

Critique of the Gotha Programme

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Background

Critique of the Gotha Programme is a critique of the draft programme of the United Workers' Party of Germany. In this document Marx address the dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition from capitalism to communism, the two phases of communist society, the production and distribution of the social goods, proletarian internationalism, and the party of the working class.

Lenin later wrote:

The great significance of Marx's explanation is, that here too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, 'concocted' definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

(Lenin Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 471)

Engels wrote a foreword when the document was first published in 1891. Together with the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Engels published [Marx's letter to Bracke](#), directly bound up with the work.

Karl Marx
Critique of the Gotha Programme

Foreword

The manuscript published here -- the covering letter to Bracke as well as the critique of the draft programme -- was sent in 1875, shortly before the [Gotha Unity Congress, to Bracke](#) for communication to Geib, Auer, Bebel [\[1\]](#), and Liebknecht and subsequent return to Marx. Since the [Halle Party Congress](#) has put the discussion of the Gotha Programme on the agenda of the Party, I think I would be guilty of suppression if I any longer withheld from publicity this important -- perhaps the most important -- document relevant to this discussion.

But the manuscript has yet another and more far-reaching significance. Here for the first time Marx's attitude to the line adopted by Lassalle in his agitation from the very beginning is clearly and firmly set forth, both as regards Lassalle's economic principles and his tactics.

The ruthless severity with which the draft programme is dissected here, the mercilessness with which the results obtained are enunciated and the shortcomings of the draft laid bare -- all this today, after fifteen years, can no longer give offence. Specific Lassalleans now exist only abroad as isolated ruins, and in Halle the Gotha Programme was given up even by its creators as altogether inadequate.

Nevertheless, I have omitted a few sharp personal expressions and judgments where these were immaterial, and replaced them by dots. Marx himself would have done so if he had published the manuscript today. The violence of the language in some passages was provoked by two circumstances. In the first place, Marx and I had been more intimately connected with the German movement than with any other; we were, therefore, bound to be particularly perturbed by the decidedly retrograde step manifested by this draft programme. And secondly, we were at that time, hardly two years after the [Hague Congress of the International](#), engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists, who made us responsible for everything that happened in the labour movement in Germany; hence we had to expect that we

would also be added with the secret paternity of this programme. These considerations do not now exist and so there is no necessity for the passages in question.

For reasons arising from the Press Law, also, a few sentences have been indicated only by dots. Where I have had to choose a milder expression this has been enclosed in square brackets. Otherwise the text has been reproduced word for word.

London, January 6, 1891

Footnotes

[1] Before the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was written, Engels wrote a [letter to August Bebel](#) expressing Marx and Engels' surprise at the programme, and going on to criticise it.

Marx-Engels Correspondence 1875

Marx to W. Bracke In Brunswick

Abstract

Written: May 5, 1875;

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London, 5 May 1875

Dear Bracke,

When you have read the following critical marginal notes on the Unity Programme, would you be so good as to send them on to Geib and Auer, Bebel and Liebknecht for examination. I am exceedingly busy and have to overstep by far the limit of work allowed me by the doctors. Hence it was anything but a "pleasure" to write such a lengthy creed. It was, however, necessary so that the steps to be taken by me later on would not be misinterpreted by our friends in the Party for whom this communication is intended.

After the Unity Congress has been held, Engels and I will publish a short statement to the effect that our position is altogether remote from the said programme of principle and that we have nothing to do with it.

This is indispensable because the opinion – the entirely erroneous opinion – is held abroad and assiduously nurtured by enemies of the Party that we secretly guide from here the movement of the so-called [Eisenach Party](#). In a Russian book [*Statism and Anarchy*] that has recently appeared, Bakunin still makes me responsible, for example, not only for all the programmes, etc., of that party but even for every step taken by Liebknecht from the day of his cooperation with the [People's Party](#).

Apart from this, it is my duty not to give recognition, even by diplomatic silence, to what in my opinion is a thoroughly objectionable programme that demoralises the Party.

Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes. If, therefore, it was not possible – and the conditions of the item did not permit it – to go *beyond* the Eisenach programme, one should simply have concluded an agreement for action against the common enemy. But by drawing up a programme of principles (instead of postponing this until it has been prepared for by a considerable period of common activity) one sets up before the whole world landmarks by which it measures the level of the Party movement.

The Lassallean leaders came because circumstances forced them to. If they had been told in advance that there would be haggling about principles, they would *have had* to be content with a programme of action or a plan of organisation for common action. Instead of this, one permits them to arrive armed with mandates, recognises these mandates on one's part as binding, and thus surrenders unconditionally to those who are themselves in need of help. To crown the whole business, they are holding a congress *before the Congress of Compromise*, while one's own party is holding its congress *post festum*. One had obviously had a desire to stifle all criticism and to give one's own party no opportunity for reflection. One knows that the mere fact of unification is satisfying to the workers, but it is a mistake to believe that this momentary success is not bought too dearly.

For the rest, the programme is no good, even apart from its sanctification of the Lassallean articles of faith.

I shall be sending you in the near future the last parts of the French edition of *Capital*. The printing was held up for a considerable time by a ban of the French Government. The thing will be ready this week or the beginning of next week. Have you received the previous six parts? Please let me have the address of Bernhard Becker, to whom I must also send the final parts.

The bookshop of the [Volksstaat](#) has peculiar ways of doing things. Up to this moment, for example, I have not been sent a single copy of the *Cologne Communist Trial*.

With best regards,

Yours,

Karl Marx

Marx-Engels Correspondence 1875

Engels to August Bebel In Zwickau

Written: London, March 18-28, 1875;

First Published: A. Bebel, *Aus meinem Leben*, Part 2, Stuttgart, 1911;

Translated: Peter and Betty Ross;

Transcribed: Zodiac;

HTML Markup: [S. Ryan](#) and [B. Baggins](#).

