

# MARXIST STUDY COURSES

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*Elements of Marxian economics*
2. **HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASS**  
*The working class movement in the main centers of imperialist power*

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## RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

### For This Lesson

- The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, by *Karl Marx*.....\$1.50  
 The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, *Introduction and notes by D. Ryazanov*..... 2.00

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- The History of the First International, by *G. M. Steklov*.....\$3.50  
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# MARXIST STUDY COURSES

Course

## HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASS

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Question of unity; defeat in Germany; Marx and Engels in the revolution.



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Marxist Study Courses

Course 2.

# **History of the Working Class**

LESSON III.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN  
FRANCE AND GERMANY



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### LESSON III

## THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

### I. INTRODUCTION

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*The July monarchy—The money-lenders' and bankers' State—The character of the February revolution and the tactics of the proletariat—Louis Blanc—The June battle—Bonapartism—The lessons of the 1848 revolution in France.*

### III. THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

*Germany before the revolution—The question of unity—The course of the revolution in Austria—The defeat of the revolution in Germany—Marx and Engels in the revolution.*

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### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO LESSON THREE

Section 1: *What are respectively the strong and the weak aspects of utopian socialism, its ideology, and its tactics? In particular, the attitude of the utopists to revolution, to the political struggle, to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie should be firmly grasped. This will make clear the difference between the utopists and Marx on the questions of the nature of the transition from capitalism to socialism, the role of the proletariat, the class struggle, and the revolution.*

Section 2: *Here it is important to explain the role of the bankers in France before 1848 and the attitude adopted by the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie towards*

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THE GARDEN CITY PRESS LIMITED,  
LETCHWORTH, HERTS.

them. A study of the character of French industry at that time is necessary to an understanding of the part played by the proletariat. The student should observe the new features in the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution which became apparent as a result of the independent demands put forward by the proletariat.

It is particularly important to examine the conditions which gave rise to the Bonapartist coup d'état and the nature of that event.

Section 3: The student should note what obstacles stood in the way of capitalist development in Germany and why German unity was bound to be a decisive problem for the revolution.

There are a number of questions requiring careful study: Why did the German bourgeoisie turn away from the revolution? Why did the German peasantry take no active part? Why did no "Jacobin" party arise among the urban petty bourgeoisie of Germany? How did national enmities and the reaction abroad help to defeat the revolution?

The reader must get a clear understanding of the tactics of Marx and Engels, and, in connection therewith, of the early German labour movement.

In working through the pertinent writings of Marx and Engels, and with them the illustrative material given in the Ryazanov edition of the Communist Manifesto, a task which is strongly recommended, the reader should examine how Marx, on the basis of the experience offered by 1848, understood the tasks of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the tactics it should adopt towards the petty bourgeoisie, and the meaning of the slogan "permanent revolution."

#### LITERATURE RECOMMENDED

ON UTOPIAN SOCIALISM—ENGELS: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; MARX AND ENGELS: *The Communist Manifesto*.

HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE—An excellent analysis is given in Marx's great historical writings: *Class Struggles in France* and the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

1848 REVOLUTION IN GERMANY—ENGELS: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*.

R. W. POSTGATE: *Revolution, 1789 to 1906*—Contains a number of valuable documents illustrative of the history of this period.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### I. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN EUROPE

In the period between the French Revolution and 1848, all the countries of western Europe were changed by the industrial revolution. Although the displacement of small-scale production by large-scale industry proceeded on the continent much more slowly than in England and large-scale industry had nowhere else won such a dominating position, nevertheless the triumph of capitalist manufacture over the small producer, the rise of machinery and of large factories, and the penetration of capitalism into agriculture, had everywhere resulted in important re-alignments of class forces.

Small producers, driven from the village and from their handicraft, joined the ranks of the proletariat in great numbers. The workers' standard of life sank considerably lower, particularly as a result of economic crises. The transformation of the skilled artisan into a machine minder, and the great increase in the employment of female and child labour, were accompanied by a sharp fall in wages. The labour itself, particularly for workers newly entering industry, was painful and ruinous; the working day lasted for twelve and fourteen hours. Housing conditions in the new industrial towns were intolerable, and the working-class districts were seldom free of typhus and cholera epidemics. Unemployment, destitution, and crime increased. "Abundance," wrote the great Utopist Fourier, "has become the source of misery and poverty."

During this period the most important change in the relative strength of the classes was brought about by the development of the proletariat, which became increasingly conscious of its power. The development of the industrial revolution was accompanied by a number of riots and insurrections. The Luddites and the Chartist movement in England, the two great insurrec-

tions of 1831 and 1834 in Lyons, the centre of the French silk industry, and the unrest among the Silesian weavers in 1844, bear witness to the growth of revolutionary sentiments among the desperate workers. They expressed the first spontaneous efforts of the proletariat to constitute itself a distinct class opposed to the bourgeoisie.

The increase in destitution and the greater activity of the proletariat resulted in greater interest being shown in this new class. From among the intelligentsia, from among the small producers and handicraftsmen, who were being ruined by the new industry, there came forward men who agreed that the fundamental problems of that new age were not the purely political questions, such as the substitution of a bourgeois republic for the monarchy, the demand for personal liberty and for free trade, but the "social problem," the abolition of frightful inequality and of the poverty of the proletariat. This formed the origin of Utopian socialism.

## 2. UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

The majority of the Utopists were representatives of the intelligentsia, men from the bourgeois sections of the population who, frightened by the growth of social distress and worried by the action of the proletariat and their revolutionary sentiments, wished to ameliorate the suffering and abolish social inequality. Some of the Utopists represented the interests of the fast-disappearing small producers, who were being thrust into the ranks of the proletariat by the competition of large-scale industry and the concentration of capital. The most important Utopists were Robert Owen (1771-1858), Charles Fourier (1771-1837), and Saint-Simon (1760-1825). Their earlier writings express to some extent the discontent of the industrialists, but gradually they drew near to socialism.

The greatest service rendered by these Utopists consists in the fact that they were the first to subject

modern capitalist society to thorough and devastating criticism. Before the great French revolution, the most advanced bourgeois thinkers were convinced that the destruction of feudalism and the establishment of political liberty would bring well-being and progress in their train for all humanity. Fourier and Owen, on the other hand, proved that these expectations were unfounded; they showed that the position of the working people had become incomparably worse after political power had passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Fourier, for example, gave a "deeply penetrating criticism of the existing order of society," showing that a great part of the population—merchants, some manufacturers, lawyers, tax-collectors, the military, large numbers of women in the towns, dandies—lived the life of parasites and did no productive work. Fourier exposed the material and moral wretchedness of the bourgeois world, the hypocrisy of marriage, and the disintegration of the family. Fourier and Owen advocated the abolition of the difference between town and country, and urged the necessity of a new system of education built upon the unity of productive labour and learning. (Owen's ideas have already been discussed in Lesson II.) Engels said that Saint-Simon was gifted with a genius's breadth of vision: he was dimly aware that economic conditions form the basis of political constitutions. In his writings, too, we find the conception of the final aim as the transformation of political government over men into the administration of things and the guidance of the processes of production; this idea of the abolition of the State is clearly expressed.

If the Utopists' criticism of the existing order of society was extremely powerful and passionate, their plans for a future society were at the best brilliant fantasies (Utopias<sup>1</sup>), for they were not based upon a careful examination of economic development. The

<sup>1</sup> The word *Utopia* (meaning "nowhere") was the name given by Thomas More in 1516 to his political romance of an imaginary ideal society. From this all fancy pictures of ideal future states of society have been called "Utopias."

future society was described in the most minute detail. Fourier, for example, planned the establishment of community settlements, which he called phalansteries (from the word "phalanx," a military formation), each embracing 1,600 to 1,800 people. Each member of the phalanstery was to be engaged in turn in all the different branches of agriculture and industry. Nevertheless Fourier did not envisage the abolition of capitalism; the products of the phalansteries were to be divided among the workers (five-twelfths), the capitalists (four-twelfths), and the administrative workers (three-twelfths). He thus rejected the complete socialisation of the means of production. He expected that the community of labour in each phalanstery, the regulated application of the competitive spirit, the change in occupation, and the concentration of forces, would result in a great increase in the productivity of labour. On these new social and material foundations, the way of life, the length and the powers of life of humanity, would be completely transformed; this change, too, Fourier painted in visionary colours.

#### THE TACTICS OF THE UTOPISTS

The Utopists considered that the conditions created by the development of capitalism were intolerable, but they thought the change would be very easy to accomplish; it was enough to carry on propaganda for the plans of the future society which they had worked out. Hence they considered it their duty to persuade the possessing classes and those who disposed of political power to support the establishment of "cells" of the future society, since the example of such model colonies would have an extraordinarily rapid influence on the rest of humanity. A revolution, a political struggle, was not in the least necessary. "If I had the revolution in my closed fist, I would not open it," said the French socialist Cabet (1788-1856) who, just before the revolution of 1848, called upon the workers to settle in America and set up socialist settlements there.

