

## Frederick Engels

### PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM<sup>155</sup>

*Question 1:* What is communism?

*Answer:* Communism is the doctrine of the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

*Question 2:* What is the proletariat?

*Answer:* The proletariat is that class of society which procures its means of livelihood entirely and solely from the sale of its labour<sup>156</sup> and not from the profit derived from any capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence depend on the demand for labour, hence, on the alternation of times of good and bad business, on the fluctuations resulting from unbridled competition. The proletariat, or class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the nineteenth century.

*Question 3:* Then there have not always been proletarians?

*Answer:* No. Poor folk and working classes have always existed,<sup>157</sup> and the working classes have for the most part been poor. But such poor, such workers who live under the conditions just stated, that is, proletarians, have not always existed, any more than competition has always been free and unbridled.

*Question 4:* How did the proletariat arise?

*Answer:* The proletariat arose as a result of the industrial revolution which took place in England in the latter half of the last century and which has repeated itself since then in all the civilised countries of the world. This industrial revolution was brought about by the invention of the steam-engine, of various spinning machines, of the power-loom, and of a great number of other mechanical devices. These machines which were very expensive and, consequently, could only be purchased by big capitalists, changed the entire

hitherto existing mode of production and supplanted the former workers because machines produced cheaper and better commodities than could the workers with their imperfect spinning-wheels and hand-looms. Thus, these machines delivered industry entirely into the hands of the big capitalists and rendered the workers' scanty property (tools, looms, etc.) quite worthless, so that the capitalists soon had their hands on everything and the workers were left with nothing. In this way the factory system was introduced into the manufacture of clothing materials.—Once the impetus had been given to the introduction of machinery and the factory system, this system was soon applied to all the other branches of industry, notably the calico and book-printing trades, pottery, and hardware industry. There was more and more division of labour among the individual workers, so that the worker who formerly had made a whole article now produced only a part of it. This division of labour made it possible to supply products more speedily and therefore more cheaply. It reduced the activity of each worker to a very simple, constantly repeated mechanical operation, which could be performed not only just as well but even much better by a machine. In this way, all these branches of industry came one after another under the domination of steam-power, machinery, and the factory system, just like spinning and weaving. But they thus fell at the same time completely into the hands of the big capitalists, and here too the workers were deprived of the last shred of independence. Gradually, in addition to actual manufacture, the handicrafts likewise fell increasingly under the domination of the factory system, for here also the big capitalists more and more supplanted the small craftsmen by the establishment of large workshops, in which many savings on costs can be made and there can be a very high division of labour. Thus we have now reached the point when in the civilised countries almost all branches of labour are carried on under the factory system, and in almost all branches handicraft and manufacture have been ousted by large-scale industry.—As a result, the former middle classes, especially the smaller master handicraftsmen, have been increasingly ruined, the former position of the workers has been completely changed, and two new classes which are gradually swallowing up all other classes have come into being, namely:

- I. The class of big capitalists who already now in all civilised countries almost exclusively own all the means of subsistence and the raw materials and instruments (machinery, factories, etc.), needed for the production of these means of subsistence. This class is the bourgeois class or the bourgeoisie.

II. The class of the completely propertyless, who are compelled therefore to sell their labour to the bourgeois in order to obtain the necessary means of subsistence in exchange. This class is called the class of the proletarians or the proletariat.

*Question 5:* Under what conditions does this sale of the labour of the proletarians to the bourgeois take place?

*Answer:* Labour is a commodity like any other and its price is determined by the same laws as that of any other commodity. The price of a commodity under the domination of large-scale industry or of free competition, which, as we shall see, comes to the same thing, is on the average always equal to the cost of production of that commodity. The price of labour is, therefore, likewise equal to the cost of production of labour. The cost of production of labour consists precisely of the amount of the means of subsistence required for the worker to maintain himself in a condition in which he is capable of working and to prevent the working class from dying out. Therefore, the worker will not receive for his labour any more than is necessary for that purpose; the price of labour, or wages, will be the lowest, the minimum required for subsistence. Since business is now worse, now better, the worker will receive now more, now less, just as the factory owner receives now more, now less for his commodity. But just as on the average between good times and bad the factory owner receives for his commodity neither more nor less than the cost of its production, so also the worker will on the average receive neither more nor less than this minimum. This economic law of wages will come to be more stringently applied the more all branches of labour are taken over by large-scale industry.