London, March 18-28, 1875

Dear Bebel,

I have received your letter of February 23 and am glad to hear that you are in such good bodily health.

You ask me what we think of the unification affair. We are, unfortunately, in exactly the same boat as yourself. Neither Liebknecht nor anyone else has let us have any kind of information, and hence we too know only what is in the papers — not that there was anything in them until a week or so ago, when the draft programme appeared. That astonished us not a little, I must say.

Our party had so often held out a conciliatory hand to the Lassalleans, or at least proffered co-operation, only to be rebuffed so often and so contemptuously by the Hasenclevers, Hasselmanns and Tolckes as to lead any child to the conclusion that, should these gentlemen now come and themselves proffer conciliation, they must be in a hell of a dilemma. Knowing full well what these people are like, however, it behoves us to make the most of that dilemma and insist on every conceivable guarantee that might prevent these people from restoring, at our party's expense, their shattered reputation in general working-class opinion. They should be given an exceedingly cool and cautious reception, and union be made dependent on the degree of their readiness to abandon their sectarian slogans and their state aid, ^[2] and to accept in its essentials the Eisenach Programme of 1869 ^[3] or an improved edition of it adapted to the present day. Our party has *absolutely nothing to learn* from the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere, i.e. the crux of the matter where the programme is concerned, but the Lassalleans doubtless have something to learn from the party; the first prerequisite for union was that they cease to be sectarians, Lassalleans, i.e. that, first and foremost, they should, if not wholly relinquish the universal panacea of state aid, at least admit it to be a secondary provisional measure alongside and amongst many others recognised as possible. The draft programme shows that our people, while infinitely superior to the Lassalleian leaders in matters of theory, are far from being a match for them where political guile is concerned; once again the "honest men" ^[4] have been cruelly done in the eye by the dishonest.

To begin with, they adopt the high-sounding but historically false Lassalleian dictum: in relation to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass. This proposition is true only in certain exceptional instances, for example in the case of a revolution by the proletariat, e.g. the Commune, or in a country in which not only has the bourgeoisie constructed state and society after its own image but the democratic petty bourgeoisie, in its wake, has already carried that reconstruction to its logical conclusion. If, for instance, in Germany, the democratic petty bourgeoisie were part of this reactionary mass, then how could the Social-Democratic Workers' Party have gone hand in hand with it, with the People's Party, ^[5] for years on end? How could the *Volksstaat* derive virtually all its political content from the petty-bourgeois democratic *Frankfurter Zeitung*? And how can one explain the adoption in this same programme of no less than seven demands that coincide exactly and word for word with the programme of the People's Party and of petty-bourgeois democracy? I mean the seven political demands, 1 to 5 and 1 to 2, of which there is not one that is not bourgeois-democratic. ^[6]

Secondly, the principle that the workers' movement is an international one is, to all intents and purposes, utterly denied in respect of the present, and this by men who, for the space of five years and under the most difficult conditions, upheld that principle in the most laudable manner. The German workers' position in the van of the European movement rests *essentially* on their genuinely international attitude during the war ^[7]; no other proletariat would have behaved so well. And now this principle is to be denied by them at a moment when, everywhere abroad, workers are stressing it all the more by reason of the efforts made by governments to suppress every attempt at its practical

application in an organisation! And what is left of the internationalism of the workers' movement? The dim prospect — not even of subsequent co-operation among European workers with a view to their liberation — nay, but of a future “international brotherhood of peoples” — of your Peace League bourgeois “United States of Europe”! ^[8]

There was, of course, no need whatever to mention the International as such. But at the very least there should have been no going back on the programme of 1869, and some sort of statement to the effect that, *though first of all* the German workers' party is acting within the limits set by its political frontiers (it has no right to speak in the name of the European proletariat, especially when what it says is wrong), it is nevertheless conscious of its solidarity with the workers of all other countries and will, as before, always be ready to meet the obligations that solidarity entails. Such obligations, even if one does not definitely proclaim or regard oneself as part of the “International,” consist for example in aid, abstention from blacklegging during strikes, making sure that the party organs keep German workers informed of the movement abroad, agitation against impending or incipient dynastic wars and, during such wars, an attitude such as was exemplarily maintained in 1870 and 1871, etc.

Thirdly, our people have allowed themselves to be saddled with the Lassallean “iron law of wages” which is based on a completely outmoded economic view, namely that on average the workers receive only the minimum wage because, according to the Malthusian theory of population, there are always too many workers (such was Lassalle's reasoning). Now in *Capital* Marx has amply demonstrated that the laws governing wages are very complex, that, according to circumstances, now this law, now that, holds sway, that they are therefore by no means iron but are, on the contrary, exceedingly elastic, and that the subject really cannot be dismissed in a few words, as Lassalle imagined. Malthus' argument, upon which the law Lassalle derived from him and Ricardo (whom he misinterpreted) is based, as that argument appears, for instance, on p. 5 of the *Arbeiterlesebuch*, where it is quoted from another pamphlet of Lassalle's, ^[9] is exhaustively refuted by Marx in the section on “Accumulation of Capital.” Thus, by adopting the Lassallean “iron law” one commits oneself to a false proposition and false reasoning in support of the same.

Fourthly, as its *one and only social* demand, the programme puts forward — Lassallean state aid in its starkest form, as stolen by Lassalle from Buchez. ^[10] And this, after Bracke has so ably demonstrated the sheer futility of that demand; after almost all if not all, of our party speakers have, in their struggle against the Lassalleans, been compelled to make a stand against this “state aid”! Our party could hardly demean itself further. Internationalism sunk to the level of Amand Goegg, socialism to that of the bourgeois republican Buchez, who *confronted the socialists* with this demand in order to supplant them!

