

Lenin Rediscovered: What Is To Be Done? in Context

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Chapter 1: The Merger of Socialism and the Worker Movement

Anyone reading Lenin's early writings will often run across the formula 'Social Democracy is the merger of socialism and the worker movement.' At one point he describes this formula as 'Karl Kautsky's expression that reproduces the basic ideas of the Communist Manifesto'.! In this way, Lenin draws a link between what for him were two foundational books: the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels (1848) and the Erfurt Programme by Karl Kautsky (1891). So important were these books to the young Lenin that he translated both of them into Russian (unfortunately, neither translation survives).?

We shall follow Lenin's lead and describe developments from the 1840s to the 1890s with the merger formula as unifying theme. The aim is not so much to advance a particular interpretation of the history of nineteenth-century Marxist socialism as to bring out how Lenin and others of his generation saw this history. The merger formula is a condensation of a narrative. Key to the considerable emotional charge of this narrative is the idea of a mission — both the world historical mission of the workers to take power and introduce socialism and the mission of the Social Democrats to merge socialism and the worker movement. To bring out this emotional aspect out, I shall be quoting some flowery rhetoric of a type that does not often make its way into secondary accounts. Anyone who pictures Social Democracy as based on dry and deterministic 'scientific socialism' and overlooks the fervent rhetoric of good news and saving missions has missed the point.

The merger formula also implied a concrete political strategy that is as often overlooked as the formula's emotional fervour. In order to further the desired merger, certain kinds of organisations need to be set up, certain kinds of political conditions need to be established, and certain social forces need to be assessed as either friends or foes. When the Russian Social Democrats put forth this strategy, observers found it innovative and even heretical. But although the Russians may have come up with the new name of 'hegemony', the basic logic had been fairly thoroughly worked out by the Germans.

My label 'good news interpretation' underscores these two vital but under-appreciated aspects of nineteenth-century Social Democracy: the proselytising fervour of the Social Democrats plus some hard-headed

thinking about how best to spread the word.

Marx and Engels

One element of success the workers possess - numbers; but numbers weigh only in the balance, if united by combination and led by knowledge. (Karl Marx, Inaugural Address, 1864.)

At its highest level, the merger narrative is a world-historical epic about the coming of socialism. In its full scope, the epic surveys both 'the history of all hitherto existing societies' and the future.[3] In a biographical sketch of Marx written during his lifetime, Engels summarises the crucial final episodes of this epic in one monster sentence:

[Marx's 'new conception of history' teaches that] the ruling big bourgeoisie has fulfilled its historic calling [Beruf], that it is no longer capable of the leadership of society and has even become a hindrance to the development of production. ... that historical leadership [Leitung] has passed to the proletariat, a class which, owing to its whole position in society, can only free itself by abolishing altogether all class rule, all servitude and all exploitation, and that the productive forces of society, which have outgrown the control of the bourgeoisie, are only waiting for the associated proletariat to take possession of them in order to bring about a state of things in which every member of society will be enabled to participate not only in production but also in the distribution and administration of social wealth, and which so increases the productive forces of society and their yield by planned operation of the whole of production that the satisfaction of all reasonable needs will be assured to everyone in ever-increasing measure

While this particular formulation brings out the key feature of Marx's narrative - classes having a 'calling' for 'historical leadership' - it does not bring out the central task of proletarian class leadership, namely, the conquest of political power. The Communist Manifesto states this task as follows: 'The immediate aim of the communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of bourgeois rule, conquest of political power by the proletariat'. [5] Marx's Inaugural Address in 1864 for the Working Men's International Association puts it more succinctly: 'To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes.'[6]

Scientific socialism is a reasoned recounting of this world-historical epic. We are here primarily interested in the political strategy that differentiates Marx-based Social Democracy from other nineteenth-century socialists and revolutionaries. Thus we now focus on one particular episode from the

overall story, namely, the episode in which the worker class realises its great duty and carries it out.

As long as we remain on the level of the world-historical epic as a whole, we can content ourselves with saying 'the worker class realises its great duty', as if this process occurs more or less automatically. But, once we start to examine this episode in detail, we immediately see that the episode has a dramatic plot of its own, since it describes the outcome of interaction of historical actors who strive to overcome obstacles to their chosen goals. The plot of this episode is summarised by the merger formula: 'Social Democracy is the merger of socialism and the worker movement.' 'Socialism' here means socialist doctrine, and Social Democracy is the historical actor that prepares the worker class for its great deed.

