maintain the fiction of the free state issuing from a social contract, we must assume that the majority of its citizens must have had the prudence, the discernment, and the sense of justice necessary to elect the worthiest and the most capable men and to place them at the head of their government. But if a people had exhibited these qualities, not just once and by mere chance but at all times throughout its existence, in all the elections it had to make, would it not mean that the people itself, as a mass, had reached so high a degree of morality and of culture that it no longer had need of either government or state? Such a people would not drag out a meaningless existence, giving free rein for all its instincts; out of its life, justice and public order would rise spontaneously and naturally. The State, in it, would cease to be the providence, the guardian, the educator, the regulator of society. As it renounced all its repressive power and sank to the subordinate position assigned to it by Proudhon, it would turn into a mere business office, a sort of central accounting bureau at the service of society.

There is no doubt that such a political organization, or rather such a reduction of political action in favour of the liberty of social life, would be a great benefit to society, but it would in no way satisfy the persistent champions of the State. To them, the State, as providence, as director of the social

life, dispenser of justice, and regulator of public order, is a necessity. In other words, whether they admit it or not, whether they call themselves republicans, democrats, or even socialists, they always must have available a more or less ignorant, immature, incompetent people, or, bluntly speaking, a kind of canaille to govern. This would make them, without doing violence to their lofty altruism and modesty, keep the highest places for themselves, so as always to devote themselves to the common good, of course. As the privileged guardians of the human flock, strong in their virtuous devotion and their superior intelligence, while prodding the people along and urging it on for its own good and well-being, they would be in a position to do a little discreet fleecing of that flock for their own benefit.

Any logical and straightforward theory of the State is essentially founded upon the principle of authority, that is, the eminently theological, metaphysical, and political idea that the masses, always incapable of governing themselves, must at all times submit to the beneficent yoke of a wisdom and a justice imposed upon them, in some way or other, from above. Imposed in the name of what, and by whom? Authority which is recognised and respected as such by the masses can come from three sources only: force, religion, or the action of a superior intelligence. As we are discussing the theory of the State founded upon the free contract, we must postpone discussion of those states founded on the dual authority of religion and force and, for the moment, confine our attention to authority based upon a superior intelligence, which is, as we know, always represented by minorities.

What do we really see in all states past and present, even those endowed with the most democratic institutions, such as the United States of North America and Switzerland? Actual self-government of the masses, despite the pretence that the people hold all the power, remains a fiction most of the time. It is always, in fact, minorities that do the governing. In the United States, up to the recent Civil War and partly even now, and even within the party of the present incumbent, President Andrew Johnson, those ruling minorities were the so-called Democrats, who continued to favour slavery and the ferocious oligarchy of the Southern planters, demagogues without faith or conscience, capable of sacrificing everything to their greed, to their malignant ambition. They were those who, through their detestable actions, and influence, exercised practically without opposition for almost fifty successive years, have greatly contributed to the corruption of political morality in North America.

Right now, a really intelligent, generous minority -- but always a minority -- the Republican party, is successfully challenging their pernicious policy. Let us hope its triumph may be complete; let us hope so for all humanity's sake. But no matter how sincere this party of liberty may be, no matter how great and generous its principles, we cannot hope that upon attaining power it will renounce its exclusive position of ruling minority and mingle with the masses, so that popular self-government may at last become a fact. This would require a revolution, one that would be profound in far other ways than all the revolutions that have thus far overwhelmed the ancient world and the modern.

In Switzerland, despite all the democratic revolutions that have taken place there, government is still in the hands of the well-off, the middle class, those privileged few who are rich, leisured, educated. The sovereignty of the people -- a term, incidentally, which we detest, since all sovereignty is to us detestable--the government of the masses by themselves, is here likewise a fiction. The people are sovereign in law, but not in fact; since they are necessarily occupied with their daily labour which leaves them no leisure, and since they are, if not totally ignorant, at least quite inferior in education to the propertied middle class, they are constrained to leave their alleged sovereignty in the hands of the middle class. The only advantage they derive from this situation, in Switzerland as well as in the United States of North America, is that the ambitious minorities, the seekers of political power, cannot attain power except by wooing the people, by pandering to their fleeting passions, which at times can be quite evil, and, in most cases, by deceiving them.

Let no one think that in criticising the democratic government we thereby show our preference for the monarchy. We are firmly convinced that the most imperfect republic is a thousand times better than the most enlightened monarchy. In a republic, there are at least brief periods when the people,

while continually exploited, is not oppressed; in the monarchies, oppression is constant. The democratic regime also lifts the masses up gradually to participation in public life--something the monarchy never does. Nevertheless, while we prefer the republic, we must recognise and proclaim that whatever the form of government may be, so long as human society continues to be divided into different classes as a result of the hereditary inequality of occupations, of wealth, of education, and of rights, there will always be a class-restricted government and the inevitable exploitation of the majorities by the minorities.

The State is nothing but this domination and this exploitation, well regulated and systematised. We shall try to prove this by examining the consequences of the government of the masses by a minority, intelligent and dedicated as you please, in an ideal state founded upon the free contract.

Once the conditions of the contract have been accepted, it remains only to put them into effect. Suppose that a people recognised their incapacity to govern, but still had sufficient judgment to confide the administration of public affairs to their best citizens. At first these individuals are esteemed not for their official position but for their good qualities. They have been elected by the people because they are the most intelligent, capable, wise, courageous, and dedicated among them. Coming from the mass of the people, where all are supposedly equal, they do not yet constitute a separate class, but a group of men privileged only by nature and for that very reason singled out for election by the people. Their number is necessarily very limited, for in all times and in all nations the number of men endowed with qualities so remarkable that they automatically command the unanimous respect of a nation is, as experience teaches us, very small. Therefore, on pain of making a bad choice the people will be forced to choose its rulers from among them.