*Question 6:* What working classes existed before the industrial revolution?

*Answer:* Depending on the different stages of the development of society, the working classes lived in different conditions and stood in different relations to the possessing and ruling classes. In ancient times the working people were the *slaves* of their owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States. In the Middle Ages they were the *serfs* of the landowning nobility, just as they still are in Hungary, Poland, and Russia. In the Middle Ages and up to the industrial revolution there were in the towns also journeymen in the service of petty-bourgeois craftsmen, and with the development of manufacture there gradually emerged manufactory workers, who were already employed by the bigger capitalists.

*Question 7:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the slave?

*Answer:* The slave is sold once and for all, the proletarian has to sell

himself by the day and by the hour. Being the property of *one* master, the individual slave has, since it is in the interest of this master, a guaranteed subsistence, however wretched it may be; the individual proletarian, the property, so to speak, of the whole bourgeois *class*, whose labour is only bought from him when somebody needs it, has no guaranteed subsistence. This subsistence is guaranteed only to the proletarian *class* as a whole. The slave stands outside competition, the proletarian stands within it and feels all its fluctuations. The slave is accounted a thing, not a member of civil society; the proletarian is recognised as a person, as a member of civil society. Thus, the slave may have a better subsistence than the proletarian, but the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of development of society and himself stands at a higher stage than the slave. The slave frees himself by abolishing, among all the private property relationships, only the relationship of slavery and thereby only then himself becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

*Question 8:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the serf?

*Answer:* The serf has the possession and use of an instrument of production, a piece of land, in return for handing over a portion of the yield or for the performance of work. The proletarian works with instruments of production belonging to another person for the benefit of this other person in return for receiving a portion of the yield. The serf gives, to the proletarian is given. The serf has a guaranteed subsistence, the proletarian has not. The serf stands outside competition, the proletarian stands within it. The serf frees himself either by running away to the town and there becoming a handicraftsman or by giving his landlord money instead of labour and products and becoming a free tenant; or by driving out his feudal lord and himself becoming a proprietor, in short, by entering in one way or another into the possessing class and competition. The proletarian frees himself by doing away with competition, private property and all class distinctions.

*Question 9:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the handicraftsman?<sup>a</sup>

*Question 10:* In what way does the proletarian differ from the manufactory worker?

*Answer:* The manufactory worker of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries almost everywhere still owned an instrument of production, his loom, the family spinning-wheels, and a little plot of

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<sup>a</sup> Half a page is left blank by Engels in the manuscript. The answer is in the "Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith" (see this volume, p. 101).—*Ed.*

land which he cultivated in his leisure hours. The proletarian has none of these things. The manufactory worker lives almost always in the country and in more or less patriarchal relations with his landlord or his employer; the proletarian lives mostly in large towns, and stands to his employer in a purely money relationship. The manufactory worker is torn up from his patriarchal relations by large-scale industry, loses the property he still has and thereby only then himself becomes a proletarian.

*Question 11:* What were the immediate results of the industrial revolution and the division of society into bourgeois and proletarians?

*Answer:* *Firstly*, owing to the continual cheapening of the price of industrial products as a result of machine labour, the old system of manufacture or industry founded upon manual labour was completely destroyed in all countries of the world. All semi-barbarian countries, which until now had been more or less outside historical development and whose industry had until now been based on manufacture, were thus forcibly torn out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and let their own manufactory workers go to ruin. Thus countries that for thousands of years had made no progress, for example India, were revolutionised through and through, and even China is now marching towards a revolution. It has reached the point that a new machine invented today in England, throws millions of workers in China out of work within a year. Large-scale industry has thus brought all the peoples of the earth into relationship with one another, thrown all the small local markets into the world market, prepared the way everywhere for civilisation and progress, and brought it about that everything that happens in the civilised countries must have its repercussions on all other countries. So if now in England or France the workers liberate themselves, this must lead to revolutions in all other countries, which sooner or later will also bring about the liberation of the workers in those countries.