According to both Kautsky and Lenin, the first person to set forth the logic of the merger narrative was Engels in *Condition of the Working Class in England*, published in 1845. In a tribute to Engels written after his death in 1895, Kautsky summarised the argument of this book in these words: 'the worker movement must be the power to bring socialism into birth; socialism must be the goal the worker movement sets before itself'[7] In his own tribute to the recently deceased Engels, Lenin closely followed Kautsky in giving a high evaluation to *Condition of the Working Class*. This book shows that Engels was 'the first to say that the proletariat is not only a suffering class'. Lenin also summarised Engels's argument:

All that the socialists had to understand was which social force, owing to its position in contemporary society, has a deep interest in the realisation of socialism - and then communicate to that force an awareness of its interests and historical task. The proletariat is such a social force ... The political movement of the worker class inevitably leads the workers to the awareness that there is no escape outside of socialism. On the other hand, socialism only becomes a force when it becomes the aim of the political struggle of the worker class.[8]

Engels's argument is set forth in the chapter of *Condition of the Working Class* entitled 'Worker Movements'. In it Engels delineates two separate forces. The first is the worker movement that achieved its highest expression in Chartism, a radical political movement on a national scale. The second is the 'socialist agitation' inspired by Robert Owen. The socialists are 'thoroughly tame and peaceable...They understand, it is true, why the working man is resentful against the bourgeois, but regard as unfruitful this class hatred, which is, after all, the only moral incentive by which the worker can be brought nearer the goal'. And so, 'in its present form, Socialism can never become the common creed of the working class;

it must condescend to return for a moment to the Chartist standpoint'.

Engels confidently outlines the next episode in the story in what is evidently the first explicit statement of the merger narrative:

It is evident that the worker movement is divided into two sections, the Chartists and the Socialists. The Chartists are the more backward, the less developed, but they are genuine proletarians all over, the representatives of their class. The Socialists are more far-seeing, propose practical remedies against distress, but, proceeding originally from the bourgeoisie, are for this reason unable to amalgamate completely with the working class. The merger [Verschmelzung] of Socialism with Chartism, the reproduction of French Communism in the English style, will be the next step, and has already begun. Then only, when this has been achieved, will the worker class be the true leader of England. Meanwhile, political and social development will proceed, and will foster this new party, this new departure of Chartism.[9]

I have quoted Kautsky's and Lenin's summary of Engels in order to bring out the crucial importance of this chapter for both men. They saw it as the first statement of the essence of their political creed. And yet it is well-nigh impossible to find any mention of this chapter in the secondary literature. Thus the view from WITBD implies a revised Marxist canon.

The logic of the merger narrative is deeply embedded in the Communist Manifesto or, in any event, Lenin strongly believed this to be the case. The

Communist Manifesto states that the Communists 'fight [kämpfen] for the attainment of those aims and interests of the working class that lie immediately to hand, but they are also the voice in the present movement of the future of the movement'. [10] This sentence expresses the specifically Marxist road-map to socialism: merging the day-to-day interests that gave rise to the worker movement with the final aim of socialism. It was precisely this road-map, and perhaps even this very sentence, that finally persuaded Georgii Plekhanov, the most important founder of Russian Social Democracy, to become a Marxist in the early 1880s.¹¹

It is not too fanciful to see the merger formula reflected in the overall structure of the Manifesto. The Manifesto is divided into three large sections: 'Bourgeois and Proletarians', 'Proletarians and Communists', 'Socialist and Communist Literature'. The first section, 'Bourgeois and Proletarian', tells the story of the worker movement up to the point of revolution. The basic theme in this section is the resistance of the workers and their growing organisation, that is, the replacement of mutual isolation through competition by the merger [Vereinigung] of the workers into revolutionary associations^Y

The next section, 'Proletarians and Communists,' describes the aims of the revolution, that is, 'the future of the movement'. The communist is said to reflect only the beliefs of the most decisive part of the worker movement, the one that ever drives forward [der entschiedenste, immer weiter treibende Teil]P Thus the worker movement as a whole still needs to be persuaded of its great duty.

So we see that the first section describes the worker movement and the second section describes socialism. The third section turns to the question of how to merge these two. This section - 'Socialist and Communist Literature' - is where the political strategy inherent in the merger formula first begins to be worked out. Marx invites us to observe the self-destruction of all forms of socialism except the kind that reaches out to the worker movement. The aggressively polemical tone is in its way a compliment to the socialists. Marx wants to persuade other socialists that their great duty is to further this process. They are the aware element, they are the ones who can be directly convinced by abstract reasoning and literary polemics. When the socialists have been swung round, they themselves will start spreading awareness in the worker milieu.