Here then is a society already divided into two categories, if not yet two classes. One is composed of the immense majority of its citizens who freely submit themselves to a government by those they have elected; the other is composed of a small number of men endowed with exceptional attributes, recognised and accepted as exceptional by the people and entrusted by them with the task of governing. As these men depend on popular election, they cannot at first be distinguished from the mass of citizens except by the very qualities which have recommended them for election, and they are naturally the most useful and the most dedicated citizens of all. They do not as yet claim any privilege or any special right except that of carrying out, at the people's will, the special functions with which they have been entrusted. Besides, they are not in any way different from other people in their way of living or earning their means of living, so that a perfect equality still subsists among all. Can this equality be maintained for any length of time? We claim it cannot, a claim that is easy enough to prove.

Nothing is as dangerous for man's personal morality as the habit of commanding. The best of men, the most intelligent, unselfish, generous, and pure, will always and inevitably be corrupted in this pursuit. Two feelings inherent in the exercise of power never fail to produce this demoralisation: contempt for the masses, and, for the man in power, an exaggerated sense of his own worth.

"The masses, on admitting their own incapacity to govern themselves, have elected me as their head. By doing so, they have clearly proclaimed their own inferiority and my superiority. In this great crowd of men, among whom I hardly find any who are my equals, I alone am capable of administering public affairs. The people need me; they cannot get along without my services, while I am sufficient unto myself. They must therefore obey me for their own good, and I, by deigning to command them, create their happiness and well-being." There is enough here to turn anyone's head and corrupt the heart and make one swell with pride, isn't there? That is how power and the habit of commanding become a source of aberration, both intellectual and moral, even for the most intelligent and most virtuous of men.

All human morality--and we shall try, further on, to prove the absolute truth of this principle, the development, explanation, and widest application of which constitute the real subject of this essay--all collective and individual morality rests essentially upon respect for humanity. What do we mean by respect for humanity? We mean the recognition of human right and human dignity in every man,

of whatever race, colour, degree of intellectual development, or even morality. But if this man is stupid, wicked, or contemptible, can I respect him? Of course, if he is all that, it is impossible for me to respect his villainy, his stupidity, and his brutality; they are repugnant to me and arouse my indignation. I shall, if necessary, take the strongest measures against them, even going so far as to kill him if I have no other way of defending against him my life, my right, and whatever I hold precious and worthy. But even in the midst of the most violent and bitter, even mortal, combat between us, I must respect his human character. My own dignity as a man depends on it. Nevertheless, if he himself fails to recognise this dignity in others, must we recognise it in him? If he is a sort of ferocious beast or, as sometimes happens, worse than a beast, would we not, in recognising his humanity, be supporting a mere fiction? No, for whatever his present intellectual and moral degradation may be, if, organically, he is neither an idiot nor a madman--in which case he should be treated as a sick man rather than as a criminal--if he is in full possession of his senses and of such intelligence as nature has granted him, his humanity, no matter how monstrous his deviations might be, nonetheless really exists. It exists as a lifelong potential capacity to rise to the awareness of his humanity, even if there should be little possibility for a radical change in the social conditions which have made him what he is.

Take the most intelligent ape, with the finest disposition; though you place him in the best, most humane environment, you will never make a man of him. Take the most hardened criminal or the man with the poorest mind, provided that neither has any organic lesion causing idiocy or insanity; the criminality of the one, and the failure of the other to develop an awareness of his humanity and his human duties, is not their fault, nor is it due to their nature; it is solely the result of the social environment in which they were born and brought up.

THE COMMUNE, THE CHURCH & THE STATE.

I am a passionate seeker for truth and just as strong an opponent of the corrupting lies, through which the party of order-this privileged, official, and interested representative of all religions, philosophical political, legal economical, and social outrage in the past and present-has tried to keep the world in ignorance. I love freedom with all my heart. It is the only condition under which the intelligence, the manliness, and happiness of the people, can develop and expand. By freedom, however, I naturally understand not its mere form, forced down as from above, measured and controlled by the state, this eternal lie which in reality, is nothing but the privilege of the few founded upon the slavery of all. Nor do I mean that "individualistic," selfish, petty, and mock freedom, which is propagated by J.J. Rousseau and all other schools of bourgeois liberalism. The mock freedom which is limited by the supposed right of all, and defended by the state, and leads inevitably to the destruction of the rights of the individual. No: I mean the only true freedom, that worthy of the name; the liberty which consists therein for everyone to develop all the material, intellectual, and moral faculties which lie dormant in him; the liberty which knows and recognizes no limitations beyond those which nature decrees. In this sense, there are no limitations, for the laws of our own nature are not forced upon us by a law-giver who, beside or above us, sits on a throne. They are in us, the real basis of our bodily and intellectual existence. Instead of limiting them, we must know that they are the real condition and first cause of our liberty.

I mean that liberty of each which is not limited or restrained or curtailed by the liberty of another, but is strengthened and enlarged through it: the unlimited liberty of each through the liberty of all, liberty through solidarity, liberty in equality. (Political, & economical and social.) The liberty which has conquered brute force and vanquished the principle of authority, which is, always, only the expression of that force. The liberty, which will abolish all heavenly and earthly idols, and erect a new world of fellowship and human solidarity on the ruins of all states and churches.

I am a confirmed disciple of economic and social equality. Outside of this, I know, freedom, justice, manliness, morality, and the welfare of the individual as well as that of the community, can only be a hollow lie, an empty phrase. This equality must realise itself through the free organisation of labour and the voluntary cooperative ownership of the means of production, through the combination of the productive workers into freely organised communes, and the free federation of the communes. There must be no controlling intervention of the state.

This is the point which separates, especially, the revolutionary socialists from the authoritarian i. e. marxian socialists. Both work for the same end. Both are out to create a new society. Both agree that the only basis of this new society shall be: the organisation of labour which each and all will have to perform under equal economic conditions, following the demands of nature; and the common ownership of, everything that is necessary to perform that labour, lands, tools, machinery, etc. But, where as, the revolutionary socialists believe in the direct initiative of the workers themselves through their industrial combinations, this is anarchist stand point in contradiction to marxian or as it claims to be scientific. The authoritarians believe in the direct initiative of the state. They imagine they can reach their goal with the help of the radical parties (now it should be understood as communist) through the development and organisation of the political power of the working-class, especially the proletariat of the big towns, due to concentration of large industries employing large mass of proletariat. But the revolutionary socialists oppose all these compromising and confusing alliances. They are convinced that the goal of a free society can only be reached through the development and organisation of the non-political, but social power of the working class of both town and country, with the fusion of forges of all those members of the upper class who are willing to declass themselves and ready to break with the past, and to combine together for

the same demands. The revolutionary socialists are opposed, therefore, to all politics.