But “state aid” in the Lassallean sense of the word is, after all, at most only *one* measure among many others for the attainment of an end here lamely described as “paving the way for the solution of the social question,” as though in our case there were still a social *question* that remained *unsolved* in theory! Thus, if you were to say: The

German workers' party strives to abolish wage labour and hence class distinctions by introducing co-operative production into industry and agriculture, and on a national scale; it is in favour of any measure calculated to attain that end! — then no Lassallean could possibly object.

Fifthly, there is absolutely no mention of the organisation of the working class as a class through the medium of trade unions. And that is a point of the utmost importance, this being the proletariat's true class organisation in which it fights its daily battles with capital, in which it trains itself and which nowadays can no longer simply be smashed, even with reaction at its worst (as presently in Paris). Considering the importance this organisation is likewise assuming in Germany, it would in our view be indispensable to accord it some mention in the programme and, possibly, to leave some room for it in the organisation of the party.

All these things have been done by our people to oblige the Lassalleans. And what have the others conceded? That a host of somewhat muddled and *purely democratic demands* should figure in the programme, some of them being of a purely fashionable nature — for instance “legislation by the people” such as exists in Switzerland and does more harm than good, if it can be said to do anything at all. *Administration* by the people — that would at least be something. Similarly omitted is the first prerequisite of all liberty — that all officials be responsible for all their official actions to every citizen before the ordinary courts and in accordance with common law. That demands such as freedom of science and freedom of conscience figure in every liberal bourgeois programme and seem a trifle out of place here is something I shall not enlarge upon.

The free people's state is transformed into the free state. Grammatically speaking, a free state is one in which the state is free vis-à-vis its citizens, a state, that is, with a despotic government. All the palaver about the state ought to be dropped, especially after the Commune, which had ceased to be a state in the true sense of the term. The *people's state* has been flung in our teeth *ad nauseam* by the anarchists, although Marx's anti-Proudhon piece and after it the *Communist Manifesto* declare outright that, with the introduction of the socialist order of society, the state will dissolve of itself and disappear. Now, since the state is merely a transitional institution of which use is made in the struggle, in the revolution, to keep down one's enemies by force, it is utter nonsense to speak of a free people's state; so long as the proletariat still *makes use* of the state, it makes use of it, not for the purpose of freedom, but of keeping down its enemies and, as soon as there can be any question of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore suggest that *Gemeinwesen* ["commonalty"] be universally substituted for *state*; it is a good old German word that can very well do service for the French “Commune.”

"The elimination of all social and political inequality," rather than "the abolition of all class distinctions," is similarly a most dubious expression. As between one country, one province and even one place and another, living conditions will always evince a *certain* inequality which may be reduced to a minimum but never wholly eliminated. The living conditions of Alpine dwellers will always be different from those of the plainsmen. The

concept of a socialist society as a realm of *equality* is a one-sided French concept deriving from the old “liberty, equality, fraternity,” a concept which was justified in that, in its own time and place, it signified a *phase of development*, but which, like all the one-sided ideas of earlier socialist schools, ought now to be superseded, since they produce nothing but mental confusion, and more accurate ways of presenting the matter have been discovered.

I shall desist, although almost every word in this programme, a programme which is, moreover, insidiously written, lays itself open to criticism. It is such that, should it be adopted, Marx and I could *never* recognise a *new* party set up on that basis and shall have to consider most seriously what attitude — public as well as private — we should adopt towards it. ^[11] Remember that abroad we are held responsible for any and every statement and action of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party. E.g. by Bakunin in his work *Statehood and Anarchy*, in which we are made to answer for every injudicious word spoken or written by Liebknecht since the inception of the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*. People imagine that we run the whole show from here, whereas you know as well as I do that we have hardly ever interfered in the least with internal party affairs, and then only in an attempt to make good, as far as possible, what we considered to have been blunders — and *only theoretical* blunders at that. But, as you yourself will realise, this programme marks a turning-point which may very well force us to renounce any kind of responsibility in regard to the party that adopts it.

Generally speaking, less importance attaches to the official programme of a party than to what it does. But a *new* programme is after all a banner planted in public, and the outside world judges the party by it. Hence, whatever happens there should be no going-back, as there is here, on the Eisenach programme. It should further be considered what the workers of other countries will think of this programme; what impression will be created by this genuflection on the part of the entire German socialist proletariat before Lassalleanism.

I am, moreover, convinced that a union on *this* basis would not last a year. Are the best minds of our party to descend to repeating, parrot-fashion, Lassallean maxims concerning the iron law of wages and state aid? I'd like to see you, for one, thus employed! And were they to do so, their audiences would hiss them off the stage. And I feel sure that it is precisely on *these* bits of the programme that the Lassalleans are insisting, like Shylock the Jew on his pound of flesh. The split will come; but we shall have “made honest men” again of Hasselmann, Hasenclever and Tolcke and Co.; we shall emerge from the split weaker and the Lassalleans stronger; our party will have lost its political virginity and will never again be able to come out whole-heartedly against the Lassallean maxims which for a time it inscribed on its own banner; and then, should the Lassalleans again declare themselves to be the sole and most genuine workers' party and our people to be bourgeois, the programme would be there to prove it. All the socialist measures in it are *theirs*, and *our* party has introduced nothing save the demands of that petty-bourgeois democracy which it has *itself* described in that same programme as part of the “reactionary mass”!