I have read somewhere that this sentence was indeed crucial for Plekhanov, but

I have been unable to track down the reference. In his memoirs, another founder of Russian Social Democracy, Pavel Akselrod, quotes this sentence from Plekhanov's introduction to his 1882 translation of the Manifesto: The Manifesto can prevent Russian socialists from two equally sorry extremes: a negative attitude toward political activity [= working to overthrow tsarism] on the other hand, and forgetting the future interests of the party, on the other'. Akselrod 1975, p. 423.

Marx and Engels 1959, p. 474. The five targets subjected to critique in the final section of the Manifesto

are not just a random assortment but represent most of the logical possibilities of opposition to the merger strategy. As such, they foreshadow the bulk of the polemics unleashed later by Social Democracy against its competitors. The first target is feudal or reactionary socialists. The merger strategy will not work here because these are the wrong socialists. Their demagogic flirting with the workers covers up a will to dominate the worker movement. Various forms of 'state socialism' continued to challenge Social Democracy throughout the nineteenth century.

In his next target - 'petty-bourgeois socialism' - Marx argues that the merger strategy will fail because it is based on the wrong workers. The interests of

the petty bourgeoisie - peasants and shopkeepers - do not lead them toward a viable socialist society but toward a 'reactionary utopia' in which economic independence is based on small individual property.

The third target ('True Socialists') will be examined later when we look at the Manifesto's tactical implications. In the fourth and fifth targets, we see the right workers and the right socialists - but outside the merger, outside the great synthesis. If the worker movement refuses to adopt the revolutionary- socialist point of view, it becomes mere bourgeois reformism that vainly seeks to emancipate workers inside the framework of bourgeois society. If the socialists continue to regard the workers as incapable of emancipating themselves, they will dwindle into a set of cranks. The Manifesto does not blame the early worker movement and the early socialists for not immediately seeking the merger - indeed, they are praised for their embattled resistance on the one hand and for their critical insight on the other. It is the continued refusal of the great synthesis that is reprehensible.

Having established the foundational impact of the merger narrative, we now turn to an outline of the political strategy therein implied, as set forth in various remarks by the masters. The key idea is 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves'. The famous motto of the First International can be understood in two ways. On one reading, the motto tells revolutionaries from other classes that they are not wanted: the emancipation of the worker class is the business of the workers and no one else. The motto was understood in this way by the French Proudhonists who were perhaps the most important constituency within the First International. [48] « Chapter One

On another reading, the motto not only refuses to close the door to nonproletarian revolutionaries but actually invites them in. If only the workers themselves can bring about their liberation, then it is imperative that they come to understand what it is they need to do and that they obtain the requisite organisational tools. This mission of preparing the worker class for its mission was incumbent upon any socialist who accepted the Marxist class narrative, no matter what his or her social origin. As the programme of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party put it in 1890, the aim of Social Democracy is 'to organise the proletariat politically, to fill it with the awareness of its position and its task, and to make and keep it spiritually and physically fit for struggle'.

It follows that the job of the socialists is to ensure that the workers are 'united by combination and led by knowledge'. 'Combination' —

disciplined organisation - is necessary on both the national and international level if the workers are not be 'chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent effort', as Marx elegantly put it in the Inaugural Address."^{*} When Marx and Engels speak of the knowledge that must lead the workers, they mean, of course, scientific socialism. A crucial couple of sentences by Engels defines the role of scientific socialism in the Social-Democratic political strategy. These sentences conclude Engels's immensely influential Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. I despair of reproducing the rhetorical force made possible by German syntax and therefore present this passage in both languages.

Diese weltbefreiende Tat durchzuführen, ist der geschichtliche Beruf des modernen Proletariats. Ihre geschichtlichen Bedingungen, und damit ihre Natur selbst, zu ergreifen und so der zur Aktion berufenen, heute unterdrückten Klasse die Bedingungen und die Natur ihrer eignen Aktion zum Bewusstsein zu bringen, ist die Aufgabe des theoretischen Ausdrucks der proletarischen Bewegung, des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus.

To carry out this world-freeing deed - this is the historical calling of the modern proletariat. The task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement - scientific socialism - is to solidly explicate the deed's historical conditions and therefore its very nature. By so doing, scientific socialism

will bring the conditions and the nature of the proletariat's own act into the awareness of a class that, although oppressed today, is called to this [great] action. I;

Beruf, 'calling', is an expressively intense word that summons up echoes of a high religious calling. The proletariat is almost defined as 'die zur Aktion berufenen Klasse', 'the called-to-a-great-deed class: Scientific socialism's own task [Aufgabe, another key word] is not only to explicate the proletariat's calling but also to make the class aware of it - that is, to get involved in the nuts and bolts of propaganda and agitation. Thus, scientific socialism tells the proletariat a story about itself: its past ('historical conditions'), its present ('oppressed') and its future ('world-freeing deed'). Since this story will itself inspire the proletariat to carry out the great deed, telling the story is a precondition for freeing the world.