Thus we have two methods:

- 1) The organisation of the representative or political strength of the proletariat for the purpose of capturing political power in the state in order to transform society.
- 2) The organisation of the direct strength, the social and industrial solidarity of the proletariat for the purpose of abolishing all political power and the state.

The advocates of both methods believe in science which is out to slay superstition, and which shall take the place of religious church belief. But the former propose to force it into humanity, whilst the latter seek to convince the people of its truth, to educate them everywhere, so that they shall voluntarily organise and combine-freely, from the bottom upwards through individual initiative and according to their true interests, but never according to a plan drawn up before hand for the "ignorant masses" by a few intellectually superior persons.

Revolutionary-now known as libertarian socialists believe that, in the instinctive yearnings and true wants of the masses, is to be found much sound reason and logic than in the deep wisdom of all the doctors, servants, and teachers of humanity who, after many disastrous attempts, still dabble in the problem of making the people happy. Humanity, think they, has been ruled and governed much too long and so they think this state of the affairs should continue. Indeed the source of people's trouble, lies not in this or that form of government, but in the existence and manifestation of Government itself, whatever form it may assume.

This is the historical difference between the authoritarian communist ideas, scientifically developed through the German Marxist school and partly adopted by English and American Socialists, on one hand and the Anarchist ideas of Joseph Pierre Proudhon which have educated the proletariat of the Latin countries and led them intellectually to the last consequences of Proudhon's teachings This latter revolutionary or libertarian socialism has now for the first time, attempted to put its ideas into practice in the Paris Commune.

I am a follower of the Paris Commune, which, though dastardly murdered and drowned in blood by the assassins of the clerical and monarchial reaction, yet lives, more than ever, in the imagination and hearts of the European proletariat. I am its follower, especially because of the fact that it was a courageous, determined, negation of the state. It is a fact of enormous significance, that this should have happened in France, hitherto the land of strongest political centralisation; that it was Paris, the head and creator of this great centralisation, which made the start- thus destroying itself and proclaiming with joy its fall, in order to give life to France, to Europe, to the whole world; thus revealing to all enslaved people-and who are the people who are not slaves-the only way to liberty and happiness; delivering a deathly stroke against the political traditions of bourgeois liberalism, and giving a sound basis to revolutionary socialism.

Paris thus earned for itself the curses of the reactionaries of France and Europe. It inaugurated the new era, that of the final and entire liberation of the people, and their truly realised solidarity, above and in spite of all limitations of the State. Proclaimed the religion of humanity. Made manifest its humanism and atheism, and substituted the great truths of social life and science for godly lies. Paris, heroic, sane, unflinching, asserted its strong belief in the future of humanity. It substituted liberty, justice, and fraternity for the falsehood and injustice of religious and political morality. Paris, choked in the blood of its children, symbolised humanity crucified by the international united reaction of Europe at the direct inspiration of the churches and the high priests (Politicians) of injustice. The next international upheaval of humanity will be the resurrection of Paris.

Such is the true meaning and the beneficial and immeasurably important results of the two-months' existence and memorable fall of the Paris Commune. It lasted only a short time. It was hampered too much by the deadly war it had to wage against the Versailles reaction and Holy Alliance. Consequently, it was unable to work out its Socialist programme, even theoretically, much less

practically. The majority of the members of the Commune, even, were not Socialists in the real sense of the word. And if they acted as Socialists, it was only because they were irresistibly carried away by the nature of their surroundings, the necessity of their position, and not by their own innermost convictions. The Socialists, led by our friend Varlin, formed in the Commune only a disappearingly small minority say fourteen or fifteen members. The rest consisted of Jacobins. But we must discriminate between Jacobins and Jacobins.

There are doctrinaire Jacobins like Gambetta whose, oppressing lust for power and formal republicanism has lost the old revolutionary fire, and preserved only a respect for centralised unity and authority. This was the Jacobinism that betrayed the France of the people to the Prussian conquerors, and then to the native reaction. But there were honest revolutionary Jacobins also, the last heroic descendants of the democratic impulse of 1793, men and women who could sacrifice their centralised unity and well-armed authority to the needs of the revolution rather than bend their conscience before the obnoxious reaction. In the vanguard of these great-hearted Jacobins we see Delecluse, a great and noble figure. Before everything he desired the triumph of the revolution; and as, without the people, no revolution is possible, as the people are Socialistically inclined, and could not be won for any other revolution than a social or economic one, Delecluse and his fellow honest Jacobins allowed themselves to be carried away by the logic of the revolutionary movement. Without desiring it, they became revolutionary Socialists, and signed proclamations and appeals whose general spirit was of a decidedly Socialist nature.

But, in spite of their honesty and goodwill, their Socialism was the product of external circumstances rather than inner conviction. They had neither the time nor the ability to overcome bourgeois prejudices diametrically opposed to their newly acquired Socialism. This internal conflict of opinion weakened them in action. They never got beyond fundamental theories, and were unable to come to decisive conclusions such as would have severed their connection with bourgeois society once and for all.

This was a great calamity for the Commune and for the men themselves. It paralysed them, and they paralysed the Commune. But we must not reproach them on that account. Man does not change in a day, and we cannot change our natures and customs overnight. The Jacobins of the commune have shown their honesty by suffering themselves to be murdered for it. Who can expect more of them?

Even the people of Paris, under whose influence they thought and acted, were Socialists more by instinct than by well-balanced conviction. All their yearnings were in the highest degree entirely Socialistic. But their thoughts were expressed in traditional forms far removed from this height. Among the proletariat of the French towns, and even of Paris, many Jacobin prejudices still remain. Many false ideas about the necessity of dictatorship and government still flourish. The worship of authority—the inevitable result of religious education, that eternal source of all evil, all degradation, all enslavement of peoples—has not yet been entirely removed from its midst. So much is this the case that even the most intelligent sons of the people, the self-conscious Socialists of that time, have not yet been able to free themselves from this superstition. Were one to dissect their minds, one would find the Jacobin, the believer in government, huddled together in a little corner, forsaken and almost lifeless, but not quite dead.