"We must above all be on our guard against the use of force," wrote an English Utopian socialist. "When the decisive hour strikes, we do not need to draw a sword, we do not need to raise a finger."

The Utopists considered the workers as the most oppressed section of the population, but as being incapable of independent action; they therefore required help from above, they had to rely on the generosity of the ruling classes. To the question: "Should not the rich first of all be turned on to the right road?" Cabet answered: "Undoubtedly, it is useful to begin with them, because the rich and the educated have much more influence among the rich, and even among the poor. Can we, however, rely upon being successful among the rich? Why should we doubt it? Are there no enlightened, just, and generous people among the rich?" It is said of Fourier that for many years he waited at home at definite times, in expectation of the millionaire who was going to provide the capital for the establishment of the first phalanstery.

While the great Utopists hoped to build their islands of socialism with the support of the kind-hearted bourgeoisie and well-meaning monarchs, other socialists, still more closely allied with the petty bourgeoisie, put forward a comprehensive programme of transitional measures, full of petty bourgeois illusions and demands. Proudhon (1809-1865) and Louis Blanc (1811-1882) urged the establishment of mutual credit institutions and all-embracing co-operative associations. Easily accessible or even socialised credit would serve excellently the requirements of the small producers, who could not afford the interest demanded by the banks or money-lenders, but it would do nothing to abolish private property; indeed, it would improve the position of the small proprietor. In the forties of the nineteenth century this was one of the central demands of the socialists, rallying petty bourgeois as well as workers.

One of the most influential socialists in France in the

eighteen-forties was Louis Blanc. Like the Utopists, he rejected revolution and the use of force, and believed in the omnipotence of producers' co-operatives. "The people look to their emancipation not in the use of crude force, but in order. Let us leave force to our enemies," wrote Blanc. Society as a whole, including the bourgeoisie, is interested in the establishment of socialism. "If the bourgeoisie is moved by good intentions, it will do everything to regenerate the country. Let them amalgamate with the people and take the initiative in changing over from competition to association."

What was new in the ideas of Louis Blanc—and in this the reformists of to-day share his views—was the emphasis on the great importance of the democratic State in the transition to co-operative society. The earlier Utopists completely denied the importance of the State. Louis Blanc considered that, with the franchise, the people could wield decisive influence in the State and thus be able to found co-operatives, open public works, and use private capital to maintain them. Freely competing against private undertakings, the public concerns would prove their superiority, without its being necessary to wipe out private enterprise by the application of force.

In the France of that time the producers' co-operative movement<sup>1</sup> was fairly widespread. But, having to compete against large-scale capitalist undertakings, the co-operatives were bound either to fail or themselves to resort to the exploitation of wage labour.

### 3. FROM UTOPIA TO SCIENCE

The historical service rendered by the founders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, consisted in their contention that socialism is a necessary product of historical development, that economic development prepares and makes inevitable the replacement of the capitalist by the socialist system of production. Pro-

<sup>1</sup> Started by Owen and his followers in England in the period 1818-32.

ceeding from a comprehensive and systematic investigation into the philosophy, the economic theory, and the economic and political history of their epoch, Marx and Engels developed the materialist conception of history. They supplied the key to the understanding of the development of human society. The scientific conception of the world and of history, elaborated by Marxism in what is known as dialectical materialism, makes possible an understanding of the historical process and defines the correct tactics for the proletarian class struggle.

Before Marx the Utopists used emotional arguments to prove the possibility of the transition to socialism, relying upon the goodwill of individual rulers and attributing great importance to their plans of the future. Marx showed how the capitalist system of production arose, how in the course of its development it prepares the ground for the socialisation of the means of production and how, at a certain stage, the abolition of private property becomes indispensable if the productive forces of society are to continue to grow. As opposed to the Utopists, for whom the proletariat did not play an independent part, Marx and Engels taught that the abolition of private property in the means of production, necessary to the transition to socialism, can be accomplished only by the one revolutionary class in modern society, the proletariat. The socialist transformation is possible only with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the winning of political power by the proletariat—the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence follows the necessity of winning the support of the proletariat for the political struggle and of preparing of the revolution.

### THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE AND THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

By the middle of the 'forties Marx and Engels had already given definite form to these ideas. But they were not only great social theorists—they were at the

same time important organisers and participators in the working-class movement.

In 1834 German journeymen and political *émigrés* had formed in Paris a League of Outlaws, which in 1836 grew into the more radical League of the Just, a secret league of Communist revolutionaries. In 1840 the headquarters of the League were transferred to London. In 1847 Marx and Engels entered this league, helped to get its name changed to the Communist League, and, in 1848, brought out for the League its programme, famous throughout all the world as the *Communist Manifesto*. In this programme the League declared its complete adherence to the principles of scientific socialism. In 1846 Marx had already broken with the tailor's journeyman, Weitling (1808-71), the writer and agitator for the League of the Just, whose socialism was of the emotional order and who represented the most advanced German artisans. Weitling had placed his hopes upon an insurrection of 20,000 thieves and "lumpen-proletarians" to be released from prison, and his arguments for socialism drew frequent inspiration from the life of Christ and the teachings of the gospel. Marx and Engels also criticised sharply the ideas of the "German" or "true" socialists, as they called themselves, who, "instead of defending true needs, had defended the 'need for truth,' instead of championing the interests of the proletariat, had championed the interests of the essence of mankind, of that archetypal man who belongs to no class" (*Communist Manifesto*). They maintained that, while in France it was "the poor workers" who strove for socialism, in Germany it was "mainly the higher and more educated sections" who wished to accomplish this aim, and they therefore appealed to the workers never to take part in political revolutions. After Marx and Engels had disposed of these "German philosophers, would-be philosophers and men of letters," they energetically set about establishing connections with the outposts of the revolutionary proletariat (in Brussels and Paris), opened a Communist

correspondence bureau and in 1847 assumed the intellectual leadership of the Communist League. The fundamental idea of the *Communist Manifesto*, the most famous piece of writing in the political literature of the world, is:

"The method of production, and the organisation of social life inevitably arising therefrom, constitute in every historical epoch the foundation upon which is built the political and intellectual history of that epoch; consequently the whole of man's history has been the history of class struggles, incessant warfare between exploited and exploiter, between oppressed classes and ruling classes at various stages in the evolution of society; the struggle has now reached a stage of development when the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) cannot free itself from the dominion of exploiting and ruling class (the bourgeoisie) without at one and the same time and for ever ridding society of exploitation, oppression and class struggles." (From Engels' Introduction to the 1888 edition of the *Manifesto*.)

Utopianism was replaced by proletarian communism, inseparably bound up with the class struggle, and the organisation of the working class.

"This work gives with the clarity and distinction of genius the new conception of the world, consistent materialism, embracing also the sphere of social life, dialectic materialism as the most comprehensive and profound theory of development, the theory of the class struggle and the world-historical revolutionary role of the proletariat, the creator of a new communist society." (Lenin, *Karl Marx*.)

The petty bourgeois British Fabians, and, under their theoretical guidance, the leaders of the British Labour Party and of the I.L.P.—especially those of the MacDonal school—have always been ostentatious in their repudiation of Marx and the doctrines of the

*Communist Manifesto*. These doctrines they claim are "out of date"—yet it is instructive to note that their standpoint and programme are substantially those of the pre-Marxian Louis Blanc (see p. 10). And just as Louis Blanc in the name of "democracy" and the "State" traduced and denounced the Commune of 1871 and lent aid and encouragement to its enemies, so the Fabians and MacDonaldites have traduced and denounced the Russian Revolution and lent both open and covert aid and encouragement to its enemies.

The German Social-Democracy which was at one time highly scandalised by the anti-Marxist attitude of these "British" Socialists has now come round completely to their standpoint. It now professes "horror" at the policy projected by Marx and Engels in 1848-50.

The Socialist Party of the U.S.A., which was in pre-war days more-or-less Marxist in standpoint, has since the war and under the leadership of the Rev. Norman Thomas paralleled both the British and the German modes of retreat from the standpoint of Marx.

In 1848 the ideas of the *Manifesto* were necessarily not very widespread. But scarcely had it appeared, when the Paris Revolution broke out and the revolutionary wave swept over a large part of Europe. Everywhere, in the storms of that "red year," the working class played the greatest part, but it only achieved a conscious understanding of its real class tasks, it only learned correct tactics in the lessons of that mass movement, through its failures and through the serious mistakes of its leaders. In France, the country which took the lead in the Revolution, the most respected leaders of the workers were still petty bourgeois socialists like Louis Blanc.