The great duty of taking political power implies that the aim of all this insight and organisation will be a nation-wide, class-based and therefore independent, political party.¹⁶ Marx sketches the development of such a party in Part I of the Manifesto. One theme in this sketch is of particular importance for understanding Lenin's rhetoric in WITBD: the parallel Marx draws between the nationalisation of the economy and the nationalisation of

political organisations. The bourgeoisie nationalises the economy by dislodging it from its original starting point of local, parochial, scattered and low-technology production and progressively moving it toward the endpoint of national, urban, centralised and industrial production. The bourgeois transformation of society is mirrored by the transformation of society's own political organisations. Thus 'the confrontations between individual workers and individual bourgeois increasingly take on the character of confrontations between two classes'. The drive toward nationwide combination is furthered by 'the growing means of communication generated by large-scale industry that put the workers of different localities in contact with one another. But this contact is all that is needed to centralise the many local struggles of a generally similar kind into a national - a class - struggle'.^[17]

Thus, the merger formula sets the socialists the task of organising and propagandising on a national level. From this definition of the task flows an enormous tactical implication: the necessity of freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and other political freedoms. This implication is already drawn without any ambiguity in the Communist Manifesto. As discussed earlier, the third section of the Manifesto outlines the nature of the merger between socialism and the worker movement in the negative form of showing how not to do it. In the third of the five targets attacked in the third section, Marx draws a contrast between the German 'True Socialists' and the German communists. As described by Marx, the True Socialists were a set of intellectuals who 'hurled traditional anathemas against liberalism, against representative government, against bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois right, bourgeois freedom and equality'. They were so eager to use socialist demands as a way of discrediting any striving for political freedom that they became tools of the nobility and the German absolutist governments. Far different are the German communists, who fight alongside the bourgeoisie 'as soon as it shows itself revolutionary - against the absolutist monarchy, the feudal landowners, the petty bourgeoisie'.¹⁸

Exactly these passages are cited by Plekhanov in *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, the book he issued in 1883 to announce his conversion to Social Democracy. As Plekhanov's title implies, the aim of the book is to convince Russian socialists that the struggle for political freedom must be their most urgent priority.^[19] But the insistence on political freedom was basic not only to Russian but to all Social Democrats: it was what distinguished the political strategy of Marx-based Social Democracy from all other nineteenth-century socialists, revolutionaries and worker-movement

activists.

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The central importance of political freedoms for Social Democracy is brought

out in another revealing but overlooked text by Engels, 'The Workingmen of Europe in 1877'.²⁰ In this survey of the progress of worker parties all over the continent, the state of political freedom is a touchstone of the aims and successes of the various national parties. Engels's description of the French worker class is particularly revealing. By 1877, the French worker class had suffered two recent traumas. The first was

the eighteen years of the Bonapartist Empire, during which the press was fettered, the right of meeting and of association suppressed and the working class consequently deprived of every means of inter-communication and organisation.

This repressive regime was followed by the crushing of the Paris Commune in 1871. The ones who held power in France now were the very middle-class radicals who (as Engels angrily put it) had betrayed the workers and the country.

Nevertheless, Engels's political advice is to support these hateful bourgeois democrats against monarchist attacks. The worker class has

but one immediate interest: to avoid the recurrence of such another protracted reign of repression [as it had experienced under Bonapartism], and with it the necessity of again fighting, not for their own direct emancipation but for a state of things permitting them to prepare for the final emancipatory struggle.

Only the republic, despicable as it was, gave them a chance to 'obtain such a degree of personal and public liberty as would allow them to establish a working-class press, an agitation by meetings and an organisation as an independent political party, and moreover, the conservation of the republic would save them the necessity of delivering a separate battle for its future reconquest'.

Political freedoms are so fundamental that even political independence should be temporarily sacrificed for them if need be. In 1877, the worker class supported the republicans from an attack by the monarchists. Engels comments:

Engels 1989, pp. 209-29 (written in 1878 for a New York socialist newspaper). Hal Draper first pointed out the importance of this article (Draper 1977-90, Vol. 2).