*Secondly*, wherever large-scale industry replaced manufacture, the industrial revolution developed the bourgeoisie, its wealth and its power, to the highest degree and made it the first class in the land. The result was that wherever this happened, the bourgeoisie obtained political power and ousted the hitherto ruling classes—the aristocracy, the guild-burghers and the absolute monarchy representing both. The bourgeoisie annihilated the power of the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing entails or the ban on the sale of landed property, and all privileges of the nobility. It destroyed the power of the guild-burghers by abolishing all guilds and craft privileges. In

place of both it put free competition, that is, a state of society in which everyone has the right to engage in any branch of industry he likes, and where nothing can hinder him in carrying it on except lack of the necessary capital. The introduction of free competition is therefore the public declaration that henceforward the members of society are only unequal in so far as their capital is unequal, that capital has become the decisive power and therefore the capitalists, the bourgeois, have become the first class in society. But free competition is necessary for the beginning of large-scale industry since it is the only state of society in which large-scale industry can grow. The bourgeoisie having thus annihilated the social power of the nobility and the guild-burghers, annihilated their political power as well. Having become the first class in society, the bourgeoisie proclaimed itself also the first class in the political sphere. It did this by establishing the representative system, which rests upon bourgeois equality before the law and the legal recognition of free competition, and which in European countries was introduced in the form of constitutional monarchy. Under these constitutional monarchies those only are electors who possess a certain amount of capital, that is to say, the bourgeois; these bourgeois electors elect the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies, by means of the right to refuse taxes, elect a bourgeois government.

*Thirdly*, the industrial revolution built up the proletariat in the same measure in which it built up the bourgeoisie. In the same proportion in which the bourgeois became wealthier, the proletarians became more numerous. For since proletarians can only be employed by capital and since capital only increases when it employs labour, the growth of the proletariat keeps exact pace with the growth of capital. At the same time it concentrates the bourgeois as well as the proletarians in large cities, in which industry can most profitably be carried on, and through this throwing together of great masses in *one* place it makes the proletarians conscious of their power. Further, the more it develops, the more machines are invented which displace manual labour, the more large-scale industry, as we already said, depresses wages to their minimum, and thereby makes the condition of the proletariat more and more unbearable. Thus, through the growing discontent of the proletariat, on the one hand, and through its growing power, on the other, the industrial revolution prepares a social revolution by the proletariat.

*Question 12:* What were the further results of the industrial revolution?

*Answer:* In the steam-engine and the other machines large-scale industry created the means of increasing industrial production in a

short time and at slight expense to an unlimited extent. With this facility of production the free competition necessarily resulting from large-scale industry very soon assumed an extremely intense character; numbers of capitalists launched into industry, and very soon more was being produced than could be used. The result was that the goods manufactured could not be sold, and a so-called trade crisis ensued. Factories had to stand idle, factory owners went bankrupt, and the workers lost their bread. Everywhere there was the greatest misery. After a while the surplus products were sold, the factories started working again, wages went up, and gradually business was more brisk than ever. But before long too many commodities were again produced, another crisis ensued, and ran the same course as the previous one. Thus since the beginning of this century the state of industry has continually fluctuated between periods of prosperity and periods of crisis, and almost regularly every five to seven years a similar crisis has occurred,<sup>158</sup> and every time it has entailed the greatest misery for the workers, general revolutionary ferment, and the greatest danger to the entire existing system.

*Question 13:* What conclusions can be drawn from these regularly recurring trade crises?

*Answer:* *Firstly*, that although in the initial stages of its development large-scale industry itself created free competition, it has now nevertheless outgrown free competition; that competition and in general the carrying on of industrial production by individuals have become a fetter upon large-scale industry which it must and will break; that large-scale industry, so long as it is conducted on its present basis, can only survive through a general confusion repeating itself every seven years which each time threatens all civilisation, not merely plunging the proletarians into misery but also ruining a great number of bourgeois; therefore that either large-scale industry itself must be given up, which is utterly impossible, or that it absolutely necessitates a completely new organisation of society, in which industrial production is no longer directed by individual factory owners, competing one against the other, but by the whole of society according to a fixed plan and according to the needs of all.