#### AUGUSTE BLANQUI AND BLANQUISM

A great advance upon these petty bourgeois socialists can be observed in Auguste Blanqui (1805-81), a revolutionary Communist who spent a great part of his life—thirty-six years—in prison. Blanqui's strength did not lie in his ability to analyse the capitalist system;

in this the great Utopists far surpassed him, but he was a master of tactics and a convinced revolutionary. He was opposed to putting forward plans for a future society and fought strongly against the idea of peaceful growth into socialism; he fought against the illusion that, so long as capitalist society still existed, the co-operatives could achieve real power. His chief service was to spread the idea of the inseparable connection between the political struggle and socialism. Socialism, he argued, was possible only as the result of a violent revolution, of an armed rising and the establishment of a temporary dictatorship. Throughout his life Blanqui worked untiringly at organising armed insurrection. He considered that the most essential requisite was a numerically small, but disciplined, illegal revolutionary organisation.

Blanqui began to build such an organisation during the July monarchy and continued the work under the Second Empire. The organisation was divided into groups of ten, and only the leader of the group maintained contact with the district leadership of the organisation. Only a few members of the organisation met the central body and Blanqui himself. Shortly before the downfall of the Second Empire, Lafargue tells us, Blanqui arranged once or twice for a "roll-call" of the organisation in Paris. The leaders of the groups of ten were requested to assemble at certain boulevards and by them there passed, unrecognised, a little old man, the "eternal prisoner," the most dangerous enemy of bourgeois and bureaucratic France.

With its recognition of the necessity for an armed uprising, for organising insurrection and creating a party of professional revolutionaries, Blanquism marked a transition stage from Utopian socialism to revolutionary Marxism. The greatest theoreticians of the revolutionary proletariat, Marx and Lenin, learnt a good deal from Blanqui, but he and his followers exaggerated the importance of the Republic and the role of France in the international revolutionary

movement—hence their attitude of “defending the fatherland” and, in Blanqui, a certain chauvinism in regard to the Germans.

The usual estimate of Blanqui as a mere conspirator and “putschist” is false, although the Blanquists did not correctly understand the relationship of the party to the class. Nevertheless, Blanquism marked a great step forward in the revolutionary movement and exercised a profound and revolutionary influence upon the workers’ movement. Marx had a very high opinion of Blanqui and his followers.<sup>1</sup> In 1850 Marx and Engels entered into a formal alliance with the Blanquists—Blanqui himself was in prison—to found the Universal League of Revolutionary Communists, and the declaration was signed by Marx, Engels, and leading Blanquists.

## II. THE 1848 REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

### THE JULY MONARCHY—THE MONEY-LENDERS’ AND BANKERS’ STATE

The great French Revolution of 1789-94 had not completed the bourgeois democratic transformation of France. After the *coup d'état* of Thermidor 9th (1794) the radical democratic measures of the Jacobin dictatorship began to be annulled. The forces of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the workers were worn out. The Directory—the government of five led by former Jacobins—was replaced after the *coup d'état* of 1799 by the Consulate. The First Consul, Napoleon Bonaparte, a former Jacobin and the most successful general in the revolutionary armies, became Emperor in 1804. In the First Empire the big bourgeoisie determined the policy of the government, while the peasantry maintained the gains they had won in the Revolution, but, on the defeat of Napoleonic France in the war against the coalition of feudal Europe, the

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of the life of Blanqui is given in Postgate’s *Out of the Past*. It must, however, be read with critical caution.

old Bourbon monarchy, which had been overthrown by the people, was restored. The nobles who had fled from France returned and tried to win back their old privileges; they were awarded millions in compensation for the land that had been taken from them; and they were more than satisfied with the restoration of the old order.

In July 1830 a new Revolution broke out in Paris. The Bourbon dynasty was overthrown, but the people did not succeed in re-establishing the Republic; the Bourbons were replaced by the Orleans dynasty. King Louis Philippe (the son of the Duke of Orleans, who had taken part in the great Revolution, had changed his name to Citizen “Equality,” and was later executed) represented and defended the interests of the wealthiest section of the big bourgeoisie, the aristocracy of finance. “Henceforth, the bankers will rule in France,” declared the banker Laffitte when Louis Philippe was proclaimed king.

In contrast to England, where the industrial revolution had transformed the entire national economy, France was still predominantly an agricultural country; in England the peasants formed 23 per cent. of the population, in France 75 per cent.

After the great Revolution in France, smallholdings became the chief form of land tenure. But the small peasant, burdened by taxes, could not advance very far on his own resources in a money economy. He was forced either to contract debts—to borrow in spring, repay in autumn, and borrow again towards the end of the winter—or to rent more land and try to improve its cultivation. In either case he was compelled to resort to loans, that is, to mortgage his land. Thus every year the peasant had to pay interest on his loan and also repay part of the sum originally lent. In the forties these payments amounted to about 550 million francs a year—almost a third of the net income of the whole French peasantry. The peasant was driven to mortgage more and more of his land, and the money-lenders made greater and greater profits. The usurer

ruled in the village, but over France as a whole the banker ruled, the financial capitalist. The mortgaging of the land, the sale and re-sale of holdings at a price that steadily mounted higher, were sources of vast profit. The banker had another source of income in the State budget deficit. As a result of prolonged wars the balance of the budget had been completely destroyed; the expenditure on officials and officers, particularly numerous in a country of small peasants, rose higher and increased the State indebtedness. The principal way of meeting the deficit was by means of loans, which the financiers granted at very high rates. Thus the State debt became an excellent instrument of accumulation for the financial aristocracy, who accordingly brought upon themselves the enmity of the petty bourgeoisie.

The industrial bourgeoisie had not yet gained a dominant position within the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless industrial capitalism was developing. The number of steam engines almost doubled in eight years.

	<i>Steam Engines.</i>	<i>Total Horse-power.</i>
1839 ..	2,540	33,000
1847 ..	4,583	62,000

In the same period the production of coal rose from 180,000 tons to more than 5,000,000 tons, and the first railways were laid down. But the extension of large-scale industry, the application of machinery, the subjection of small producers to large concerns, the rise of great enterprises which crushed small business out of existence, aroused (although all of this process was far from completed) great dissatisfaction among the urban petty bourgeoisie.

With the development of capitalism, the numbers of the proletariat grew. Only a small part was engaged in large-scale industry, while the majority worked in small concerns, largely dependent on the great merchants and manufacturers; they were exploited to the utmost, and in addition many of them worked at home (for example, the tailors and the needlewomen, parti-

cularly numerous in Paris). In Paris alone there were about 300,000 workers, of whom 70,000 were engaged in building and the clothing trades. There did not yet exist, however, an absolutely sharp line of division between employer and workman; that was to be found only between the large capitalists and the workers; the numerous small business men still felt a certain kinship with the workmen, who for their part had not yet given up the hope of themselves becoming independent; together the small masters and their workmen were hostile to large-scale capital; in Paris there were about 64,000 men in business, of whom one-half worked alone or with one assistant.

The social contradictions thus developing were aggravated by political conditions. Of the entire French population of twenty-four millions, only a comparatively small group of 240,000, the richest bourgeois and landowners, were entitled to vote. The use made of the machinery of State by the privileged financial aristocracy, who used methods of corruption to enrich themselves still further, gave rise to general dissatisfaction. Even the industrial bourgeoisie was to some extent opposed to the régime; they were a constitutional opposition, anxious not to abolish the monarchy, but merely to reform the franchise.

Things were brought to a head by the economic crisis of 1847-8. The crisis wrought terrible havoc in French economy, as can be clearly seen from a comparison of France's foreign trade and production in Paris in the two years in question:

	<i>Imports into France.</i>	<i>Industrial Production in Paris.</i>
	<i>In Million Francs.</i>	
1847 ..	1,290	1,463
1848 ..	708	677

With such an enormous decline in industry, the figures of unemployment rose to extraordinary heights—about 186,000 workers were dismissed. The class struggle came to a head; the conflict that had begun

as a struggle for franchise reform developed into revolution; on February 24th, 1848, Louis Philippe fled from France; Monarchism seemed overthrown.

THE CHARACTER OF THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION AND  
THE TACTICS OF THE PROLETARIAT

Judged by its real tasks, the revolution of February 1848 was an essential link in the chain of bourgeois democratic revolutions. Its purpose was to complete the bourgeois transformation of the country, to replace the monarchy by the Republic, to extend political power to larger sections of the bourgeoisie, and, finally, to give a powerful impulse to the bourgeois transformation of Europe, wherever semi-feudal monarchies still existed and a nationalist bourgeois-revolutionary movement had developed.