*No doubt in this they acted as the tail of the middle-class Republicans and Radicals, but a working class which has no press, no meetings, no clubs, no political societies, what else can it be but the tail of the Radical middle-class party? What can it do, in order to gain its political independence, but support the only party which is bound to secure to the people generally, and therefore, to the workmen too, such liberties as will admit of independent organisation?*²¹

Thus the new view of history set out in the Communist Manifesto came attached with a political strategy, one that is firmly outlined in the Manifesto itself and one to which its authors remained loyal over the years. Some writers see a contrast between the revolutionism of the Address to the Communist League in 1850 and the reformism of the Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association in 1864. Yet both are based on the same fundamental political strategy: strive to obtain political liberties and use them once attained to bring combination and knowledge to a nationwide, independent, worker political party whose goal is to conquer political power in order to introduce socialism. Despite the fierceness of the cry *Die Revolution im Permanenz!*, the 1850 address is engaged in giving electoral advice ('even where there is no prospect whatsoever of their being elected, the workers must put up their own candidates in order to preserve their independence, to count their forces and to bring before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint') under the assumption of a 'lengthy revolutionary development'.^[22] Despite the mildness of the Inaugural Address's salute to legislation such as the English Ten Hours Bill, Marx still insists that the great duty of the worker class is to conquer political power in order to abolish hired labour.

The Marx presented here is not the Marx of Leszek Kolakowski, who opens his trilogy with what he considers the most important fact about Marx, namely, 'Marx was a German philosopher'.^[23] Nor is it the Marx of Geoff Eley, who writes that 'Marx's most important legacy for the pre-1914 social democratic

Engels 1989, pp. 222-3.

tradition' was an economic theory that emphasised 'the determining effects of material forces on human achievement, and the linking of political opportunities to movements of the economy'.^[24] Nor yet is it the Marx of Eric Hobsbawm, who says that Marx's greatest impact came from the assertion of socialism's inevitability.^[25] On the other hand, the Marx presented here is akin to the Marx of Hal Draper. Draper's great achievement was to put Marx in the company not so much of Hegel and his followers, not so much of Ricardo and his followers, but of the nineteenth

century's other radical, socialist, revolutionary and worker leaders - the likes of August Blanqui, Ferdinand Lassalle, and Mikhail Bakunin.[26]

Of course, Marx was indeed a major philosopher and economist. But the Marx who was central for Lenin and his generation was the one whose new view of the path to socialism gave rise to a new view of the tasks of the socialists - a new political strategy that, in turn, inspired some of the most impressive and innovative political institution-building of the nineteenth century. In 1917, in his notebook on Marxism and the state, Lenin commented on 'the basic idea of Marx: the conquest of political power by the proletariat'.[27] Marx the philosopher and Marx the economist tried to give these few words the most solid foundation possible. But the Marx who had the greatest impact on the nineteenth century was the activist who tried to draw out all the implications for political strategy that lay hidden in these few words.

Ferdinand Lassalle

In Italy at the turn of the century, so we are told, Italian socialists named their sons Lassalo and their daughters Marxina.²⁸ Some informed observers were ready to give Ferdinand Lassalle top billing: 'To Lassalle, even more than to Marx, modern Socialists are deeply indebted; Marx set the world of culture thinking and arguing, Lassalle set the people organising'.²⁹ In the German Social-Democratic Party, Lassalle remained the hero-founder, and meetings were opened by an anthem that affirmed:

*Der Bahn, der kahlen, folgen wir, Die uns geföhrt Lassalle. (We follow that bold path on which Lassalle has led US.)*³⁰

These days, in contrast, Lassalle has more or less dropped off the historical radar screen. A recent 600-page book on the history of the European Left in the last 150 years does not even mention him.³¹ A direct motive for bringing out his contribution here is that Lassalle makes an appearance in a crucial passage in WITBD. A wider motive is the conviction that one cannot understand the emotional world of Social Democracy nor the logic of its institutions without looking at its forgotten founding father.

Lassalle's career as a leader of nascent German Social Democracy was incredibly short, given its impact on the rest of the century. In 1863, he was asked by a German worker group to give his opinion on the best political course for the workers. In his Open Letter (also known as his Manifesto), Lassalle advised them to organise an independent political party aimed at achieving universal suffrage. He then plunged into a whirlwind round of

setting up just such an organised party. Only a year and a half after the start of his campaign, he was killed in a duel that arose out of his love affair with a German countess. His death was probably a good career move, since his organising efforts had achieved little in concrete results and his flirtation with conservatives such as Bismarck might soon have sorely discredited him. As it was, he remained a martyr and an icon of the cause.