*Secondly*, that large-scale industry and the unlimited expansion of production which it makes possible can bring into being a social order in which so much of all the necessities of life will be produced that every member of society will thereby be enabled to develop and exercise all his powers and abilities in perfect freedom. Thus, precisely that quality of large-scale industry which in present society

produces all misery and all trade crises is the very quality which under a different social organisation will destroy that same misery and these disastrous fluctuations.

Thus it is most clearly proved:

1. that from now on all these ills are to be attributed only to the social order which no longer corresponds to the existing conditions;
2. that the means are available to abolish these ills completely through a new social order.

*Question 14:* What kind of new social order will this have to be?

*Answer:* Above all, it will have to take the running of industry and all branches of production in general out of the hands of separate individuals competing with each other and instead will have to ensure that all these branches of production are run by society as a whole, i.e., for the social good, according to a social plan and with the participation of all members of society. It will therefore do away with competition and replace it by association. Since the running of industry by individuals had private ownership as its necessary consequence and since competition is nothing but the manner in which industry is run by individual private owners, private ownership cannot be separated from the individual running of industry and competition. Hence, private ownership will also have to be abolished, and in its stead there will be common use of all the instruments of production and the distribution of all products by common agreement, or the so-called community of property. The abolition of private ownership is indeed the most succinct and characteristic summary of the transformation of the entire social system necessarily following from the development of industry, and it is therefore rightly put forward by the Communists as their main demand.

*Question 15:* The abolition of private property was therefore not possible earlier?

*Answer:* No. Every change in the social order, every revolution in property relations, has been the necessary result of the creation of new productive forces which would no longer conform to the old property relations. Private property itself arose in this way. For private property has not always existed, but when towards the end of the Middle Ages a new mode of production appeared in the form of manufacture which could not be subordinated to the then existing feudal and guild property, manufacture, having outgrown the old property relations, created a new form of ownership—private ownership. For manufacture and the first stage of development of large-scale industry, no other form of ownership was possible than private ownership and no other order of society than that founded



upon private ownership. So long as it is not possible to produce so much that not only is there enough for all, but also a surplus for the increase of social capital and for the further development of the productive forces, so long must there always be a ruling class disposing of the productive forces of society, and a poor, oppressed class. How these classes are composed will depend upon the stage of development of production. In the Middle Ages, which were dependent upon agriculture, we find the lord and the serf; the towns of the later Middle Ages show us the master guildsman and the journeyman and day labourer; the seventeenth century has the manufacturer and the manufactory worker; the nineteenth century the big factory owner and the proletarian. It is obvious that hitherto the productive forces had not yet been so far developed that enough could be produced for all or to make private property a fetter, a barrier, to these productive forces. Now, however, when the development of large-scale industry has, *firstly*, created capital and productive forces on a scale hitherto unheard of and the means are available to increase these productive forces in a short time to an infinite extent; when, *secondly*, these productive forces are concentrated in the hands of a few bourgeois whilst the great mass of the people are more and more becoming proletarians, and their condition more wretched and unendurable in the same measure in which the riches of the bourgeois increase; when, *thirdly*, these powerful productive forces that can easily be increased have so enormously outgrown private property and the bourgeois that at every moment they provoke the most violent disturbances in the social order—only now has the abolition of private property become not only possible but even absolutely necessary.

*Question 16:* Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?

*Answer:* It is to be desired that this could happen, and Communists certainly would be the last to resist it. The Communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only futile but even harmful. They know only too well that revolutions are not made deliberately and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and at all times they have been the necessary outcome of circumstances entirely independent of the will and the leadership of particular parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat is in nearly every civilised country forcibly suppressed, and that thus the opponents of the Communists are working with all their might towards a revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat in the end be goaded into a revolution, we Communists will then defend

the cause of the proletarians by deed just as well as we do now by word.

*Question 17:* Will it be possible to abolish private property at one stroke?

*Answer:* No, such a thing would be just as impossible as at *one* stroke to increase the existing productive forces to the degree necessary for instituting community of property. Hence, the proletarian revolution, which in all probability is impending, will transform existing society only gradually, and be able to abolish private property only when the necessary quantity of the means of production has been created.