But the February Revolution was accomplished by the proletariat, the bourgeoisie confining its activities to parliamentary opposition. Even in the July Revolution of 1830, the decisive part had been played by the workers who, however, did not know how to exploit the victory and did not even succeed in establishing a republic. In the eighteen years that had passed since those days the proletariat had increased numerically and grown intellectually stronger, and this time it intended to make use of its victory. Although the provisional government displayed great irresolution and postponed, on every possible pretext, taking a decision as to the form of the political régime that was to be established, the proletarians of Paris, who had not yet laid down their arms, forced the proclamation of the Republic. But they had no intention of remaining content with a mere political change; they wanted to introduce a fundamental, socialist change in the conditions of labour. For the first time the French proletariat put forward its own demands: the demand for the "organisation of labour," the demand for the proclamation of the right to work, for the formation of a ministry of labour to give effect to these demands. The proletariat forced

the provisional government—bourgeois in its majority—to include among its members representatives of the petty bourgeois democrats (Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, Louis Blanc—who had proposed the plan for the peaceful transformation of society by the "organisation of labour"—and the worker Albert.)

"The proletariat having won it [the Republic] by force of arms, put the stamp of its class upon the new creation, and proclaimed the socialist Republic. Thus was indicated the general significance of modern Revolutions—a significance which was, however, in this case sharply contrasted with all that was immediately practicable in view of the materials to hand. . . ." (Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 30.)

In a country where industrial capitalism had not yet attained the dominant position, where large-scale industry was still fairly weak, it was impossible for socialism to triumph; capitalism had to develop further. But the proletariat, which had already demonstrated its power, overthrew the monarchy and, anxious to carry the revolution further, issued its dictates to the new government. Even though the demand for the right to work was Utopian, since it could be realised only by the socialisation of the means of production, their correct tactics wrung certain concessions from the bourgeoisie.

The independent action of the proletariat changed at one stroke the relation of class forces in the country. Before February there had been a united front (despite all the acute contradictions between the different classes) against the financial aristocracy. Then the action of the proletariat drove the bourgeoisie into the opposite camp, alienated it from the revolution and made it an enemy of the "red republic." The experiences of 1848 are consequently of such great importance because they show clearly, for the first time, the tactics of the bourgeoisie in the democratic Revolution, in which the proletariat appears as an advanced and

independent force. At the same time the 1848 Revolution in France shows us the part played by the petty bourgeoisie, once the proletariat has come forward independently. The proletariat has only to put forward its own demands and the petty bourgeoisie—although the revolution means for it the fulfilment of a number of immediate demands—goes over into the camp of counter-revolution.

Immediately after the February days and the first demonstrations of the Parisian workers, the big bourgeoisie and the middle classes of France saw only one enemy—the proletariat. All their efforts were then directed to winning the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie over to the bourgeois united front.

#### LOUIS BLANC AND HIS IDEAS

The proletariat did not know how to make immediate use of the position it had won. The consistent revolutionary elements (under Blanqui's leadership) were in a minority. The majority put their trust in Louis Blanc, who, like all Utopian petty bourgeois socialists, hoped to be able to accomplish the transition to socialism by peaceful means and with the support of almost all classes.

"There is nobody," wrote Blanc, "who, independently of his position, his rank, and his make-up, is indifferent to the triumph of the new social order. . . . This necessary revolution can be brought about, and easily too, by peaceful means."

In accordance with these views, Louis Blanc tried to moderate the temper of the Paris workers and induce them to place confidence in the provisional government. He persuaded them to agree to the setting up of a special government commission (the "Luxembourg Commission," so called because its meetings were held in the Luxembourg Palace) to draw up a plan of social demands, and to this commission were invited representatives of the workers and the employers, with equal rights. When the workmen of Paris, influenced by the Blanquist revolutionary clubs, expressed their

mistrust of the government and organised a demonstration to demand the cleansing of the provisional government and the postponement of the elections to the national assembly (for the workers rightly judged that in the short space of time allowed they would not be able to carry their propaganda for the Red Republic into the provinces), Louis Blanc did his utmost to get them to change the object of their demonstration. He exploited the great respect and confidence which he enjoyed among the workers to transform the mighty demonstration on March 17th, 200,000 strong, into a peaceful demonstration of confidence in the petty bourgeois members of the government (such as Ledru-Rollin). The demand for postponement was granted by the government, the elections being arranged to take place two weeks later. The workers' representatives wasted their time in the Luxembourg Commission, which met under the presidency of Louis Blanc, while the bourgeoisie strengthened its position. Lenin was recalling the experiences of 1848 when, in 1917, he warned the workers against a repetition of the "Louis Blanc affair" engineered by the Mensheviks and social revolutionaries.

Meanwhile the policy of the provisional government was welding together the united front against the proletariat. Despite the deficit bequeathed by the July monarchy, the government did not dare to attack the big capitalists. Interest on State bonds was paid even before the date on which it fell due, but, on the other hand, the savings banks were forbidden to pay out larger sums than 100 francs, and, worst of all, the direct taxes, the burden of which fell mainly on the peasantry, were increased by 45 per cent. The peasantry were thus forced into the camp of the enemies of that Republicanism whose chief defender was revolutionary Paris.

#### THE JUNE DAYS

Early in March 1848, on a suggestion made by the extreme right wing of the government, national work-

shops were set up for the unemployed. The work done therein was not productive but obviously useless, the purpose being, while attaching the unemployed to the provisional government, to discredit these "social measures" among the public. Unemployment being so widespread, the national workshops, by the beginning of May, were dealing with 100,000 men, who, however, contrary to all expectations, were not at all hostile to revolution. Thereupon the right wing of the government used the national workshops as a basis for their own counter-revolutionary agitation: 100,000 idlers living at France's expense—that was the result of the activity of the socialists, who wanted to abolish property and divide everything up; to feed these good-for-nothings—and there might easily be another 100,000 of them soon—the government was forced to increase taxation. Slogans like "An end to all this!" "Fight against the division of property, against the Red Republic!" welded the united front against the proletariat.

In these circumstances the elections to the national assembly (on April 23rd) gave a great majority to the enemies of the revolution. The Paris workers organised mass action and demanded that the national assembly should take up the defence of Poland's independence and support the revolutionary movement in Europe. On May 15th they burst into the Assembly Hall and made a vain attempt to break up the meeting. The counter-revolutionaries now made up their minds to suppress the Paris proletariat. Large detachments of troops were concentrated in the capital and an opportunity to use them was carefully prepared.

On June 21st the government decided to dissolve the national workshops. Unmarried workers between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five were to enter the army, while the rest were to be despatched to the provinces. To this attempt to deprive the 100,000 of their bread, the workers of Paris replied with a call to arms. For four days, from June 23rd to 26th, they fought on the barricades, and fought so vigorously that

one of the leaders of the reaction, Thiers, suggested that Paris should temporarily be abandoned. Finally the army and the National Guard—under the command of General Cavaignac, a bourgeois republican—succeeded in suppressing the insurrection with frightful slaughter.

The great significance of the June battle lies in this, that for the first time the proletariat fought all the other classes of bourgeois society. It cannot be said that the Paris insurgents possessed clearly-understood socialist aims. In one of their appeals they wrote: "By defending the Republic we are defending property." In a suggestion for the composition of the government they included bourgeois republicans and Louis Napoleon in addition to Blanqui and Louis Blanc. At the same time some groups of the insurgents demanded the continuance of the national workshops, the promulgation of a decree on the right to work and on freedom of association, and the dissolution of the national assembly. To judge by the lists of those arrested and brought to court, more than three-fourths of the insurgents were workers, while the number of intellectuals and students was quite small. The insurrection broke out spontaneously. The masses themselves built up the barricades—there was no guiding centre. In the different districts, however, leaders sprang up, most of them active participants in former struggles—Blanquists, workers, communists, republicans, Jacobins of the extreme left.

The June insurrection was not only the climax of the revolutionary events of 1848, but also of all the earlier struggles of the proletariat in the 'forties. It is interesting to note that the movement in Paris had been preceded by a number of insurrections in the industrial provincial centres, which had broken out in connection with the crisis, the fall in wages and the efforts of the employers to lengthen the working day, which had been fixed at ten hours after the February revolution.

The June rising was a spontaneous mass movement, in which the proletariat, deserted by the petty bour-

geoisie and relying solely on its own strength, fought against the united forces of capitalist society.

#### BONAPARTISM

After the days of June, the bourgeois republicans established their dictatorship; this, however, soon came to an end with the election, on December 10th, 1848, of Louis Bonaparte, nephew of the first emperor, as President of the Republic. Cavaignac, the murderer of the June insurgents, received one and a half million votes against Bonaparte's five and a half million. The significance of the December election was first made clear by Marx; it represented the struggle of the small peasant proprietors against working-class Paris, which, it was feared, would confiscate all the land; and at the same time, it expressed an old dissatisfaction with the government of the financial aristocracy. The first Napoleon enjoyed great popularity among the peasants, for, in their opinion, his victories over Europe had helped them to retain the land won during the Revolution. This halo of glory now descended upon the nephew; the small proprietor regarding the Bonapartes as a peasant dynasty. The December elections signified the breach between the small landholder and the big bourgeoisie, and, at the same time, Bonaparte's victory reflected the feelings of a part of the army, particularly the higher ranks, who had demonstrated their power in the June days. A Russian spy in Paris at that time reported to St. Petersburg:

"The army is thirsting for a change. It feels that it possesses decisive weight, because without the army order could not be maintained. It does not love the present power, but if a capable man were to be found, the army would be ready to give its energies to the re-establishment of a stable order of society."