Lassalle's impact on his contemporaries was in large part due to his larger-than-life flamboyance. The English critic George Brandes, writing in 1881,

Villiers 1908, p. 86. Russell 1965 [1896], 130. On the importance of this song in SPD culture, see Lidtke

1985, pp. 112-14. Lidtke observes that ' throughout the nineties numerous localities still held Lassalle Festivals, but no one seems ever to have thought of holding a Marx Festival' (Lidtke 1985, p. 195). declared that the fundamental feature of his temperament was 'apparent in the quality best expressed by the Jewish word "Chutspo", which connotes presence of mind, impudence, temerity, resolution, and effrontery'.³² Lassalle's legacy to German Social Democracy was a very mixed bag indeed and the movement spent many years shedding many of his policy nostrums as well as his proclivities toward dictatorial party organisation. In our discussion, however - with one important exception - we are going to focus on the permanent contribution that even otherwise suspicious Marxists were prepared to grant. There were two sides to Lassalle's permanent contribution. He brought out the emotional underpinning of the merger narrative more vividly and effectively than either Marx or Engels. He also brought the political strategy inherent in the merger formula out on the national stage for all to see.

The emotional fervour latent in the merger formula arises most profoundly from the idea of a mission: a noble task that one has an obligation to accept. In the texts by Marx and Engels we have looked at, we have seen references to a Beruf to a 'world-freeing deed', to the workers' 'great duty' and their 'historic mission'. But Marx and Engels were perhaps too sardonic to wax eloquent on this theme. Lassalle was just the opposite. While his melodramatic rhetoric has no doubt dated more than Marx's, it was extremely effective at the time. Thirty years later, propagandising among the workers of Petersburg, K.M. Takhtarev found that Lassalle's 'idea of the worker estate' made a very strong impression on the workers in his study circle.³³

Lassalle explained the 'idea of the worker estate' by telling the following story. Originally, the workers had been united with the bourgeoisie as part of the revolutionary Third Estate, but then the bourgeoisie separated itself

off due to its egoism and desire for privilege. For the workers, in contrast, self-interest and group solidarity coincided.

*The more earnestly and deeply the lower classes of society strive after the improvement of their condition as a class, the improvement of the lot of their class, the more does this personal interest, instead of opposing the movement of history and being thereby condemned to that immoral liberty [that is exemplified by the bourgeoisie], assume a direction which thoroughly accords with the development of the whole people, with the victory of the idea, with the advance of culture, with the living principle of history itself, which is no other than the development of freedom. Or in other words ... its interest is the interest of the entire human race.*³

The workers now constituted a Fourth Estate that possessed a historical mission to transform society.

You are able therefore to devote yourselves with personal passion to this historical development, and to be certain that the more strongly this passion grows and burns within you ... the higher is the moral position you have attained ... We may congratulate ourselves, gentlemen, that we have been born at a time which is destined to witness this the most glorious work of history, and that we are permitted to take a part in accomplishing it.[35]

But this destiny imposes the obligation of a quasi-religious earnestness, as revealed by the following widely-quoted passage from one of Lassalle's most influential writings, *The Worker Programme*:

Nothing is more calculated to impress upon a class a worthy and moral character, than the awareness that it is destined to become a ruling class, that it called upon to raise the principle of its class to the principle of the entire age, to convert its idea into the leading idea of the whole of society and thus to form this society by impressing upon it its own character. The high and world-wide honour of this destiny must occupy all your thoughts. Neither the burden of the oppressed, nor the idle dissipation of the thoughtless, nor even the harmless frivolity of the insignificant, are henceforth becoming to you. You are the rock on which the Church of the present is to be built. It is the lofty moral earnestness of this thought which must with devouring exclusiveness possess your spirits, fill your minds, and shape your whole lives, so as to make them worthy of it, conformable to it, and always related to it. It is the moral earnestness of this thought which must never leave you, but must be present to your heart in your workshops during the hours of labour, in your leisure hours, during your walks, at your meetings, and even when you stretch your limbs to rest upon your hard couches, it is this thought which must fill and occupy your minds till they lose themselves in dreams. The more exclusively you immerse yourselves in the moral earnestness of this thought, the more undividedly you give yourselves up to its glowing fervour, by so much the more,

be assured, will you hasten the time within which our present period of history will have to fulfil its task, so much the sooner will you bring about the accomplishment of this task.[36]

Lassalle was also remembered because he 'showed the path', that is, he set out the fundamentals of the party's political strategy. This strategy was first announced in the Open Letter: 'The working class must constitute itself an independent political party and make universal, equal and direct suffrage the primary watchword and banner of this party.'[37] Thus Lassalle called for an independent political organisation: all three terms have equal emphasis. At the time that Lassalle put forth his strategy, all of its facets were innovative, not to say outrageous.[38] By insisting on a political organisation, Lassalle was flying in the face of an opinion widespread even among the workers themselves that (as Lassalle put it in his Open Letter) 'you have no business to trouble yourselves about a political movement, for this is something in which you have no interest'.[39]