*Question 18:* What will be the course of this revolution?

*Answer:* In the first place it will inaugurate a *democratic constitution* and thereby, directly or indirectly, the political rule of the proletariat. Directly in England, where the proletariat already constitutes the majority of the people. Indirectly in France and in Germany, where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians but also of small peasants and urban petty bourgeois, who are only now being proletarianised and in all their political interests are becoming more and more dependent on the proletariat and therefore soon will have to conform to the demands of the proletariat. This will perhaps involve a second fight, but one that can end only in the victory of the proletariat.

Democracy would be quite useless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means of carrying through further measures directly attacking private ownership and securing the means of subsistence of the proletariat. Chief among these measures, already made necessary by the existing conditions, are the following:

1. Limitation of private ownership by means of progressive taxation, high inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance by collateral lines (brothers, nephews, etc.), compulsory loans and so forth.

2. Gradual expropriation of landed proprietors, factory owners, railway and shipping magnates, partly through competition on the part of state industry and partly directly through compensation in assignments.

3. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels against the majority of the people.

4. Organisation of the labour or employment of the proletarians on national estates, in national factories and workshops, thereby putting an end to competition among the workers themselves and compelling the factory owners, as long as they still exist, to pay the same increased wages as the State.

5. Equal liability to work for all members of society until complete abolition of private ownership. Formation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

6. Centralisation of the credit and banking systems in the hands of the State by means of a national bank with state capital and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.

7. Increase of national factories, workshops, railways, and ships, cultivation of all uncultivated land and improvement of land already cultivated in the same proportion in which the capital and workers at the disposal of the nation increase.

8. Education of all children, as soon as they are old enough to do without the first maternal care, in national institutions and at the expense of the nation. Education combined with production.

9. The erection of large palaces on national estates as common dwellings for communities of citizens engaged in industry as well as agriculture, and combining the advantages of both urban and rural life without the one-sidedness and disadvantages of either.

10. The demolition of all insanitary and badly built dwellings and town districts.

11. Equal right of inheritance to be enjoyed by illegitimate and legitimate children.

12. Concentration of all means of transport in the hands of the nation.

Of course, all these measures cannot be carried out at once. But one will always lead on to the other. Once the first radical onslaught upon private ownership has been made, the proletariat will see itself compelled to go always further, to concentrate all capital, all agriculture, all industry, all transport, and all exchange more and more in the hands of the State. All these measures work towards such results; and they will become realisable and will develop their centralising consequences in the same proportion in which the productive forces of the country will be multiplied by the labour of the proletariat. Finally, when all capital, all production, and all exchange are concentrated in the hands of the nation, private ownership will automatically have ceased to exist, money will have become superfluous, and production will have so increased and men will be so much changed that the last forms of the old social relations will also be able to fall away.

*Question 19:* Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?

*Answer:* No. Large-scale industry, already by creating the world market, has so linked up all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilised peoples, that each people is dependent on what happens

to another. Further, in all civilised countries large-scale industry has so levelled social development that in all these countries the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have become the two decisive classes of society and the struggle between them the main struggle of the day. The communist revolution will therefore be no merely national one; it will be a revolution taking place simultaneously in all civilised countries, that is, at least in England, America, France and Germany.<sup>159</sup> In each of these countries it will develop more quickly or more slowly according to whether the country has a more developed industry, more wealth, and a more considerable mass of productive forces. It will therefore be slowest and most difficult to carry out in Germany, quickest and easiest in England. It will also have an important effect upon the other countries of the world, and will completely change and greatly accelerate their previous manner of development. It is a worldwide revolution and will therefore be worldwide in scope.

*Question 20:* What will be the consequences of the final abolition of private ownership?