One of the French generals declared: "It is as easy for me to make an emperor as a box of sweets." In himself, Louis Napoleon was a man of small stature, a

bankrupt adventurer, always in debt, and ready to sell himself to the Russian government for a few hundred thousand francs. His English admirers never fail to remind us that he enlisted as a special constable to help suppress the Chartists in April 1848.

Reaction advanced all over the country, even against the petty bourgeoisie, once more in opposition and ready to re-establish the alliance with the proletariat. On June 13th, 1849, a movement of protest in Paris was suppressed. The bourgeoisie, although it had gained power, did not succeed in "re-establishing order." The elections of May 1849 gave a majority of votes to the left, who called themselves the social democratic party. The bourgeois national assembly in retaliation, on May 31st, 1850, restricted the franchise. Large numbers of the bourgeoisie would have given anything for peace and order and were ready to surrender their political power if thereby their aim could be secured; they therefore withdrew their support from their parliamentary representatives, who were defending the political rule of their class against the claims of Louis Napoleon, which day by day grew more assertive.

"Its [the bourgeoisie's] attitude showed that the fight to maintain its public interests, its class interests, and its political power, was regarded by it as undesirable, and as nothing more than a disturbance of the tranquil course of private business . . . the aim of the bourgeoisie was to establish a strong government, one with unlimited powers, one under whose protection business men could concentrate their attention upon private business affairs. Thus the bourgeoisie declared unanimously its eagerness for abdication. . . ."

"The bourgeois class, together with other classes, had to be condemned to political nullity . . . in order that bourgeois money-bags might be saved, the bourgeoisie must be sacrificed to the crown." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*, pages 113 et seq.)

In these circumstances Bonaparte won an easy victory. On December 2nd, 1851, he dissolved the national assembly, re-established universal suffrage, and prolonged his own term of office. A year later, on December 2nd, 1852, as Napoleon III, he proclaimed the Empire. The bourgeoisie bowed to the sword.

There is a great difference between Bonapartism in the epoch of industrial capitalism and fascism in the epoch of imperialism, when capitalism is in a state of general crisis. The two tendencies have different origins and different goals, and it would be utterly false to treat them as identical. In subsequent chapters we shall analyse the nature of fascism and describe its history. Here we indicate only one circumstance which demonstrates the great difference between Bonapartism and fascism. For the French bourgeoisie, which was terribly afraid of the Paris proletariat during the second Republic (1848-52), Bonapartism—the rule of the sword and the bureaucracy—was no more than a transitional political régime, a stage in the creation of the bourgeois State. The steering between classes, to which Bonaparte resorted in order to gain and maintain power, was characteristic of an epoch in which the bourgeoisie did not yet feel itself strong enough to exercise political power directly. Once it had won confidence in itself, the bourgeoisie claimed direct political power once more. For many years the bourgeoisie maintained a republican democratic régime, in which bourgeois democracy and parliamentarianism cloaked the rule of force. Bonapartism was a comparatively brief episode in the development of the bourgeoisie, a short halt, caused by weakness, on the road towards unrestricted rule behind bourgeois democratic curtains. Fascism, on the other hand, arose in the period of imperialism, during the revolutionary post-war crisis of capitalism, when the parliamentary system was going bankrupt.

“ In order to give its power greater security and stability, the bourgeoisie is to an increasing extent

forced to give up parliamentary in favour of fascist methods, which are independent of relations and combinations between the different political parties.” (Programme of the Communist International.)

The new fascist methods of government, the uncooled dictatorship, are required principally to destroy the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. The fascist dictatorship was established first in Italy, but the great imperialist powers are taking the same road. In Germany, for example, Brüning, with the help of the social democrats, has practically excluded parliament already, and is governing in virtue of paragraph 48 of the constitution; at the same time the masters of heavy industry, Hitler's financial backers, are preparing for a more complete form of dictatorship. Under Louis Bonaparte, the bourgeoisie for a time transferred to him the exercise of political power, but “ at times when the position is particularly critical for the bourgeoisie, fascism makes use of anti-capitalist phrases; no sooner, however, is its power assured, than it reveals itself as the terrorist dictatorship of capital and throws off its anti-capitalist trappings.” (Programme of the Communist International.)

Fascism is reaction on the offensive, a method to which the leading groups of the imperialist bourgeoisie resort, “ seriously and looking far ahead,” in order to defeat or to avoid the proletarian revolution.

A careful study of Bonapartism is particularly useful, however, in clarifying the nature of the “ anti-capitalist ” ideology of fascism. In order to facilitate his accession to power, Bonaparte fought against the parliamentary representatives of the bourgeoisie, defeated them and even introduced universal suffrage. Nevertheless, he represented the class interests of the big bourgeoisie, particularly the financial bourgeoisie of the time, which assisted him greatly, while the bourgeois deputies in parliament opposed his *coup d'état*. The circumstance that, for example, Mussolini and the Italian fascists fought against some

bourgeois groups in parliament does not in any way change the basic fact that fascism is bourgeois counter-revolution, that the big bourgeoisie plays the leading and decisive role in the fascist state and in the fascist movement. It would be a vulgar error to ascribe to the petty bourgeoisie a decisive role in that movement, because fascism fights against certain cliques of bourgeois politicians in parliament and has penetrated deeply into the masses of the petty bourgeoisie (this mistake was made by some Polish communists during the Pilsudski insurrection in May 1926). The fascist movement is controlled solely by the big bourgeoisie.

The ease with which Bonaparte put through his *coup d'état* can be explained only by the support given to him by the petty bourgeoisie and above all the peasantry. Bonaparte's victory was the result of a temporary alliance between the big and the petty bourgeoisie, forces normally hostile to each other, which, in the further course of history, during the Second Empire (1852-70), again took up the struggle against each other. Napoleon's election as President in 1848 was the result of the peasants' votes, but the history of the Second Empire shows that Bonaparte, while for a time he fulfilled the expectations of the big bourgeoisie, completely and shamefully disappointed the hopes of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

It is clear that the fascists, where they have gained control of the machinery of state, do nothing to improve the conditions of the petty bourgeois masses; indeed, their position grows worse, as that of the French peasantry grew worse under the rule of Napoleon III.

#### THE LESSONS OF THE 1848 REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

In the bourgeois democratic revolution, which was complicated by the action of the proletariat with its independent demands, the bourgeoisie, from the very first, adopted a counter-revolutionary attitude; in this lies the peculiarity of the 1848 Revolution. The same characteristic had been evident in former revolu-

tions, but it was only in 1848 that it appeared quite clearly and unmistakably. A further new feature of 1848 was the estrangement of the petty bourgeoisie, the dissolution of its *bloc* with the proletariat when the latter tried to go beyond the limits of a bourgeois democratic revolution. Finally, Bonapartism was no accident, but an inevitable stage in France's development from feudal monarchy to bourgeois republic. While the proletariat was not yet able to rule, the bourgeoisie—momentarily thrown out of gear by the proletarian offensive—lost its capacity to govern and for a time entrusted the reins of government to the sword, to the executive machinery of the State power. It was the treacherous behaviour of petty bourgeois opportunists of the type of Louis Blanc which made the proletariat realise that the hesitating, confused, cowardly attitude of the petty bourgeois leaders delivered the proletariat up to bourgeois reaction. The lesson of the 1848 Revolution in France is the necessity of the proletariat's hegemony over its ally, the peasantry; in their struggles in 1905 and 1917 the Bolshevik Party of Russia had this lesson clearly before them.

By taking part in the coalition government, Louis Blanc in 1848, like the leaders of the Mensheviks and social revolutionaries, Tseretelli and Chernov, in 1917, fulfilled the same function: they served as a cloak for a purely bourgeois policy. Their participation in the government was advantageous to the bourgeoisie, for it weakened the masses' distrust of the government and, among some workers, engendered the illusion that the socialist ministers would somehow or other be able to pass measures in the interest of the masses. The result was a division among the proletariat, a weakening of their capacity for struggle. In fact, the bourgeois government, both in France in 1848 and in Russia in 1917, pursued its own bourgeois policy, completely indifferent to any Louis Blanc or Tseretelli. The same motives impelled the German bourgeoisie, when it was found necessary to weaken the proletarian

mass movement, to call into the government social democratic ministers (as in 1923 and 1928, when the elections showed a strong move to the left). Once the bourgeoisie again felt secure, it threw the social democrats out of the government. That is what happened to Louis Blanc in 1848.<sup>1</sup>

### III. THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

#### GERMANY BEFORE THE REVOLUTION—THE QUESTION OF UNION

While France was being completely transformed into a bourgeois state, the other countries of Europe still presented many obstacles to the free development of capitalism. The February Revolution in Paris supplied a powerful impulse to other countries; a successful insurrection took place in Vienna, the capital of Austria, on March 13th, 1848, and on March 18th, in Berlin, the capital of Prussia.