I had held this letter back in view of the fact that you would only be released on April 1, in honour of Bismarck's birthday, ^[12] not wanting to expose it to the risk of interception in the course of an attempt to smuggle it in. Well, I have just had a letter from Bracke, who has also felt grave doubts about the programme and asks for our opinion. I shall therefore send this letter to him for forwarding, so that he can read it without my having to write the whole thing over again. I have, by the way, also spoken my mind to Ramm; to Liebknecht I wrote but briefly. I cannot forgive his not having told us a *single word* about the whole business (whereas Ramm and others believed he had given us exact information) until it was, in a manner of speaking, too late. True, this has always been his wont — hence the large amount of disagreeable correspondence which we, both Marx and myself, have had with him, but this time it really is too bad, and *we definitely shan't act in concert with him.*

Do see that you manage to come here in the summer; you would, of course, stay with me and, if the weather is fine, we might spend a day or two taking sea baths, which would really do you good after your long spell in jail.

Ever your friend,

F. E.

Marx has just moved house. He is living at 41 Maitland Park Crescent, NW London.

Footnotes

1. Engels' letter to August Bebel written between March 18 and 28, 1875 is closely connected with Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and is traditionally published together with the latter work. It conveyed the joint opinion of Marx and Engels concerning the fusion of two German workers' parties, the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans, scheduled for early 1875. The immediate reason for the letter was the publication of the draft programme of the future united Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany (*Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei*) in *Der Volksstaat* (the organ of the Eisenachers) and the *Neuer Social-Demokrat* (the organ of the Lassalleans) on March 7, 1875. The draft programme was approved with slight changes by the unity congress at Gotha on May 22-27, 1875, and came to be known as the Gotha Programme.

This letter was first published by Bebel, after the lapse of 36 years, in his *Aus meinem Leben, Zweiter Teil*, Stuttgart, 1911. In the present edition the letter is printed according to this book.

It was published in English for the first time in: K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Lawrence, London [1933], pp. 51-62.

2. A reference to one of Lassalle's programme theses on the establishment of workers' producer associations with the aid of the state. Lassalle and his followers repeatedly emphasised that what they had in mind was a state in which power would pass into the hands of the working people through universal suffrage.

3. Engels is referring to the *Programm und Statuten der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiter-Partei*, adopted at the general German workers' congress in Eisenach in August 1869 and published in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* on August 14, 1869. The congress founded the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany. By and large the programme complied with the principles of the International Working Men's Association.

4. The "*honest men*" — nickname of the members of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (the Eisenachers), as distinct from the members of the General Association of German Workers (the Lassalleans), the "dishonest men."

5. The *German People's Party*, established in September 1868, embraced the democratic section of the bourgeoisie, mostly in the South-German states. The party opposed the establishment of Prussian hegemony in Germany and advocated the idea of a federative German state.

6. A reference to the following articles of the draft Gotha Programme:

"The German workers' party demands as the free basis of the state:

"1. Universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot for all males who have reached the age of 21, for all elections in the state and in the community. 2. Direct legislation by the people with the right to initiate and to reject bills. 3. Universal military training. A people's militia in place of the standing army. Decisions regarding war and peace to be taken by a representative assembly of the people. 4. Abolition of all exceptional laws, in particular the laws on the press, associations and assembly. 5. Jurisdiction by the people. Administration of justice without fees.

"The German workers' party demands as the intellectual and moral basis of the state:

"1. Universal and equal education of the people by the state. Compulsory school attendance. Free instruction. 2. Freedom of science. Freedom of conscience."

7. The reference is to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71.

8. The *League of Peace and Freedom* — A pacifist organisation set up in Switzerland in 1867 with the active participation of Victor Hugo, Giuseppe Garibaldi and other democrats. The League asserted that it was possible to prevent wars by creating the "United States of Europe." Its leaders did not disclose the social sources of wars and often confined anti-militarist activity to mere declarations. At the General Council meeting of August 13, 1867 Marx spoke against the International's official participation in the League's Inaugural Congress, since this would have meant solidarity with its

bourgeois programme, but recommended that some members of the International should attend the Congress in their personal capacity in order to support revolutionary-democratic decisions (see Marx's letter to Engels of September 4, 1867).

9. On page 5 of his *Arbeiterlesebuch* Lassalle quotes a passage about the "iron law of wages" from his pamphlet *Offnes Antwortschreiben an das Central-Comite zur Berufung eines Allgemeinen Deutschen Arbeitercongresses zu Leipzig*, Zurich, 1863, pp. 15-16.

10. Philippe Joseph Buchez, one of the first ideologists of the so-called Christian socialism, advanced a plan for the establishment of workers' producer associations with the aid of the state.

11. On October 12, 1875 Engels wrote to Bebel concerning this programme that, since both workers and their political opponents "interpreted it communistically," "*it is this circumstance alone* which has made it possible for Marx and myself not to disassociate ourselves publicly from a programme such as this. So long as our opponents as well as the workers continue to read our views into that programme, we are justified in saying nothing about it."

12. In March 1872 August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were sentenced to two years' confinement in a fortress for their adhesion to the International Working Men's Association and their socialist views. In April Bebel was sentenced, in addition, to nine months' imprisonment and deprived of his mandate as a Reichstag member for "insulting His Majesty." Liebknecht was released on April 15, 1874, while Bebel was freed on April 1, 1875.

Karl Marx
Critique of the Gotha Programme

I

1. "Labor is the source of wealth and all culture, and since useful labor is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

First part of the paragraph: "Labor is the source of all wealth and all culture."

Labor is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labor, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labor power. The above phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct insofar as it is implied that labor is performed with the appurtenant subjects and instruments. But a socialist program cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to pass over in silence the *conditions* that lone give them meaning. And insofar as man from the beginning behaves toward nature, the primary source of all instruments and subjects of labor, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labor becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for falsely ascribing *supernatural creative power* to labor; since precisely from the fact that labor depends on nature it follows that the man who possesses no other property than his labor power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labor. He can only work with their permission, hence live only with their permission.