The content of worker politics comes from the uplifting mission of the workers and their loyalty to 'the idea of the Fourth Estate'. Lenin in WITBD makes a distinction between 'trade-unionist politics' and 'Social-Democratic politics'. The essence of this distinction is already in Lassalle:

You want to found Savings-banks, Invalid and Sick-help Societies; institutions whose relative but subordinate importance I readily recognise. [But] is it your aim to ameliorate the condition of the worker - guarding him against the results of recklessness, sickness, age and accidents, the unguarded effects of which press individual workers below the ordinary condition of their class? If so, the establishment of such institutions will be fully equal to meet your aims. But for such an aim, it would hardly be worthwhile to instigate a movement throughout all Germany and commence a universal agitation of the entire worker estate. A movement of such magnitude as the universal agitation of the workingmen of the nation, however, would be far from finding its reward in accomplishing so little when so much could be done.[40]

Lassalle also insisted on political independence, a goal which in 1861 had a very concrete meaning: to break away from the liberal Progressive Party that to a large extent had summoned up the worker societies in the first place in order to recruit followers in its struggle for a liberal constitution. Lassalle violently attacked the Progressives because their bourgeois interests were in conflict with those of the workers. He also attacked them because of their lack of energy, weakness and pusillanimity in fighting for their own goal of political freedom. This sort of accusation against the liberals became a standard feature of Social Democracy both in Germany and in Russia.

Finally, Lassalle insisted on effective organisation. One aspect of this theme was as a rather dictatorial and 'cult of personality' mode of inner-party organisation. What I want to stress here is rather how Lassalle's ideal of organisation followed from the fundamental aim of spreading the good news of the 'idea of the Fourth Estate'.

But how to effect the introduction of universal direct suffrage? Look at England. The great agitation of the English people against the Corn Laws lasted for over five years. And then the laws had to go: a Tory Ministry itself had to abolish them. Organise yourselves as a Universal Union of German Workers for the purpose of a legal and peaceful but unwearying, unceasing agitation for the introduction of universal direct suffrage in every German state!

Lassalle wanted a party of agitation that openly inscribed its sentiments on its banners. In order to succeed in this aim, the new party had to set up treasuries based on membership dues. These treasuries will support a powerful agitation force:

Found and publish newspapers, to make this demand daily and to prove the reasons for it from the state of society. With the same funds circulate pamphlets for the same purpose. Pay agents out of the Union's funds to carry this insight into every corner of the country, to thrill the heart of every worker, every house-servant, every farm-labourer, with this cry. Indemnify out of the Union's funds all workers who have been injured or prosecuted for their activity. Repeat daily, unwearyingly, the same thing, again the same thing, always the same thing

In this way, Lassalle evoked the image of the spreading circle of awareness that was later central to Lenin's idea of class leadership:

Propagate this cry in every workshop, every village, every hut. May the workers of the towns let their higher insight and education [Bildung] overflow on to the workers of the country. Debate, discuss, everywhere, every day, without pausing, without ending as in the great English agitation against the Corn Laws, now in peaceful public assemblies, now in private conferences, the necessity of universal direct suffrage. The more the millions who echo your voice, the more irresistible will be its influence!

The key to effective agitation, Lassalle believed, was to keep it simple by focusing on one basic message. In the case of his own agitation, the message was to be 'universal suffrage in order to obtain state aid to worker co-operatives'. This programme was a very distorted first approximation of the programme of conquering political power in order to introduce socialism.

Thus Lassalle had his own version of the merger formula: 'The great destiny of our age is precisely this - which the dark ages had been unable to

conceive, much less to achieve - the dissemination of scientific knowledge among the body of the people'.[44] What Lassalle means by 'science' here is essentially his popularised version of Marx's historical materialism. And what he meant by 'disseminate' was not adult education lectures, but the excited agitation machine described in the Open Letter.