Besides, the position of the small minority of class conscious and revolutionary Socialists in the Commune was very difficult. They felt that they lacked the support of the mass of the Paris population. The organisation of the International Workers' Association was very imperfect, and it only had a few thousand members. With this backing, they had to fight daily against a Jacobin majority. And under what circumstances! Daily they had to find work and bread for several hundred thousand workers, to organize and arm them, and to guard against reactionary conspiracies. All in a town like Paris, beleaguered, menaced with starvation, and exposed to all underhand attacks of the reaction which had established itself in Versailles by kind permission of the Prussian Conqueror. They were forced to create a revolutionary government and army in order to oppose Versailles government and army. They had to forget and violate the first principles of revolutionary Socialism,

and organise themselves as a Jacobin reaction, in order to fight the monarchical and clerical reaction.

It is obvious that, under these circumstances, the Jacobins were the stronger party. They were in a majority and possessed superior political cunning. Their traditions and greater experience in the organisation of government gave them a gigantic advantage over the few genuine Socialists. But the Jacobins took little advantage of this fact; they -did not strive to give to the uprising of Paris a distinctive Jacobin character, but allowed themselves to drift into a social revolution.

Many Socialists, very consequential in their theory, reproach our Paris comrades with not having acted sufficiently Socialistic, whilst the barkers of the bourgeois forces accused them of having been too loyal to the Socialist programme. We will leave the latter gentry on one side now, and endeavour to convince the stern theorists of the liberation of labour that they are unjust to our Paris brethren. Between the best theories and their practical realisation is a gigantic difference, which cannot be covered in a few days. Those of us who knew for instance, our friend Varlin-to mention only him whose death was certain-how strong, well considered, and deep-rooted were the convictions of Socialism in him and his friends. They were men whose enthusiasm, honesty, and self-sacrifice nobody could doubt. Their very honesty make them suspicious of themselves, and they underestimated their strength and character in face of the titanic labour to which they were consecrating their life and thought. Besides, they had the right conviction that, in the social revolution-which in this, as in every other respect, is the direct opposite of political revolution-the deeds of the single leading personality nearly disappear, and the independent, direct reaction of the masses count as everything. The only thing which the more advanced can do is to work out, spread, and explain the ideas which suit the requirements and ideals of the people, and contribute to the national strength of the latter by working untiringly on the task of revolutionary organisation-nothing more. Everything else can and must be accomplished by the people themselves. Otherwise we would arrive at political dictatorship; that is, a re-instatement of the State, privilege, inequality, persecution; a re-establishment, by a long and roundabout way, of political, social, and economic slavery.

Varlin and all his friends; like all true Socialists, and like the average worker who is born and bred amongst the people, experienced in highest degree this well justified fear of the continued initiative of the same men, this distrust of the rule of distinguished personalities. Their uprightness caused them to turn this fear and suspicion as much against themselves as against others.

In opposition to the, in my opinion, entirely erroneous idea of State Socialists, that a dictatorship or a constitutional assembly-that has emerged from a political revolution-can proclaim and organise the social revolution by laws and degrees, our Paris friends were convinced that it could only be brought about and developed through the independent and unceasing efforts of the masses and the groups. They were a thousand times right. Where is the head, however genial, or-if one speaks of the collective dictatorship of an elected assembly, even if it consists of several hundred uncommonly well educated people-where is the brain that is mighty and grasping enough to grasp the unending number and multitude of true interests, yearnings, wills, and requirements, the sum total of which constitute the collective will of the people? And who could invent a social organisation which would satisfy every want-- such an organisation would be nothing less than a torture-chamber, into which the more or less aggressive State would put unhappy society. This has always happened up to now. But the social revolution must make an end of this antiquated system of organisation. It must give back to the masses, the groups, communes, societies, even to every man and woman, their full and unrestricted liberty. It must abolish, once and for all, political power. The State must go. With its fall must disappear all legal rights, all the lies of various religions. For law and religion were always only the forged justification for privilege outrages and established aggression.

It is clear that liberty can only be restored to mankind, and that the true interests of society, of all groups, all local organisations, as well as every single, being can be entirely satisfied entirely only when all States have been abolished.

All the so-called "common interests of society" which are supposed to be represented by the State, are in reality nothing else than the entire and continued suppression of the true interests of the districts, communes, societies, and individuals which are subservient to the State. They are an imagination, an abstract idea, a lie. Under the guise of this idea of representing common interests, the State becomes a vast slaughter-house or cemetery, wherein is slain all the living energy of the people.

But an abstract idea can never exist for itself and through itself. It has no feet with which to walk, no arms with which to work, no stomach in which to digest its slaughtered victims. The religious idea, God, represents, in reality, the self-evident and real interests of a privileged class, the clergy, who represent the earthly half of the God idea. The State, the political abstraction, represents as real and self-evident interests of the bourgeoisie. Today, that class is the most important and practically only exploiting class, which is threatening to swallow up all other classes, Priesthood is developing gradually into a very rich and mighty minority, but is rather relegated and with poor majority. The same is true of the bourgeoisie. Its political and social organisations are every day making for a real ruling oligarchy, to whom a majority of more or less conceited and impoverished bourgeois creatures who are obliged to serve the almighty oligarchy as blind tools. This majority lives in a continuous illusion, and is, through the irresistible power of economic development, unavoidably and ever more pulled down to the ranks of the proletariat.

The abolition of Church and State must be the first and essential condition for the true liberation of society. Only afterwards can and must society organise itself on a new basis. But not from the top downwards, after a more or less beautiful plan of a few experts or theorists, or on the Strength of decrees of a ruling power, or through a universal-suffrage-elected Parliament. Such a proceeding would lead inevitably to the creation of a new ruling aristocracy, i.e., a class who have nothing in common with the people. This class would exploit and bleed the people under the presence of the common welfare. Or in order to preserve the new State.