Let us now leave the sentence as it stands, or rather limps. What could one have expected in conclusion? Obviously this:

"Since labor is the source of all wealth, no one in society can appropriate wealth except as the product of labor. Therefore, if he himself does not work, he lives by the labor of others and also acquires his culture at the expense of the labor of others."

Instead of this, by means of the verbal river "and since", a proposition is added in order to draw a conclusion from this and not from the first one.

Second part of the paragraph: "Useful labor is possible only in society and through society."

According to the first proposition, labor was the source of all wealth and all culture; therefore no society is possible without labor. Now we learn, conversely, that no "useful" labor is possible without society.

One could just as well have said that only in society can useless and even socially harmful labor become a branch of gainful occupation, that only in society can one live by being idle, etc., etc. -- in short, one could just as well have copied the whole of Rousseau.

And what is "useful" labor? Surely only labor which produces the intended useful result. A savage -- and man was a savage after he had ceased to be an ape -- who kills an animal with a stone, who collects fruit, etc., performs "useful" labor.

Thirdly, the conclusion: "Useful labor is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

A fine conclusion! If useful labor is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labor belong to society -- and only so much therefrom accrues to the individual worker as is not required to maintain the "condition" of labor, society.

In fact, this proposition has at all times been made use of by the champions of the *state of society prevailing at any given time*. First comes the claims of the government and everything that sticks to it, since it is the social organ for the maintenance of the social order; then comes the claims of the various kinds of private property, for the various kinds of private property are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases can be twisted and turned as desired.

The first and second parts of the paragraph have some intelligible connection only in the following wording:

"Labor becomes the source of wealth and culture only as social labor", or, what is the same thing, "in and through society".

This proposition is incontestably correct, for although isolated labor (its material conditions presupposed) can create use value, it can create neither wealth nor culture.

But equally incontestable is this other proposition:

"In proportion as labor develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the nonworkers."

This is the law of all history hitherto. What, therefore, had to be done here, instead of setting down general phrases about "labor" and "society", was to prove concretely how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which enable and compel the workers to lift this social curse.

In fact, however, the whole paragraph, bungled in style and content, is only there in order to inscribe the Lassalleian catchword of the "undiminished proceeds of labor" as a slogan at the top of the party banner. I shall return later to the "proceeds of labor", "equal right", etc., since the same thing recurs in a somewhat different form further on.

2. "In present-day society, the instruments of labor are the monopoly of the capitalist class; the resulting dependence of the working class is the cause of misery and servitude in all forms."

This sentence, borrowed from the Rules of the International, is incorrect in this "improved" edition.

In present-day society, the instruments of labor are the monopoly of the landowners (the monopoly of property in land is even the basis of the monopoly of capital) *and* the capitalists. In the passage in question, the Rules of the International do not mention either one or the other class of monopolists. They speak of the "monopolizer of the means of labor, that is, *the sources of life*." The addition, "sources of life", makes it sufficiently clear that land is included in the instruments of labor.

The correction was introduced because Lassalle, for reasons now generally known, attacked *only* the capitalist class and not the landowners. In England, the capitalist class is usually not even the owner of the land on which his factory stands.

3. "The emancipation of labor demands the promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property of society and the co-operative regulation of the total labor, with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labor.

"Promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property" ought obviously to read their "conversion into the common property"; but this is only passing.

What are the "proceeds of labor"? The product of labor, or its value? And in the latter case, is it the total value of the product, or only that part of the value which labor has newly added to the value of the means of production consumed?

"Proceeds of labor" is a loose notion which Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic conceptions.

What is "a fair distribution"?

Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is "fair"? And is it not, in fact, the only "fair" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal conceptions, or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise out of economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about "fair" distribution?

To understand what is implied in this connection by the phrase "fair distribution", we must take the first paragraph and this one together. The latter presupposes a society wherein the instruments of labor are common property and the total labor is co-operatively regulated, and from the first paragraph we learn that "the proceeds of labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

"To all members of society"? To those who do not work as well? What remains then of the "undiminished" proceeds of labor? Only to those members of society who work? What remains then of the "equal right" of all members of society?

But "all members of society" and "equal right" are obviously mere phrases. The kernel consists in this, that in this communist society every worker must receive the "undiminished" Lassallean "proceeds of labor".

Let us take, first of all, the words "proceeds of labor" in the sense of the product of labor; then the co-operative proceeds of labor are the *total social product*.

From this must now be deducted: *First*, cover for replacement of the means of production used up. *Second*, additional portion for expansion of production. *Third*, reserve or insurance funds to provide against accidents, dislocations caused by natural calamities, etc.

These deductions from the "undiminished" proceeds of labor are an economic necessity, and their magnitude is to be determined according to available means and forces, and partly by computation of probabilities, but they are in no way calculable by equity.

There remains the other part of the total product, intended to serve as means of consumption.

Before this is divided among the individuals, there has to be deducted again, from it: *First*, the general costs of administration not belonging to production. This part will, from the outset, be very considerably restricted in comparison with present-day society, and it diminishes in proportion as the new society develops. *Second*, that which is intended for the common satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc. From the outset, this part grows considerably in comparison with present-day society, and it grows in proportion as the new society develops. *Third*, funds for those unable to work, etc., in short, for what is included under so-called official poor relief today.

Only now do we come to the "distribution" which the program, under Lassallean influence, alone has in view in its narrow fashion -- namely, to that part of the means of consumption which is divided among the individual producers of the co-operative society.