A basic problem for the bourgeois revolution in the countries that form modern Germany was that of national union. Germany, since the seventeenth century, thrust out of the main currents of world trade, had split up into a number of petty states with different tariffs, different systems of coinage, weights and measures, different royal families, and varying relations with foreign states. In 1848 these states numbered thirty-six, including five kingdoms. Capitalism, for its development, demanded urgently the creation of a single national market, a unified government, and unity in foreign policy, freedom of movement for men

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the Paris Commune (1871), Louis Blanc remained at Versailles and supported the policy of the enemies of the commune. Similarly the German social democrats, even when not in the government, supported the bourgeoisie and helped to disarm and destroy workers' organisations. But while Louis Blanc merely cleared the way for Cavaignac's dictatorship, merely helped objectively the establishment of that dictatorship, Severing and Zörgiebel consciously and deliberately set about suppressing the revolutionary mass movement.

and goods, the abolition of inter-state customs barriers, and a unified tariff policy against the import of industrial commodities—for English manufactures were the chief enemy of the young German industry. Certain successes had already been achieved by the bourgeoisie in the direction of unification; in 1834 the Zollverein had been formed, but that was not a single tariff system covering the whole country; nor had the question of Germany's political unity been solved. The German nobility was closely connected with the ruling houses and deeply interested in the maintenance of their local privileges and rights.

To an even greater extent than France, Germany (we use the term only provisionally, since the unified German state did not yet exist) was a predominantly agricultural country. In France small peasant proprietorship was the prevailing form of land tenure, but in Germany large estates were usual, except in the south and west. As her industry developed, England needed larger and larger amounts of foreign grain, and here the East Prussian large estates found their opportunity; at first the statutory labour of the peasants was used, even though supplies were destined for the market. The labour of serfs, however, soon proved to be unprofitable for the landowner. Gradually, therefore, the peasants were liberated, although actually in Prussia and East Germany this emancipation merely changed them into agricultural labourers who, because the share of land allotted to them was so small, were more closely bound than ever to the neighbouring large estates, since their own holding could not furnish them with a livelihood.

The result of the reforms in the earlier part of the century was that, in the eastern provinces, in the second half of the nineteenth century, about 64 to 80 per cent. of the land was held by the large landowners. In buying his freedom from serfdom the peasant, in addition to making a money payment, surrendered from one-third to one-half of his holding. The transformation of feudal economy into capitalist agriculture

(Lenin distinguishes the "Prussian" type of farmer from the American type) proceeded slowly and, for the peasant masses, agonisingly. Still it would be incorrect to assume that the agrarian question in Germany was the most important question of the revolution, as it had been in the great French Revolution, or as it was in Russia before 1905. Capitalist agriculture was based in the east of Germany primarily on the ownership of large estates, and in the west on peasant economy—the chief obstacle in the way of its development was the lack of political unity. There were still many survivals of serfdom binding the peasants; consequently, despite the economic differences among themselves, they represented a fairly united body. Since, however, by their very circumstances, they were incapable of centralised and simultaneous action, they needed a class to lead them.

In contrast to the French nobility of the old régime, who lived on their parasitical income and themselves did nothing, the Prussian junker was a vigorous business man, a serious foe who energetically defended his power and his rents. Nevertheless the bourgeois revolution had good chances of success. In its struggle for national unity, for abolishing all the relics of serfdom and the privileges of the junkers, the German bourgeoisie was assured the support of large sections of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and the workers.

Small-scale industry was still very widespread, and the number of artisans very large. In 1846, for the 457,000 masters in Prussia, there were only 385,000 journeymen. The prevailing type was therefore the master who worked alone, but capitalist manufacture in a number of districts (Silesia and Saxony) was already supplanting the small producer, and turning him into a home-worker, brutally exploited by the manufacturer; such, for example, was the lot of the Silesian weavers. In the economically advanced Rhine province, large factories arose. In Prussia in 1846 there were about 79,000 concerns employing 551,000

workers. Within the boundaries of the Zollverein there were 313 spinning mills working 750,000 spindles. In Prussia in 1846 there were 497,000 spindles for woollen yarn and flax; there were 139,000 looms for cotton and mixed woollen weaving, of which 71,000 were in the workers' homes; in the same year in Prussia there were 1,139 steam engines with a total horse-power of 21,000, most of them employed in the mining industry. The productivity of these machines and factories was not very great—the four largest German cotton spinning mills at the beginning of the twentieth century produced as much as the entire 313 concerns in 1848—but nevertheless, Germany at that time was more developed industrially than France in 1789; large-scale industry and commerce were strong enough to conduct a successful struggle against the junkers.

The same process of industrial development also explains why the bourgeoisie delayed taking action. The France of 1789 was familiar with struggles between masters and workmen, between masters and merchants, but it was almost wholly ignorant of direct action by the workers against the capitalist employer. In Germany in the 'forties, on the other hand, sharp struggles between workers and capitalists had already occurred, such as the rising of the Silesian weavers in 1844, in which the bourgeoisie sought aid from the government. The relations between the big bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, which was seeking protection against the competition of machinery and large-scale undertakings, had already become dangerously strained. The independent small producer was being crushed out of existence, as was witnessed by the growing emigration to the United States, to which 430,000 people sailed during the 'forties, as compared with 150,000 for the previous thirty years.

The attitude of the German bourgeoisie, which objectively was interested in the development of the revolution, was influenced by the course of the class struggle beyond the German frontiers. The Chartist agitation in England, the growth of socialism and

communism in France, the appearance of the "fourth estate," filled the bourgeoisie with fear. It strove for power, it is true, but hoped to achieve it by peaceful compromise. But the victory of the Paris proletariat in February, 1848, acted like a flaming signal; the revolutionary action of the masses in Berlin suddenly thrust the Prussian bourgeoisie into power.

The revolutionary movement in south-west Germany began in the early days of March (in the industrial centres like Cologne the workers were the most active section, and put forward their own demands). On March 13th the revolution broke out in Vienna and was successful; on the same day clashes occurred between workers and the military in Berlin. On March 18th the fighters on the barricades of Berlin triumphed. The "working classes, which it had been the tendency of the bourgeoisie to keep in the background, had been pushed forward, had fought and conquered, and all at once were conscious of their strength." (Engels, *Revolution and Counter Revolution*.)<sup>1</sup>

The king was forced to remove the soldiery from the towns, to promise a constitution, and to form a new liberal cabinet under Camphausen and Hansemann, two wealthy business men from the Rhine.

The treachery of the bourgeoisie and the irresolution of the petty bourgeoisie led Marx, who, on the outbreak of the revolution, had immediately hastened from Brussels via Paris to Cologne, where he had published the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (June 1st, 1848 to May 19th, 1849), to resign from the district committee of the Rhenish Democratic Association; at the same time the Cologne Working Men's Association, of which Marx had been elected President in October 1848, seceded. "From the experience of the democratic revolution alone, Marx drew the practical conclusion of the necessity for the independent organisation of the party of the proletariat." (Lenin.)

<sup>1</sup> The English edition of this work carries the name of Marx, and the original was contributed by Marx to the *New York Tribune*. We know now from the Marx-Engels correspondence that it was written by Engels for Marx to use in this way.

The lessons of 1848, the necessity for the proletariat, if the bourgeois revolution is to be carried out to the end, to organise independently and to drive the bourgeois revolution forward until it assumed a proletarian character, was clearly formulated by Marx in 1850, in his famous address to the Communist League:

"If the February Revolution, with its repercussions in Germany, was welcomed by the Prussian bourgeoisie because it threw the rudder of state into their hands, at the same time it upset their calculations, for it made their rule dependent on conditions which they neither wished to, nor could, fulfil." (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, ii, 12, 1848.)

The March Revolution in Prussia, Austria, and the other German states brought the liberal bourgeoisie to power; it was given the opportunity of destroying the state apparatus and abolishing the old semi-feudal relations. The tactics of the German bourgeoisie, however, differed greatly from those of the French. In France, at least, the old dynasty had been overthrown in 1830, while in 1848, under popular pressure, the monarchy itself had been abolished and a republic proclaimed. In no German state did the bourgeoisie dare to destroy the power of the king, least of all in Prussia. All the old machinery of government was retained. While fighting was still going on around the barricades in Berlin, the bourgeoisie concluded an alliance with the defenders of the old order against the workers. Not a single military officer, not a single civil official was dismissed, and the bourgeoisie lacked the confidence to destroy what remained of feudal forms of rule. From the first days of the revolution the bourgeoisie was frightened by the events in Paris and the independent action of the workers; it feared that the Revolution of the masses might also deal a blow to bourgeois property relations.