The organisation of the society of the future must and can be accomplished only from the bottom upwards, through the free federation and union of the workers into groups, unions, and societies, which will unite again into districts, communes, national communes, and finally form a great international federation. Only thus can be evolved the true vital order of liberty and happiness for all, the order which is not opposed to the interests of the individual or of society, but on the contrary strengthens the same and brings them into harmony.

It is said that the harmony and the solidarity between the interests of the individual and society can never be effected, because of an inherent antagonism. But if these interests never and nowhere did harmonise, up to now, it has been the fault of the State in sacrificing the interests of the majority of the people to the gain of a small privileged minority. This oft-mentioned opposition of personal and social interests is only a swindle and political lie, which originated through the religious and theological lie of the Fall—a dogma which was invented to degrade man and destroy his consciousness of his own value. Support was lent to this false idea of antagonism of interests by little speculation of the metaphysical philosophies. These are closely related to theology. Metaphysics over-look the fact that man is a social animal, however, and view society as a mechanical and wholly artificial conglomeration of individuals, who suddenly organise themselves on the basis of a secret or sacred compact out of their free will or at the dictation of a higher power. Before coming together in this fashion, these individuals had boasted an eternal soul and lived in alleged unlimited liberty!

But when the metaphysicians, especially those who believe in the immortality of the soul, assert that men, outside society, are free beings, they maintain that men can enter into society only by denying their freedom and natural independence, and sacrificing both their personal and local

interests. This denial and sacrifice of the ego becomes greater the more developed the society and the more complicated its organisation. From this viewpoint the State becomes the expression of individual sacrifice, which all have to bring to its altar. In the name of the abstract and outrageous lie called "the common good," and "law and order" it imperils increasingly all personal liberty, in the interests of the governing class it exclusively represents. Hence the State appears to us as an inevitable negation and destruction of all liberty, all personal, individual, and common interests.

Everything in the metaphysical and theological system follows and solves itself. Therefore the upholders of these systems are obliged to exploit the masses through the medium of Church and State. Whilst filling their pockets and satisfying all their filthy desires, they tell themselves that they work for the honour of God, the triumph of civilisation, and the eternal welfare of the proletariat.

But we revolutionary Socialists, who believe neither in God, nor yet in (absolute or unqualified) free will, nor yet in the immortality of the soul, we say that liberty, in its fullest sense, must be the goal of human progress.

Our idealistic opponents, the theologian and metaphysicians, take the abstract "liberty" as the foundation of their theories. It is then quite easy for them to draw the conclusion that slavery is the indisputable condition of human existence, who are in our empirical scientific theory, materialists, strive in practice for the triumph of a sane and noble idealism. We are convinced that the whole wealth of the intellectual, moral and material development of humanity, as well as its seeming independence, is due to the fact that man lives in society. Outside of society man would not only not have been free. He would not even have been capable of becoming a man, i. e., a self-conscious being, capable of thought and speech. Thinking and working together lifted man out of his animal condition. We are absolutely convinced that the whole life of man is a social product. His interests, yearnings, needs, dreams, and even his foolishness, as well as his brutality, injustice, and actions, depending, seemingly, on free will, are only the inevitable results of forces at work in our social life. Men are not independent of each other, but each influences the other. We are all in continual co-relation with our neighbours and surrounding nature.

In nature itself this wonderful co-working and fitting together of events does not take place without a struggle. On the contrary, the harmony of the elements is but the result of this continual struggle, which is the condition of all life and of movement. Both in nature and society order without struggle is the equivalent of death.

Order is possible and natural in world system only when the latter is a previously thought out arrangement imposed upon mankind from above. The Jewish religious imagination of a godly law-giver makes for unparalleled nonsense, and the negation not only of all order, but of nature itself. "The laws of nature" relate only to the goal of nature itself. The phrase is not true if used to mean laws decreed by an outside authority. For these "laws" are nothing else than the continual adaptation which is part of the evolution of things, of the working together of vastly different passing but real facts. The sum total of all action and interaction is what we call "nature." The thoughts and science of man observe these phenomena, controlled and experimented with them and finally united them into a system, the single parts of which are called "laws." But nature itself knows no laws. Nature acts unconsciously. In itself it demonstrates the unending difference of its necessarily appearing and self repeating phenomena. This is how, thanks to the inevitableness of activity, the common order can and does exist.

So with human society, which apparently develops against nature, but in reality goes hand in hand with the natural and inevitable development of things. Only the superiority of man over the rest of the animals and his highly developed thinking ability brought a special feature into his evolution—also, by the way, quite natural since man, like everything else, is the material result of the working together and union of natural forces. This special feature is the calculating, thinking ability, the power of induction and abstraction. Through this man has been able to carry his thoughts outside himself, and so observe and criticise himself as a thing apart, some strange or foreign object. And as he, in his thoughts, lifts himself out of himself and the surrounding world, he arrives at the idea

of the entire abstraction, the pure nothingness, the absolute. But this represents nothing beyond man's own ability to abstract thought, which looks down on all that is and finds peace in the entire negation of all that is. This is the very limit of the highest abstraction of thought: this is God.

Herein is to be found the spirit and historical proof of every theological and religious doctrine. Man did not understand nature and the material foundation of his own thoughts. He was unconscious of the natural circumstances and powers which were characteristic of them. So he failed to realise that his abstract ideas only expressed his own ability to abstract thought. Therefore, he came to regard the abstract idea as something really existing something before which even nature sank into insignificance. And so he worshiped and honored in every conceivable fashion this unreality of his imagination. But it became necessary to imagine more clearly and to make understood somehow this Goal, this supreme nothingness which seemed to contain all things in essence but not in fact. So primitive man enlarged his idea of God. Gradually he bestowed on the deity all the powers which existed in human society, good and bad, virtuous and vicious. Such was the beginning of all religions, such their evolution from fetish worship to Christianity.

We will not stop to analyse the history of religious, theological, and metaphysical nonsense, nor speak about the ever occurring godly incarnations and visions which have happened during centuries of human ignorance. Everyone knows that these superstitions occasioned terrible suffering, and their progress was accompanied by rivers of blood and much mourning. All these terrible errors of poor humanity were inevitable in the evolution of society. They were the necessary effect, the natural consequence of that all powerful idea that the universe is governed and conditioned by a supernatural power and will. Century succeeds century. Man becomes more and more used to this belief. Finally it seeks to crush and to kill every effort towards any higher development.