The "undiminished" proceeds of labor have already unnoticeably become converted into the "diminished" proceeds, although what the producer is deprived of in his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society.

Just as the phrase of the "undiminished" proceeds of labor has disappeared, so now does the phrase of the "proceeds of labor" disappear altogether.

Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor employed on the products appear here as the *value* of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of total labor. The phrase "proceeds of labor", objectionable also today on account of its ambiguity, thus loses all meaning.

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society -- after the deductions have been made -- exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labor. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labor time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such-and-such an amount of labor (after deducting his labor for the common funds); and with this certificate, he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labor cost. The same amount of labor which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another.

Here, obviously, the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labor, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals, except individual means of consumption. But as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity equivalents: a given amount of labor in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labor in another form.

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle -- *bourgeois right*, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange exists only on the average and not in the individual case.

In spite of this advance, this equal right is still constantly stigmatized by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labor they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labor.

But one man is superior to another physically, or mentally, and supplies more labor in the same time, or can labor for a longer time; and labor, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal* right is an unequal right for unequal labor. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right. Right, by its

very nature, can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard insofar as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one definite side only -- for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another is not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labor, and hence an equal in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly -- only then then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!

I have dealt more at length with the "undiminished" proceeds of labor, on the one hand, and with "equal right" and "fair distribution", on the other, in order to show what a crime it is to attempt, on the one hand, to force on our Party again, as dogmas, ideas which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete verbal rubbish, while again perverting, on the other, the realistic outlook, which it cost so much effort to instill into the Party but which has now taken root in it, by means of ideological nonsense about right and other trash so common among the democrats and French socialists.

Quite apart from the analysis so far given, it was in general a mistake to make a fuss about so-called distribution and put the principal stress on it.

Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of nonworkers in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labor power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the co-operative property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution

of the means of consumption different from the present one. Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democrats) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?

4. "The emancipation of labor must be the work of the working class, relative to which all other classes are only one reactionary mass."

The first strophe is taken from the introductory words of the Rules of the International, but "improved". There it is said: "The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the workers themselves"; here, on the contrary, the "working class" has to emancipate -- what? "Labor." Let him understand who can.

In compensation, the antistrophe, on the other hand, is a Lassallean quotation of the first water: "relative to which" (the working class) "all other classes are only one reactionary mass."

In the [Communist Manifesto](#) it is said:

"Of all the classes that stand face-to-face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product."

The bourgeoisie is here conceived as a revolutionary class -- as the bearer of large-scale industry -- relative to the feudal lords and the lower middle class, who desire to maintain all social positions that are the creation of obsolete modes of production. thus, they do not form together with the bourgeoisie "only one reactionary mass".

On the other hand, the proletariat is revolutionary relative to the bourgeoisie because, having itself grown up on the basis of large-scale industry, it strives to strip off from production the capitalist character that the bourgeoisie seeks to perpetuate. But the *Manifesto* adds that the "lower middle class" is becoming revolutionary "in view of [its] impending transfer to the proletariat".

From this point of view, therefore, it is again nonsense to say that it, together with the bourgeoisie, and with the feudal lords into the bargain, "form only one reactionary mass" relative to the working class.

Has one proclaimed to the artisan, small manufacturers, etc., and peasants during the last elections: Relative to us, you, together with the bourgeoisie and feudal lords, form one reactionary mass?

Lassalle knew the *Communist Manifesto* by heart, as his faithful followers know the gospels written by him. If, therefore, he has falsified it so grossly, this has occurred only to put a good color on his alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie.

In the above paragraph, moreover, his oracular saying is dragged in by main force without any connection with the botched quotation from the Rules of the International. Thus, it is simply an impertinence, and indeed not at all displeasing to Herr Bismarck, one of those cheap pieces of insolence in which the Marat of Berlin deals. [Marat of Berlin a reference to Hasselmann, cheif editor of the *Neuer Social-Demokrat*]

5. "The working class strives for its emancipation first of all within the framework of the present-day national states, conscious that the necessary result of its efforts, which are common to the workers of all civilized countries, will be the international brotherhood of peoples."

Lassalle, in opposition to the *Communist Manifesto* and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint. He is being followed in this -- and that after the work of the International!

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organize itself at home *as a class* and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle -- insofar as its class struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the *Communist Manifesto* says, "in form". But the "framework of the present-day national state", for instance, the German Empire, is itself, in its turn, economically "within the framework" of the world market, politically "within the framework" of the system of states. Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Herr Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in his pursuing a kind of *international* policy.

And to what does the German Workers' party reduce its internationalism? To the consciousness that the result of its efforts will be "the international brotherhood of peoples" -- a phrase borrowed from the bourgeois [League of Peace and Freedom](#), which is intended to pass as equivalent to the international brotherhood of working classes in the joint struggle against the ruling classes and their governments. Not a word, therefore, about the international functions of the German working class! And it is thus that it is to challenge its own bourgeoisie -- which is already linked up in brotherhood against it with the bourgeois of all other countries -- and Herr Bismarck's international policy of conspiracy.

In fact, the internationalism of the program stands *even infinitely below* that of the Free Trade party. The latter also asserts that the result of its efforts will be "the international brotherhood of peoples". But it also *does* something to make trade international and by

no means contents itself with the consciousness that all people are carrying on trade at home.

The international activity of the working classes does not in any way depend on the existence of the International Working Men's Association. This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for the activity; an attempt which was a lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave but which was no longer realizable in its historical form after the fall of the Paris Commune.

Bismarck's [Norddeutsche](#) was absolutely right when it announced, to the satisfaction of its master, that the German Workers' party had sworn off internationalism in the new program.