*Answer:* Above all, through society's taking out of the hands of the private capitalists the use of all the productive forces and means of communication as well as the exchange and distribution of products and managing them according to a plan corresponding to the means available and the needs of the whole of society, all the evil consequences of the present running of large-scale industry will be done away with. There will be an end of crises; the extended production, which under the present system of society means overproduction and is such a great cause of misery, will then not even be adequate and will have to be expanded much further. Instead of creating misery, overproduction beyond the immediate needs of society will mean the satisfaction of the needs of all, create new needs and at the same time the means to satisfy them. It will be the condition and the cause of new advances, and it will achieve these advances without thereby, as always hitherto, bringing the order of society into confusion. Once liberated from the pressure of private ownership, large-scale industry will develop on a scale that will make its present level of development seem as paltry as seems the manufacturing system compared with the large-scale industry of our time. This development of industry will provide society with a sufficient quantity of products to satisfy the needs of all. Similarly agriculture, which is also hindered by the pressure of private ownership and the parcelling of land from introducing the improvements already available and scientific advancements, will be given a quite new impulse, and place at society's disposal an

ample quantity of products. Thus society will produce enough products to be able so to arrange distribution that the needs of all its members will be satisfied. The division of society into various antagonistic classes will thereby become superfluous. Not only will it become superfluous, it is even incompatible with the new social order. Classes came into existence through the division of labour and the division of labour in its hitherto existing form will entirely disappear. For in order to bring industrial and agricultural production to the level described, mechanical and chemical aids alone are not enough; the abilities of the people who set these aids in motion must also be developed to a corresponding degree. Just as in the last century the peasants and the manufactory workers changed their entire way of life, and themselves became quite different people when they were drawn into large-scale industry, so also will the common management of production by the whole of society and the resulting new development of production require and also produce quite different people. The common management of production cannot be effected by people as they are today, each one being assigned to a single branch of production, shackled to it, exploited by it, each having developed only *one* of his abilities at the cost of all the others and knowing only *one* branch, or only a branch of a branch of the total production. Even present-day industry finds less and less use for such people. Industry carried on in common and according to plan by the whole of society presupposes moreover people of all-round development, capable of surveying the entire system of production. Thus the division of labour making one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stockjobber, which has already been undermined by machines, will completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to go through the whole system of production, it will enable them to pass from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will therefore free them from that one-sidedness which the present division of labour stamps on each one of them. Thus the communist organisation of society will give its members the chance of an all-round exercise of abilities that have received all-round development. With this, the various classes will necessarily disappear. Thus the communist organisation of society is, on the one hand, incompatible with the existence of classes and, on the other, the very establishment of this society furnishes the means to do away with these class differences.

It follows from this that the antagonism between town and country will likewise disappear. The carrying on of agriculture and industrial production by the same people, instead of by two different classes, is

already for purely material reasons an essential condition of communist association. The scattering of the agricultural population over the countryside, along with the crowding of the industrial population into the big towns, is a state which corresponds only to an undeveloped stage of agriculture and industry, an obstacle to all further development which is already now making itself very keenly felt.

The general association of all members of society for the common and planned exploitation of the productive forces, the expansion of production to a degree where it will satisfy the needs of all, the termination of the condition where the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of others, the complete annihilation of classes and their antagonisms, the all-round development of the abilities of all the members of society through doing away with the hitherto existing division of labour, through industrial education, through change of activity, through the participation of all in the enjoyments provided by all, through the merging of town and country—such are the main results of the abolition of private property.

*Question 21:* What influence will the communist order of society have upon the family?

*Answer:* It will make the relation between the sexes a purely private relation which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society has no call to interfere. It is able to do this because it abolishes private property and educates children communally, thus destroying the twin foundation of hitherto existing marriage—the dependence through private property of the wife upon the husband and of the children upon the parents. Here also is the answer to the outcry of moralising philistines against the communist community of women. Community of women is a relationship that belongs altogether to bourgeois society and is completely realised today in prostitution. But prostitution is rooted in private property and falls with it. Thus instead of introducing the community of women, communist organisation puts an end to it.

*Question 22:* What will be the attitude of the communist organisation towards existing nationalities?

—remains<sup>a</sup>

*Question 23:* What will be its attitude towards existing religions?

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<sup>a</sup> Apparently this means that the answer remains the same as to Question 21 of the “Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith”. See this volume, p. 103.—*Ed.*

<sup>b</sup> See answer to Question 22 of the “Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith”, this volume, p. 103.—*Ed.*

*Question 24:* In what way do Communists differ from socialists?

*Answer:* The so-called socialists fall into three groups.