The mad desire to rule or to govern, first on the part of a few men, then of a certain class, demanded that slavery and conquest should be accepted as the underlying principles of society. This, more than anything else, strengthened the terrible belief in a God above. Consequently, no social order could exist without being founded on the Church and State. All doctrinaires defend both of these outrageous institutions.

With their development increased the power of the ruling class, of the priests and aristocrats. Their first concern was to inoculate the enslaved peoples with the idea of the necessity, the benefit, and the sacredness of Church and State. And the purpose of all this was to change brutal and violent slavery into legal, divinely preordained and sanctified slavery.

Did the priests and aristocrats really and truly believe in these institutions which they were endeavoring to uphold with all their power, and to their own benefit? Or were they only lairs and hypocrites? In my opinion they were honest believers and dishonest deceivers simultaneously.

They themselves believe, since they participated, naturally, in the errors of the masses. Only later, at the time the old world declined—that is, in the Middle Ages did they become unbelievers and shameless liars. The founders of states can be regarded also as honest men. Man readily believes that which he desires and that which is not detrimental to his own interests. It makes no difference if he is intelligent and educated. Through his egotism and his desire to live with his neighbours and to profit by their estimation he will believe always only in that which is useful and desirable to him. I am convinced, for instance, that Thiers and the Versailles government were trying to convince themselves, violently, that they were saving France by murdering several thousand men, women, and children.

Even if the priests, prophets, aristocrats, and bourgeois of all times were honest believers, in spite of all, they were parasites. One cannot suppose that they believed every bit of nonsense in religion and politics which they taught the masses. I will not go so far back as to the time when two Augurs in Rome were unable to look into each other's face without smiling. It is hard to believe that even in the time of mental darkness and superstition the inventors of miracles were convinced of their truth.

The same may be said of politics, where the motto is: "One must understand how to govern and rob a people so that they do not complain too much or forget to be subservient, so that they get no chance to think of resentment and revolt."

How can one possibly believe after this that the men who make a business out of politics, and whose goal is injustice, violence, lies, treason, single, and wholesale murder, honestly believe that the wisdom and art of ruling the State make for the common wealth? In spite of all their brutality they are not so stupid as to think this. Church and State were in all times the schools of vice. History testifies to their crimes. Ever and always were priest and politician the conscious, systematic, unyielding, bloodthirsty enemies and executioners of the people. But how can we reconcile two seemingly opposed things like cheater and cheated, liar and believer? In thought it looks difficult, but in life we find the two often together.

The great bulk of mankind live in a continual quarrel and apathetic misunderstanding with themselves, they remain unconscious of this, as a rule, until some uncommon occurrence wakes them up out of their sleep, and forces them to reflect on themselves and their surroundings.

In politics, as well as in religion, man is only a machine in the hands of his oppressors. But robber and robbed, oppressor and oppressed live side by side, ruled by a handful of people, in whom one recognises the real oppressors. It is always the same type of men, who, free of all political and religious prejudice, consciously torture and oppress the rest of the people. In the 17th and 18th century, until the advent of the great revolution, they ruled Europe and did as they liked. They do the same today. But we have reason to hope that their rule will be over soon.

History teaches us that the chief priests of Church and State or also the sworn servants and creatures of these damnable institutions. Whilst consciously deceiving the people and leading them into disaster, these persons are concerned to uphold zealously the sanctity and unapproachability of both establishments. The Church, on the authority of all priests and most politicians, is essential to the proper care of the people's souls; and the State is indispensable, in their opinion, for the proper maintenance of peace, order, and justice. And the doctrinaires of all schools exclaim in chorus: "Without Church or government progress and civilisation is impossible."

We make no comment on the heavenly hereafter, since we do not believe in an immortal soul. But we are convinced that nothing offers a greater menace to truth and the progress of humanity than the Church. How else could it be? Is it not the task of the Church to chloroform the women and children. Does she not kill all sound reason and science with her dogmas, and degrade the self-respect of man by confusing his ideas of right and justice? Does she not preach eternal slavery to the masses in the interest of the ruling and oppressing class? And is she not determined to perpetuate the present reign of darkness, ignorance, misery, and crime? For the progress of our age not to be an empty dream, it must first sweep the Church out of its path.

The Policy of The International.

by Michael Bakunin

[The Policy was published in Egalite In 1869. It was translated by K. L. from a German version, in 1911, and was published in the Herald of Revolt, for October of that year under the title of "The Issue." It is now republished under its original title.-ED.]

"Up to now we believed," says a reactionary paper, "that the political and religious opinions of a man depended upon the fact of his being a member of the International or not."

At first sight, one might think that this paper was correct in its altered opinion. For the International does not ask any new member if he is of a religious or atheistic turn of mind. She does not ask if he belongs to this or that or no political party. She simply says: Are you a worker? If not, do you feel the necessity of devoting yourself wholly to the interests of the working class, and of avoiding all movements that are opposed to it? Do you feel at one with the workers? And have you the strength in you that is requisite if you would be loyal to their cause? Are you aware that the workers --- who create all wealth, who have made civilization and fought for liberty --- are doomed to live in misery, ignorance, and slavery? Do you understand that the main root of all the evils that the workers experience, is poverty? And that poverty --- which is the common lot of the worker --- in all parts of the world --- is a consequence of the present economic organization of society, and especially of the enslavement of labour --- i.e. the proletariat --- under the yoke of capitalism --- i.e. the bourgeoisie?

Do you know that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie there exists a deadly antagonism which is the logical consequence of the economic positions of the two classes? Do you know that the wealth of the bourgeoisie is incompatible with the comfort and liberty of the workers, because their excessive wealth is, and can only be, built upon the robbing and enslavement of the workers? Do you understand that for the same reason, the prosperity and dignity of the labouring masses inevitably demands the entire abolition of the bourgeoisie? Do you realise that no single worker, however intelligent and energetic he may be, can fight successfully against the excellently organized forces of the bourgeoisie --- a force which is upheld mainly by the organization of the State --- all States?