"The German bourgeoisie," wrote Marx in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, "saw not only a class behind itself, but a hostile Europe in front."

Having achieved control of the ministry, the bourgeois leaders proclaimed themselves the "guardians of the dynasty," protected the existence of the monarchy to the limit of their powers, and concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the reactionaries. In fear that the revolution might be carried too far, the bourgeoisie renounced the support of their natural and most powerful ally, the peasantry.

"The peasantry in Prussia, as in Austria but with less energy, feudalism upon the whole pressing not quite so hardly upon them here, had profited by the revolution to free themselves at once from all feudal shackles. But here the middle classes at once turned against them, their oldest, their most indispensable allies . . . and thus, after three months' emancipation, after bloody struggles and military executions, feudalism was restored by the hands of the, until yesterday, anti-feudal bourgeoisie." (*Revolution and Counter Revolution*.)

A bill for the immediate abolition of statutory labour was rejected in the Prussian *Landtag* in August 1848.

No sooner had the people won their fight on the barricades than the bourgeoisie also turned against the workers. They were left without the franchise and disarmed. The attempt to obtain weapons by storming the arsenal in June, 1848, was defeated by the civil guard and government troops. The German bourgeoisie was driven further and further to the right. Marx wrote on December 15th, 1848:

"The crown will sacrifice the nobility to the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie will sacrifice the people to the crown."

But the liberal bourgeoisie had seriously miscalculated. The crown, by making a compromise with the

bourgeoisie which protected the monarchy from the masses, prepared the way for a return to the conditions existing before March.

So, too, the German social democrats, who came to power in November 1918, feared the socialist world revolution and Soviet Russia, as Camphausen and Hansemann had feared revolutionary Paris. They tried as hard as they could to protect capitalism, they compromised with the bourgeoisie, the old officers were allowed to keep their high posts in the army, the state apparatus was left under the control of the old officials. Like the liberal bourgeoisie in 1848, the social democrats in 1918, instead of destroying the old order, did everything in their power to protect the old ruling classes. The result was that the bourgeoisie, having been saved by the social democratic government, could rally its forces, and throw the social democrats aside—just as the Hohenzollerns, saved by the liberal bourgeoisie in the spring of 1848, threw them overboard in the winter of the same year. In both instances the compromise led to the defeat of the revolution; to the re-establishment of the monarchy in 1848, to the restoration of the political rule of the bourgeoisie in the Germany of the Weimar constitution.

It was not the Prussian bourgeoisie which took the initiative in the struggle for German national unity. There were various possible ways of establishing that unity. There was, for example, the formation of a little Germany (excluding Austria) under Prussian leadership. On the other hand Marx, Engels, and the more resolute democrats advocated a great German Republic, including both Prussia and Austria. But this comprehensive political and economic plan for union required, as an essential preliminary, the completion of the March Revolution, the overthrow of the Prussian monarchy and the power of the junkers. The petty bourgeois democrats of the south German states, adherents from the beginning of a federative republic which would maintain the existence of the small states, relics of semi-feudal forms of government,

were opposed to giving predominance to the Prussian monarchy. As the Prussian bourgeoisie would not break with the monarchy they consequently refused to take the lead in the struggle for German unity.

In March, 1848, the southern states took the initiative in convoking a preliminary parliament at Frankfurt, which decided to convene a national assembly: the national assembly opened on May 18th. The dominant group in this Frankfurt national parliament were the liberal bourgeois intellectuals. In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx and Engels sharply and continuously criticised the activities of the parliament. The national assembly wasted a number of sessions in discussing the agenda and then proceeded to discuss and draw up a constitution, instead of becoming a real organ of power, mobilising all the revolutionary forces in the country. The proceedings at Frankfurt revealed the utter imbecility of the political leaders of the liberal bourgeoisie, who made long-winded speeches on the formulation of the articles of the constitution, while the forces of reaction were gathering for a fresh attack. The national assembly feared the movement of the people more than anything else. The Frankfurt parliament made not the slightest attempt to call to its aid an armed people: it did not consider deposing a single prince, and did nothing at all to achieve the union of the different states. Even when the parliaments of Berlin and Vienna had been dissolved, the Frankfurt parliament continued to discuss and draw up a constitution.

#### THE COURSE OF THE REVOLUTION IN AUSTRIA

For Prussia the principal issue was German unity, but for Austria, composed of many different nationalities, the chief question, in addition to that of abolishing the semi-feudal relations which were more firmly rooted there than in Prussia, consisted in the separation of the different nationalities (Hungarians, Italians, Southern Slavs, Poles, Czechs, etc.), who had to be given autonomy or independence. This difference in the problems which had to be solved in the two coun-

tries which formed the vanguard of the movement created further difficulties for the German Revolution.

In Vienna itself the revolution assumed greater dimensions than in Berlin. After the March Revolution and the expulsion of Metternich, the leader of reactionary Europe, two insurrections broke out in Vienna in May 1848 during the struggle for universal franchise and on the occasion of an attempt to disarm the student bodies. Leadership in these movements was assumed by the petty bourgeois radicals, actively supported by the workers. After the successful insurrection of May 25th, universal suffrage was introduced and the emperor and his court fled from Vienna.

The defeat of the Paris workers in June marked the turning-point in the course of the 1848 Revolution. The counter-attack of the feudal forces began.

The Austrian monarchy, having recovered from its first shock and gained a breathing space by compromising with the liberal bourgeoisie, began to exploit national differences to strengthen its own position. The Slav movement in Bohemia was suppressed with the help of the Germans and Hungarians; the Italians (at that time Austria ruled in Lombardy, and as yet no unified Italian state existed) were defeated by the Hungarians and Slavs. The crown used the strong Slav detachments against the rising Hungarian Revolution and against revolutionary Vienna.

In the Slav areas (with the exception of Poland) capitalism was only slightly developed. The Austrian monarchy sought the support of these economically and politically backward Slav peoples by inciting them against the exploitation of Slav peasants by landowners of other nationalities. Thus in the Revolution of 1848 the Slav peoples, with the exception of the Poles, were in the camp of reaction and the Austrian monarchy was enabled to crush both the bourgeois revolution and the national revolutionary movement of the more advanced peoples in Austria, particularly the Hungarians.

Marx and Engels whole-heartedly supported those

movements for national unity of the different peoples, which were of a revolutionary character, such as the struggle of Poland and Hungary for independence. That is why they emphasised that, in the actual situation obtaining in 1848, the south Slavs were playing a reactionary part, that the Slav districts represented the Vendée of the German Revolution. Engels wrote :

“ No country in a state of revolution and involved in external war can tolerate a Vendée in its very heart.” (*Revolution and Counter Revolution.*)

The position taken up by Marx and Engels was not, of course, chauvinist or anti-Slav ; their passionate defence of Poland provides sufficient disproof of such a contention. They were concerned solely with the successful development of the Revolution, and in 1848 the south Slavs were the strongest pillar of reaction in the fight against the national and revolutionary movement.

Events came to a head in October : the democratic elements in Vienna (students, workers, and petty bourgeoisie) set themselves against the dispatch of troops from Vienna to suppress the Hungarian insurrection. On October 6th another insurrection broke out in Vienna. For the second time the emperor left the capital and, within three weeks, had gathered together an army of 60,000, mostly Slavs. In Vienna itself disunity reigned among the revolutionary forces. The bourgeoisie was afraid of the workers, whose demonstrations a few weeks previously had been broken up by the civil guard. The petty bourgeoisie, leading the insurrection, also distrusted the workers. The Hungarian Army did not lend its aid in time and, moreover, the Vienna bourgeoisie feared to call in the assistance of troops of another nationality. Nor was any effective support forthcoming from the democrats of Germany.

To the last day the Viennese fought with the utmost courage :

“ In many places the order given by Bem (commanding in Vienna) ‘ to defend that post to the last man ’ was carried out to the letter. But force prevailed. Barricade after barricade was swept away by the imperial artillery in the long and wide avenues which form the main streets of the suburbs ; and on the evening of the second day’s fighting, the Croats occupied the range of houses facing the glacis of the Old Town.” (*Revolution and Counter Revolution.*)

On November 1st Vienna fell.

#### THE DEFEAT OF THE REVOLUTION IN GERMANY

The defeat of revolutionary Vienna had the same effect as the suppression of the June insurrection in Paris. Throughout Germany, and particularly in Prussia, the reactionaries took the offensive ; on November 10th, 1848, the Prussian troops entered Berlin, and the Prussian national assembly was ordered to transfer its seat to the small town of Brandenburg. The bourgeoisie put up a very feeble resistance. On December 5th the Prussian national assembly was dissolved, and the old régime thus re-established.