The first group consists of adherents of feudal and patriarchal society which has been or is still being daily destroyed by large-scale industry, world trade and the bourgeois society they have both brought into existence. From the ills of present-day society this group draws the conclusion that feudal and patriarchal society should be restored because it was free from these ills. Directly or deviously, all its proposals make for this goal. Despite all its professions of sympathy and its bewailing the misery of the proletariat, this group of *reactionary* socialists will be strongly opposed by the Communists, because

1. it is striving after something utterly impossible;

2. it seeks to establish the rule of the aristocracy, the guild-masters and the manufacturers, with their retinue of absolute or feudal monarchs, officials, soldiers and priests, a society which was indeed free from the vices of present society, but brought at least as many other evils in its train and did not even hold out the prospect of the emancipation of the oppressed workers through a communist organisation;

3. it always gives away its real intentions every time the proletariat becomes revolutionary and communist, when it immediately allies itself with the bourgeoisie against the proletarians.

The second group consists of adherents of present society in whom the evils inseparable from it have awakened fears for its survival. They therefore endeavour to preserve present society but to remove the evils bound up with it. With this end in view, some of them propose measures of mere charity, and others grandiose systems of reform which, under the pretext of reorganising society, would retain the foundations of present society, and thus present society itself. These *bourgeois socialists* will also have to be continuously fought by the Communists, since they work for the enemies of the Communists and defend the society which it is the Communists' aim to destroy.

Finally, the third group consists of democratic socialists, who in the same way as the Communists desire part of the measures listed in Question ...<sup>a</sup> not, however, as a means of transition to communism but as measures sufficient to abolish the misery of present society and to cause its evils to disappear. These *democratic socialists* are either proletarians who are not yet sufficiently enlightened regarding the conditions of the emancipation of their class, or they are

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<sup>a</sup> The manuscript has a blank space here. See answer to Question 18.—Ed.

members of the petty bourgeoisie, a class which, until the winning of democracy and the realisation of the socialist measures following upon it, has in many respects the same interest as the proletariat. At moments of action the Communists will, therefore, have to reach an understanding with these democratic socialists, and in general for the time being pursue as much as possible a common policy with them, insofar as these democratic socialists do not enter the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and attack the Communists. It is obvious that this common action does not exclude the discussion of differences with them.

*Question 25:* What is the attitude of the Communists towards the other political parties of our day?

*Answer:* This attitude differs from country to country.—In England, France, and Belgium, where the bourgeoisie rules, the Communists still have for the time being a common interest with the various democratic parties, which is all the greater the more in the socialist measures they are now everywhere advocating the democrats approach the aims of the Communists, that is, the more clearly and definitely they uphold the interests of the proletariat and the more they rely on the proletariat. In *England*, for instance, the Chartists, who are all workers, are incalculably nearer to the Communists than are the democratic petty bourgeois or so-called radicals.

In *America*, where a democratic constitution has been introduced, the Communists must make common cause with the party that will turn this constitution against the bourgeoisie and use it in the interest of the proletariat, that is, with the national agrarian reformers.<sup>160</sup>

In *Switzerland* the radicals, although still a very mixed party, are yet the only people with whom the Communists can have anything to do, and, further, among these radicals those in the cantons of Vaud and of Geneva are the most advanced.

Finally, in *Germany* the decisive struggle between the bourgeoisie and the absolute monarchy is still to come. Since, however, the Communists cannot count on the decisive struggle between themselves and the bourgeoisie until the bourgeoisie rules, it is in the interests of the Communists to help bring the bourgeoisie to power as soon as possible in order as soon as possible to overthrow them again. The Communists must therefore always take the side of the liberal bourgeois against the governments but they must ever be on their guard against sharing the self-deceptions of the bourgeois or believing their false assurances about the benefits which the victory of the bourgeoisie will bring to the proletariat. The only advantages which the victory of the bourgeoisie will provide for the Communists



will be: 1. various concessions which make easier for the Communists the defence, discussion and spreading of their principles and thus the unification of the proletariat into a closely knit, militant and organised class, and 2. the certainty that from the day when the absolute governments fall, comes the turn for the fight between bourgeois and proletarians. From that day onwards the party policy of the Communists will be the same as in the countries where the bourgeoisie already rules.

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