Do you not see that, in order to become a power, you must unite --- not with the bourgeoisie, which would be a folly and a crime, since all the bourgeoisie, so far as they belong to their class) are our deadly enemies? Nor with such workers as have deserted their own cause and have lowered themselves to beg for the benevolence of the governing class? But with honest men, who are moving, in all sincerity, towards the same goal as, you? Do you understand that, against the powerful combinations formed by the privileged classes, the capitalists or possessors of the means and instruments of production and distribution, and all the states on earth --- a local or national association --- even if it belonged to one of the biggest countries in Europe --- can never triumph? Do you not realise that, in order to fight and to vanquish this Capitalist combination, nothing less than an amalgamation of all local and national labour associations --- i.e. The International Association of the Workers of all Lands --- is required?

If you know and comprehend all this, come into our camp whatever else your political or religious convictions are. But if you are at one with us, and so long as you are at one with us, you will wish to pledge the whole of your being, by your every action as well as by your words, to the common cause, as a spontaneous and whole-hearted expression of that fervour of loyalty that will inevitably take possession of you. You will have to promise:

(1) To subordinate your personal and even your family

interest, as well as political and religious bias and would-be activities, to the highest interest of our association, namely the struggle of Labour against Capital, the economic fight of the Proletariat against the Bourgeoisie.

- (2) Never, in your personal interests, to compromise with the bourgeoisie.
- (3) Never to attempt to secure a position above your fellow workers, whereby you would become at once a bourgeois and all enemy of the proletariat; for the only difference between capitalist's and workers is this: the former seek their welfare outside, and at the expense of, the welfare of the community whilst the welfare of the latter is dependent on the solidarity of those who are robbed in the industrial field.
- (4) To remain ever and always loyal to this, principle of the solidarity of labour: for the smallest betrayal of this principle, the slightest deviation from this solidarity, is, in the eyes of the International, the greatest crime and shame with which a worker can soil himself.

II.

The founders of the International acted wisely in refusing to make philosophic or political principles the basis of their association, and preferring to have the exclusively economic struggle of Labour against Capital as the sole foundation. They were convinced that the moment a worker realised the class-struggle, the moment he --- trusting to his right and the numerical strength of his class --- enters the arena against capitalist robbery: that very moment, the force of circumstances and the evolution of the struggle, will oblige him to recognise all the political, socialistic, and philosophic principles of the International. These principles are nothing more or less than the real expressions of the aims and objects of the working-class. The necessary and inevitable conclusion of these aims, their one underlying and supreme purpose, is the abolition --- from the political as well as from the social viewpoint --- of: ---

- (1) The class-divisions existent in society, especially of those divisions imposed on society by, and in, the economic interests of the bourgeoisie.
- (2) All Territorial States, Political Fatherlands, and Nations, and on the top of the historic ruins of this old world order, the establishment of the great international federation of all local and national productive groups.

From the philosophic point of view, the aims of the International are nothing less than the realisation of the eternal ideals of humanity, the welfare of man, the reign of equality, justice, and liberty on earth, making unnecessary all belief in heaven and all hopes for a better hereafter.

The great mass of the workers, crushed by their daily toil, live in ignorance and misery. Whatever the political and religious prejudices that have been forced into their heads may be, this mass is unconsciously Socialistic: instinctively, and, through the pinch of hunger and their position, more earnestly and truly Socialistic than all the "scientific" and "bourgeois Socialists" put together. They (the mass) are Socialists through all the circumstances of their material existence, whereas the latter (the bourgeois Socialists") are only Socialistic through the circumstances of reasoning; and, in reality, the necessities of life have a greater influence over those of pure reasoning, because reasoning (or thought) is only the reflex of the continually developing life-force and not its basis.

The workers do not lack reality, the real longing for Socialist endeavour, but only the Socialist idea. Every worker, from the bottom of his heart, is longing for a really human existence, i.e., material comfort and mental development founded on justice, i.e., equality and liberty for each and every man in work. This cannot be realised in the existing political and social organization, which is founded on and bare-faced robbery of the labouring masses. Consequently, every reflective worker becomes a revolutionary Socialist, since he is forced to realise that his emancipation can only be accomplished by the complete overthrow of present-day society. Either this organisation of injustice with its entire machine of oppressive laws and privileged institutions, must disappear, or else the

proletariat is condemned to eternal slavery.

This is the quintessence of the Socialist idea, whose germs can be found in the instinct of every serious thinking worker. Our object, therefore, is to make him conscious, of what he wants, to awaken in him a clear idea that corresponds to his instincts: for the moment the class consciousness of the proletariat has lifted itself up to the level of their instinctive feeling, their intention will have developed into determination, and their power will be irresistible.

What prevents the quicker development of this idea of salvation amongst the Proletariat? Its ignorance; and, to a great extent, the political and religious prejudices with which the governing class are trying to befog the consciousness and the natural intelligence of the people. How can you disperse this ignorance and destroy these strange prejudices? "The liberation of the Proletariat must be the work of the Proletariat itself," says the preface to our general statute (The International). And it is a thousand times true! This is the main foundation of our great association. But the working class is still very ignorant. It lacks completely every theory. There is only one way out therefore, namely --- Proletarian liberation through action. And what will this action be that will bring the masses to Socialism? It is the economic struggle of the Proletariat against the governing class carried out in solidarity. It is the Industrial Organisation of the workers of the world.

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The Two Camps.

[The two Camps, which is here included, was translated by "Crastinus" from Bakunin's preface to his pamphlet refuting Mazini's theistic idealism. This work was published in the year 1871. At this time Italy witnessed the breaking-up of the workers' associations, guided by the patriotic spirit, and saw the spreading of the ideals of International Socialism, as well as the conflict between the capitalist and the working class conceptions of life. After nearly fifty years, the vibrating audacity of Bakunin's thought, their penetrating inwardness, their generosity are as alive as ever. ---ED.]

You taunt us with disbelieving in God. We charge you with believing in him. We do not condemn you for this. We do not even indict you. We pity you. For the time of illusions is past. We cannot be deceived any longer.