In the spring of 1849 the revolutionary movement in Germany flared up again for the last time. Insurrections in Hungary developed most successfully, and it was not until Russian troops had been called in that the Hungarian revolutionary army was defeated. In Saxony and a few south German states risings again took place, led by petty bourgeois liberals. The formal origin of these struggles was concerned with the national constitution drawn up and accepted by the Frankfurt parliament, after a great deal of time had been wasted in prolonged and useless debate, in April 1849. It soon became clear that the liberal petty bourgeoisie was incapable of leading an armed revolutionary struggle as Engels contended it should be led.

“ Never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your

play. . . . The insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising, it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies." (*Revolution and Counter Revolution.*)

But the petty bourgeoisie was incapable of such determination. In their irresolution the petty bourgeois leaders failed to take advantage of favourable opportunities, and the united forces of reaction succeeded in quelling the insurrection.

The chief reason why the revolution was defeated was the absence of a class able to lead it, while the enemy still formed an economically powerful class of nobles.

Intimidated by the independent action of the French, rather than of the German, proletariat, the big bourgeoisie in Germany, as in all subsequent bourgeois democratic revolutions, immediately deserted the revolution, although its interests were bound up with its success. In none of these struggles did the peasantry play an active part, as they did in the great French Revolution. It is true that in Germany economic development had already eliminated to a large extent the relics of feudalism in the countryside. But the most important fact was that the proletariat was still too weak to create and to guide a peasant movement; the peasantry were betrayed by the bourgeoisie from the beginning. In the Russia of 1905, although feudalism had not survived to any greater extent than in the Germany of 1848, a peasant war broke out because the workers had stirred up the villages.

In Austria the national question was of great importance in 1848-9. But the Habsburgs made excellent use of national contradictions and prevented the revolutionary forces from uniting. Neither the Slavs nor the Hungarians understood the relation between the national and the social question, or the necessity of attacking and defeating the chief enemy,

Austrian feudalism, in unity. The masterly fashion in which Marx and Engels approached and analysed this problem deserves the most careful study. This same problem—the correct treatment of the national question from the standpoint of the proletarian revolution—is still of the utmost importance to-day. In the 1917 Russian Revolution the significance, to the proletarian revolution, of correct treatment of the national question was made abundantly clear. The October Revolution could not have maintained its victory if that question had not been properly handled. The unconditional recognition of the right to self-determination, the right to secession from the former tsarist empire and the creation of independent states, such as Esthonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, was an indispensable condition for the victory of the proletarian revolution, just as the correct solution of the national problem in the Soviet Union, after victory had been obtained, guarantees it a secure political foundation.

The urban petty bourgeoisie was much less active in Germany than in France fifty years earlier. Its economically reactionary nature grew evident with the development of capitalism. The action of the artisans was directed rather to the economic than to the political struggle, and their demands were of a reactionary character. The Congress of German Master Craftsmen, which was held in Frankfurt in July 1848, demanded the re-establishment of compulsory craft guilds, the prohibition of workshops maintained by the state and the municipalities, a special tax on factories, etc. A Congress of Journeymen, sitting at the same time, added to these demands another for the prohibition of marriage between persons without means: "The man who founds a new family must prove that he is able to feed it."

Even the politically active sections of the petty bourgeoisie did not advocate a united German Republic but were in favour of perpetuating the small states.

## MARX AND ENGELS IN THE REVOLUTION

The slogan of a united German Republic—the slogan whose realisation would undoubtedly have unleashed all the forces of revolution—was put forward and consistently maintained only in the paper founded by Marx and Engels immediately upon their return to Germany, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx and Engels did not consider the German Revolution in isolation, apart from the movement in the other countries of Europe. The Revolution of 1848, in its immediate tasks a bourgeois revolution, would, they hoped, develop into a socialist revolution. The German Revolution was only one link in the chain of general European revolution. It had to be extended and used as a battering-ram to destroy semi-feudal Europe, and above all Russia, “the last great stronghold of European reaction.” Consequently the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* called for war against Russia to restore the independence of Poland.

Judging by the experiences of the French Revolution in which war had been successfully conducted only because the extreme left Jacobins had won power, Marx and Engels believed that “war will place the fatherland in danger, but in doing that it will also save the fatherland,” and they thus made Germany’s victory dependent upon the victory of the extreme left wing of the revolutionary democracy within the country. A European war against Russian tsarism would mean the downfall of the Russian government and would necessarily have its effects in England, where great events were taking place. The revolution without England would be but a storm in a tea-cup. War would give the Chartists the opportunity of successful struggle, and once the Chartists won power, the real socialist revolution would begin. Thus the victorious extension of the German bourgeois revolution would create favourable conditions for the beginning of the socialist revolution in England and then in France. Marx and Engels later recognised that their estimate of the socialist potentiality of the 1848

Revolution was incorrect. Only such tactics as they proposed could then have accomplished a fundamental bourgeois revolution in Germany. But in Germany there was no class to lead the revolution along the road they thus pointed out.

The growing working-class movement in Germany, the formation of “workers’ brotherhoods,” was led by members of the Communist League, especially by Stephan Born. In the political struggle the workers’ brotherhoods did not, for the most part, take up an independent attitude; they confined themselves to the economic field, putting forward the demand for a ten-hour day, together with a number of petty bourgeois Utopian demands, such as the formation of credit banks to help producers’ co-operatives. Their statutes included one point which stated that “our interests coincide with the interests of the capitalists. Like them we thirst for peace.”

Marx and Engels, who understood the decisive role to be played by the proletariat in carrying further the bourgeois revolution, recognised that it could not be restricted to making narrow, purely economic demands, diverting the proletariat from its main political object. Lenin, who on the eve of the 1905 Revolution very carefully studied the Marxist tactics of 1848, contrasted them with those of Stephan Born and pointed out how right Marx was in directing the attention of the proletariat to its fundamental political tasks in the rising revolution, while Born, by failing to do so, condemned the proletariat to wandering after the bourgeoisie. The Russian Bolsheviks were trying to continue Marx’s tactics when in 1905 they fought for the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution, while the Mensheviks, as Lenin said, followed Stephan Born and tried their utmost to narrow down the tasks of the proletariat.

The efforts made by Marx and Engels, after their return to Germany in 1848, to found a proletarian revolutionary party were unsuccessful. They began with publishing the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, an organ of democracy; Marx became a member of the Demo-

cratic Committee at Cologne. He and Engels considered that the independent organisation of the proletariat would come gradually with the development of the revolution, just as in the course of the great French Revolution, to the experiences of which alone they could refer, the Jacobin wing had gradually come into existence. They regarded it as their chief task to urge on the democratic elements, to help bring about war against tsarist Russia and thus hasten the seizure of power by the German Jacobins. The economic and political backwardness of Germany in 1848 explains why Marx and Engels could not count on the support of an independent party.

Marx hoped that the next wave of the revolution would bring the petty bourgeois democrats to power. It was necessary for the workers, who should support the democrats, to watch with mistrust, from the first moment of victory, their petty bourgeois allies. The democratic organisation must be superseded by the party of the proletariat. By abolishing feudalism the democrats would establish small peasant proprietorship, but the village proletariat would continue to exist. If the village bourgeoisie is the ally of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat, in order to protect the interests of the agricultural labourer, must demand the nationalisation of the land. In any case the workers must take up an independent class attitude and not be caught for a moment by the hypocritical phrases of petty bourgeois democrats. Their fighting slogan must be "the permanent revolution."<sup>1</sup> The conclusions drawn by Marx from the experiences of 1848 became the basis of Lenin's teaching on the tasks of the proletariat in the bourgeois democratic revolution.<sup>2</sup>

"It is our job . . . to drive the bourgeois revolution forward as far as possible, without ever forgetting our main task—the independent organisation of the proletariat." (Lenin.)

<sup>1</sup> See Stalin, *Leninism*, p. 17, and elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> Marx recapitulated these conclusions in agitational form in the *Address to the Communist League of March 1850*. A translation was printed in the *Communist Review* of February 1926. It should be studied carefully.

## IV. TEST QUESTIONS

1. How does scientific differ from Utopian socialism?
2. What was the character of the 1848 Revolution in France?
3. Why did the urban petty bourgeoisie not play, in 1848, the part it had played in 1789?
4. Why did Lenin recall in 1917 the experiences of the proletariat in regard to Louis Blanc?
5. What are the causes and the nature of Bonapartism?
6. What were the tasks of the bourgeois Revolution in Germany?
7. What were the causes of the defeat of the 1848 Revolution in Germany?
8. What lessons did Marx draw from the 1848 Revolution?