Karl Marx
Critique of the Gotha Programme

II

"Starting from these basic principles, the German workers' party strives by all legal means for the free state—and—socialist society: that abolition of the wage system together with the iron law of wages -- and—exploitation in every form; the elimination of all social and political inequality."

I shall return to the "free" state later.

So, in future, the German Workers' party has got to believe in Lassalle's "iron law of wages"! That this may not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated of speaking of the "abolition of the wage system" (it should read: system of wage labor), "together with the iron law of wages". If I abolish wage labor, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are of "iron" or sponge. But Lassalle's attack on wage labor turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that Lassalle's sect has conquered, the "wage system" must be abolished "together with the iron law of wages" and not without it.

It is well known that nothing of the "iron law of wages" is Lassalle's except the word "iron" borrowed from Goethe's "great, eternal iron laws". [\[1\]](#) The word "iron" is a label by which the true believers recognize one another. But if I take the law with Lassalle's

stamp on it, and consequently in his sense, then I must also take it with his substantiation for it. And what is that? As Lange already showed, shortly after Lassalle's death, it is the Malthusian theory of population (preached by Lange himself). But if this theory is correct, then again I cannot abolish the law even if I abolish wage labor a hundred times over, because the law then governs not only the system of wage labor but *every* social system. Basing themselves directly on this, the economists have been proving for 50 years and more that socialism cannot abolish poverty, which has its basis in nature, but can only make it *general*, distribute it simultaneously over the whole surface of society!

But all this is not the main thing. Quite apart from the false Lassallean formulation of the law, the truly outrageous retrogression consists in the following:

Since Lassalle's death, there has asserted itself in our party the scientific understanding that wages are not what they appear to be -- namely, the *value*, or *price*, of *labor*—but only a masked form for the *value*, or *price*, of *labor power*. Thereby, the whole bourgeois conception of wages hitherto, as well as all the criticism hitherto directed against this conception, was thrown overboard once and for all. It was made clear that the wage worker has permission to work for his own subsistence—that is, *to live*, only insofar as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist (and hence also for the latter's co-consumers of surplus value); that the whole capitalist system of production turns on the increase of this gratis labor by extending the working day, or by developing the productivity—that is, increasing the intensity or labor power, etc.; that, consequently, the system of wage labor is a system of slavery, and indeed of a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labor develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment. And after this understanding has gained more and more ground in our party, some return to Lassalle's dogma although they must have known that Lassalle *did not know* what wages were, but, following in the wake of the bourgeois economists, took the appearance for the essence of the matter.

It is as if, among slaves who have at last got behind the secret of slavery and broken out in rebellion, a slave still in thrall to obsolete notions were to inscribe on the program of the rebellion: Slavery must be abolished because the feeding of slaves in the system of slavery cannot exceed a certain low maximum!

Does not the mere fact that the representatives of our party were capable of perpetrating such a monstrous attack on the understanding that has spread among the mass of our party prove, by itself, with what criminal levity and with what lack of conscience they set to work in drawing up this compromise program!

Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph, "the elimination of all social and political inequality", it ought to have been said that with the abolition of class distinctions all social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself.

Footnotes

[1] Quoted from Goethe's *Das Göttliche*

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III

"The German Workers' party, in order *to pave the way to the solution of the social question*, demands the establishment of producers' co-operative societies *with state aid under the democratic control of the toiling people*. The producers' co-operative societies *are to be called into being* for industry and agriculture on such a scale *that the socialist organization of the total labor will arise from them*."

After the Lassallean "iron law of wages", the physic of the prophet. The way to it is "paved" in worthy fashion. In place of the existing class struggle appears a newspaper scribbler's phrase: "the social *question*", to the "solution" of which one "paves the way".

Instead of arising from the revolutionary process of transformation of society, the "socialist organization of the total labor" "arises" from the "state aid" that the state gives to the producers' co-operative societies and which the *state*, not the workers, "calls into being". It is worthy of Lassalle's imagination that with state loans one can build a new society just as well as a new railway!

From the remnants of a sense of shame, "state aid" has been put -- under the democratic control of the "toiling people".

In the first place, the majority of the "toiling people" in Germany consists of peasants, not proletarians.

Second, "democratic" means in German "Volksherrschaftlich" [by the rule of the people]. But what does "control by the rule of the people of the toiling people" mean? And particularly in the case of a toiling people which, through these demands that it puts to the state, expresses its full consciousness that it neither rules nor is ripe for ruling!

It would be superfluous to deal here with the criticism of the recipe prescribed by Buchez in the reign of Louis Philippe, in opposition to the French socialists and accepted by the reactionary workers, of the [Atelier](#). The chief offense does not lie in

having inscribed this specific nostrum in the program, but in taking, in general, a retrograde step from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian movement.

That the workers desire to establish the conditions for co-operative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionize the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of co-operative societies with state aid. But as far as the present co-operative societies are concerned, they are of value *only* insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois.

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IV

I come now to the democratic section.

A. "The free basis of the state."

First of all, according to II, the German Workers' party strives for "the free state".

Free state — what is this?

It is by no means the aim of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state free. In the German Empire, the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it; and today, too, the forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state".

The German Workers' party — at least if it adopts the program — shows that its socialist ideas are not even skin-deep; in that, instead of treating existing society (and this holds good for any future one) as the *basis* of the existing state (or of the future

state in the case of future society), it treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own intellectual, ethical, and libertarian bases.

And what of the riotous misuse which the program makes of the words "present-day state", "present-day society", and of the still more riotous misconception it creates in regard to the state to which it addresses its demands?

"Present-day society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the "present-day state" changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. The "present-day state" is therefore a fiction.