Whom do we find under God's banner? Emperors, kings, the official and the officious world; our lords and our nobles; all the privileged persons of Europe whose names are recorded in the Almanac de Gotha; all the guinea pigs of the industrial, commercial and banking world; the patented professors of our universities; the civil service servants; the low and high police officers; the gendarmes; the gaolers; the headsmen or hangmen; not forgetting the priests, who are now the black police enslaving our souls to the State; the glorious generals, defenders of the public order; and lastly, the writers of the reptile Press.

This is God's army!

Whom do we find in the camp opposite? The army of revolt the audacious deniers of God and repudiators of all divine and authoritarian principles! Those who are therefore, the believers in humanity, the asserters of human liberty.

You reproach us with being Atheists. We do not complain of this. We have no apology to offer, We admit we are. With what pride is allowed to frail individuals --- who, like passing waves, rise only to disappear again in the universal ocean of the collective life --- we pride ourselves on being

Atheists. Atheism is Truth --- or, rather, the real basis of all Truths.

We do not stoop to consider practical consequences. We want Truth above everything. Truth for all!

We believe in spite of all the apparent contradictions --- in spite of the wavering political wisdom of the Parliamentarians --- and of the scepticism of the times --- that truth only can make for the practical happiness of the people. This is our first article of faith.

It appears as if you were not satisfied in recording our Atheism. You jump to the conclusion that we can have neither love nor respect for mankind, inferring that all those great ideas or emotions which, in all ages, have set hearts throbbing are dead letters to us. Trailing at hazard our miserable existences --- crawling, rather than walking, as you wish to imagine us --- you assume that we cannot know of other feelings than the satisfaction of our coarse and sensual desires.

Do you want to know to what an extent we love the beautiful things that you revere? Know then that we love them so much that we are both angry and tired at seeing them hanging, out of reach, from your idealistic sky. We sorrow to see them stolen from our mother earth, transmuted into symbols without life, or into distant promises never to be realised. No longer are we satisfied with the fiction of things. We want them in their full reality. This is our second article of faith.

By hurling at us the epithet of materialists, you believe you have driven us to the wall. But you are greatly mistaken. Do you know the origin of your error?

What you and we call matter are two things totally different. Your matter is a fiction. In this it resembles your God, your Satan, and your immortal soul. Your matter is nothing beyond coarse lowness, brutal lifelessness. It Is, in impossible entity, as impossible as your pure spirit --- "immaterial," "absolute"!

The first thinkers of mankind were necessarily theologians and metaphysicians. Our earthly mind is so constituted that it begins to rise slowly-through a maze of ignorance-by errors and mistakes-to the possession of a minute parcel of Truth. This fact does not recommend "the glorious conditions of the past." But our theologian, and meta physicians, owing to their ignorance, took all that to them appeared to constitute-power, movement, life, Intelligence; and, by a sweeping generalisation, called it, spirit! To the lifeless and shapeless residue they thought remained after such preliminary selection --- uncsciously evolved from the whole world of reality --- they gave the name of matter! They were then surprised to see that this matter --- which, like their spirit existed only in their imagination --- appeared to be so lifeless and stupid when compared to their god, the eternal spirit! To be candid, we do not know this God. We do not recognise this matter.

By the words matter and material, we understand the totality of things, the whole gradation of phenomenal reality as we know it, from the most simple inorganic bodies to the complex functions of the mind of a man of genius; the most beautiful sentiments, the highest thoughts; the most heroic deeds; the actions of sacrifice and devotion; the duties and the rights, the abnegation and the egoism of our social life. The manifestations of organic life, the properties and qualities of simple bodies: electricity, light, heat, and molecular attraction, are all to our mind but so many different evolutions of that totality of things that we call matter. These evolutions, are characterised by a close solidarity, a unity of motive power.

We do not look upon this totality of being and of forms as an eternal and absolute substance, as Pantheists do. But we look upon it as the result, always changed and always changing, of a variety of actions, and reactions, and of the continuous working of real beings that are born and live in its very midst. Against the creed of the theologians I set these propositions:-

1. That if there were I God who created it the world could never have existed.
2. That if God were, or ever had been, the ruler of nature, natural, physical, and social law could never have existed. It would have presented a spectacle of complete

chaos, Ruled from above, downwards, it would have resembled the calculated and designed disorder of the political State,

3. That moral law is a moral, logical, and real law, only in so far as it emanates from the needs of human society.
4. That the idea of God is not necessary to the existence and working of the moral law. Far from this, 'It is a disturbing and socially demoralising factor.
5. That all gods, past and present, have owed their existence to a human imagination unfreed from the fetters of its primordial animality.
6. That any and every god, once established on his throne becomes the curse of humanity, and the natural ally of all tyrants, social charlatans, and exploiters of humanity.
7. That the routing of God will be a necessary consequence of the triumph of mankind. The abolition of the idea of God will be a fatal result of the proletarian emancipation. From the moral point of view, Socialism is the advent of self respect to mankind. It will mean the passing of degradation and Divinity.

From the practical viewpoint, Socialism is the final acceptance of a great principle that is leavening society more and more every day. It is making itself felt more and more by the public conscience. It has become the basis of scientific investigations and progress, and of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. It is making its way everywhere. Briefly, this principle is as follows:

As in what we call the material world, the inorganic matter- mechanical, physical, and chemical- is the determinant basis of the organic matter-vegetable, animal, Intellectual-in like manner in the social world, the development of economical questions has been and is, the, basis that determines our religious, philosophical, political, and social developments.

This principle audaciously destroys all religious ideas and metaphysical beliefs. It is a rebellion far greater than that which, born during the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, levelled down all scholastic doctrine-once the powerful rampart of the Church, of the absolute monarchy, and of the feudal nobility-and brought about the dogmatic culture of the so-called pure reason, so favourable to our latter-day rulers the bourgeois classes. We therefore, say, through the International: The economical enslavement of the workers-to those who control the necessities of life and the instruments of labour, tools and machinery-is the sole and original cause of the present slavery- in all its forms. To it are attributable mental degeneration and political, submission. The economic emancipation of the workers, therefore, is the aim to which any political movement must subordinate its being, merely as a means to that end. This briefly is the central idea, of the International.