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common: that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense, it is possible to speak of the "present-day state" in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

The question then arises: What transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousand-fold combination of the word 'people' with the word 'state'.

Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Now the program does not deal with this nor with the future state of communist society.

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old democratic litany familiar to all: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois [People's party](#), of the [League of Peace and Freedom](#). They are all demands which, insofar as they are not exaggerated in fantastic presentation, have already been *realized*. Only the state to which they belong does not lie within the borders of the German Empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc. This sort of "state of the future" is a present-day state, although existing outside the "framework" of the German Empire.

But one thing has been forgotten. Since the German Workers' party expressly declares that it acts within "the present-day national state", hence within its own state, the Prusso-German Empire — its demands would indeed be otherwise largely meaningless,

since one only demands what one has not got — it should not have forgotten the chief thing, namely, that all those pretty little gewgaws rest on the recognition of the so-called sovereignty of the people and hence are appropriate only in a *democratic republic*.

Since one has not the courage — and wisely so, for the circumstances demand caution — to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers' programs under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon did, one should not have resorted, either, to the subterfuge, neither "honest" [\[1\]](#) nor decent, of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and bureaucratically carpentered, and then to assure this state into the bargain that one imagines one will be able to force such things upon it "by legal means".

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic, and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last form of state of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion — even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism, which keeps within the limits of what is permitted by the police and not permitted by logic.

That, in fact, by the word "state" is meant the government machine, or the state insofar as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labor, is shown by the words "the German Workers' party demands as the economic basis of the state: a single progressive income tax", etc. Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else. In the state of the future, existing in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is, therefore, nothing remarkable that the Liverpool financial reformers — bourgeois headed by Gladstone's brother — are putting forward the same demand as the program.

B. "The German Workers' party demands as the intellectual and ethical basis of the state:

"1. Universal and equal elementary education by the state. Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction."

"Equal elementary education"? What idea lies behind these words? Is it believed that in present-day society (and it is only with this one has to deal) education can be *equal* for all classes? Or is it demanded that the upper classes also shall be compulsorily reduced to the modicum of education — the elementary school — that alone is compatible with the economic conditions not only of the wage-workers but of the peasants as well?

"Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction." The former exists even in Germany, the second in Switzerland and in the United States in the case of elementary schools. If in some states of the latter country higher education institutions are also

"free", that only means in fact defraying the cost of education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts. Incidentally, the same holds good for "free administration of justice" demanded under A, 5. The administration of criminal justice is to be had free everywhere; that of civil justice is concerned almost exclusively with conflicts over property and hence affects almost exclusively the possessing classes. Are they to carry on their litigation at the expense of the national coffers?

This paragraph on the schools should at least have demanded technical schools (theoretical and practical) in combination with the elementary school.

"Elementary education by the state" is altogether objectionable. Defining by a general law the expenditures on the elementary schools, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the branches of instruction, etc., and, as is done in the United States, supervising the fulfillment of these legal specifications by state inspectors, is a very different thing from appointing the state as the educator of the people! Government and church should rather be equally excluded from any influence on the school. Particularly, indeed, in the Prusso-German Empire (and one should not take refuge in the rotten subterfuge that one is speaking of a "state of the future"; we have seen how matters stand in this respect) the state has need, on the contrary, of a very stern education by the people.

But the whole program, for all its democratic clang, is tainted through and through by the Lassallean sect's servile belief in the state, or, what is no better, by a democratic belief in miracles; or rather it is a compromise between these two kinds of belief in miracles, both equally remote from socialism.

"Freedom of science" says paragraph of the Prussian Constitution. Why, then, here?.

"Freedom of conscience"! If one desired, at this time of the [Kulturkampf](#) to remind liberalism of its old catchwords, it surely could have been done only in the following form: Everyone should be able to attend his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the Workers' party ought, at any rate in this connection, to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience, and that for its part it endeavours rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion. But one chooses not to transgress the "bourgeois" level.

I have now come to the end, for the appendix that now follows in the program does not constitute a characteristic component part of it. Hence, I can be very brief.

Footnotes

[1] Epitaph used by the [Eisenachers](#). Here a play on words in German.

Appendix

"2. Normal working day."

In no other country has the workers' party limited itself to such an indefinite demand, but has always fixed the length of the working day that it considers normal under the given circumstances.

"3. Restriction of female labor and prohibition of child labor."

The standardization of the working day must include the restriction of female labor, insofar as it relates to the duration, intermissions, etc., of the working day; otherwise, it could only mean the exclusion of female labor from branches of industry that are especially unhealthy for the female body, or are objectionable morally for the female sex. If that is what was meant, it should have been said so.

"Prohibition of child labor." Here it was absolutely essential to state the age limit.

A general prohibition of child labor is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish. Its realization -- if it were possible -- would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other safety measures for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labor with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society.

"4. State supervision of factory, workshop, and domestic industry."

In consideration of the Prusso-German state, it should definitely have been demanded that the inspectors are to be removable only by a court of law; that any worker can have them prosecuted for neglect of duty; that they must belong to the medical profession.

"5. Regulation of prison labor."

A petty demand in a general workers' program. In any case, it should have been clearly stated that there is no intention from fear of competition to allow ordinary criminals to be treated like beasts, and especially that there is no desire to deprive them of their sole means of betterment, productive labor. This was surely the least one might have expected from socialists.

"6. An effective liability law."

It should have been stated what is meant by an "effective" liability law.

Be it noted, incidentally, that, in speaking of the normal working day, the part of factory legislation that deals with health regulations and safety measures, etc., has been overlooked. The liability law comes into operation only when these regulations are infringed.

In short, this appendix also is distinguished by slovenly editing.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam.

[I have spoken and saved my soul.]