Many features of Lassalle's programme, tactics and organisation were rejected by German Social Democracy as the years went by. One of the most important Marxist criticisms of Lassalle could have been predicted on the basis of the Manifesto passages cited previously. According to the Marxist wing of the early Social-Democratic movement, Lassalle's hostility toward the bourgeoisie led him to dangerously underestimate the importance of political freedom. Wilhelm Liebknecht, one of these early Marxist leaders, used the opportunity of his trial for high treason in 1872 to make this point:

I showed that a one-sided procedure against the bourgeoisie could only be of service to the aristocracy, that the contemplated universal suffrage, without freedom of the press, of meeting, and of combination, was nothing but an instrument of the reaction, and that 'State-help' from a government of lords could only be granted to corrupt the workmen and make them useful for the purposes of the reaction.[45]

It is easy to pick holes in Lassalle's programme and tactics and certainly his rhetoric has badly dated. Put next to Marx, he is, as Jeeves would say, intellectually negligible. Yet his current absence from historical memory must distort our view of Social-Democratic activists such as Lenin, for whom Lassalle was a hero even after all the criticisms were accepted. Lassalle put the political strategy adumbrated in the Communist Manifesto on the map. He caught two essential features of that strategy: the emotional appeal of the call to a historical mission and the organisational implications of preparing the workers to carry out that mission. He can indeed be called the first Social Democrat.

We may conclude with an appreciation of Lassalle penned by Eduard Bernstein in his orthodox, pre-revisionist days. His book *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer* (1893) was heavily influenced by Engels and translated into English by Marx's daughter Eleanor. Engels's role in the book was so great that Hal Draper practically treats him rather than Bernstein as the author.[46] The book as a whole is hostile to Lassalle and insists on his weaknesses at great length. All the more valuable, then, is the book's summary of Lassalle's enduring achievements. The value of organisation was one such contribution: 'If the German Social Democracy

has always recognised the value of a strong organisation, if it has been so convinced of the necessity of the concentration of forces, that even without the outer bond of organisation it has yet known how to perform all the functions of one, this is largely a heritage of the agitation of Lassalle.' But Lassalle's central contribution was to turn the idea of historical mission into practical politics:

Where at most there was only a vague desire, he gave conscious effort; he trained the German workers to understand their historical mission, he taught them to organise as an independent political party, and in this way at least accelerated by many years the process of development of the movement ... The time for victory was not yet, but in order to conquer, the workers must first learn to fight. And to have trained them for the fight, to have, as the song says, given them swords, this remains the great, the undying merit of Ferdinand Lassalle. [47]

Party of a new type: the SPD model

It is rather startling to one whose observation of socialist movements has been confined almost entirely to the United States, to enter one of the largest and most beautiful halls in the world, - a hall seating 10,000 persons - and find it packed to the point of suffocation with delegates, members, and friends of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany ... It was an impressive sight.⁴⁸

The American socialist Robert Hunter was not the only one impressed by the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD). The strength and prestige of the SPD was a source of confidence - no, the source of confidence - for socialists the world around. Hunter reels out the facts on which this confidence rested:

The German party is the oldest and largest socialist organisation in Europe. It represents the thought of a very large proportion of the working men of the entire nation. There are more socialists in Germany than there are people in Spain, or Mexico, or in Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway put together. Its present vote would have elected the President of the United States up till the time of Grant's second term. It polls a million more votes than any other party in Germany. [49]

Hunter stresses some other features that made contemporaneous observers regard the SPD as something unseen before, as a party of a new type in European politics. 'The German socialist movement is a democratically controlled organisation of a character unknown in American politics'. Furthermore, 'the party carries on a propaganda of incredible dimensions'. Finally, it was truly a working man's party - and

*they were of that type of working men one too rarely sees outside of Germany ... They were serious minded, ruddy-faced, muscular; one could see that they had saved from the exploitation of the factory enough physical and mental strength to live like men during their leisure hours; and my belief is that physically and mentally they can hold their own in the essentials with any other class in Germany.*⁵⁰

Most discussion of the SPD today, whether from the Left or the Right, is heavily tinged with irony. The party was not as revolutionary as it thought, it was not as Marxist as it thought, it was not as democratic as it thought, and (more recently) it was not as committed to gender equality as it thought. The textbook interpretation of WITBD in particular operates with a contrast between Lenin's fierce revolutionary party and the SPD's mild-mannered party of reform. In Bertram Wolfe's words, the parties and trade unions of the West were 'democratically organised, comfortably adapted to the sizeable legality permitted them, and long since devoid of insurrectionary spirit except as a banner for festal occasions'.⁵¹

No doubt there is much that gives support to all this irony. But perhaps we can understand the more dramatic view taken by contemporaneous observers when they heard August Bebel, the leader of the Party, exclaim 'I shall remain the mortal enemy of this society and social system, in order to sap its very life and, if I can, to eliminate it altogether'. Or when they heard Prussian officials say that the SPD was not 'a reformist party ... but a revolutionary party, whose aim is the destruction of the existing state and social system'.^[52] In any event, if we want to understand the impact of the SPD model on WITBD, we must, for a time, bracket the irony of hindsight. For this reason, I will document my discussion with comment from contemporaneous observers.

Every institution has an idealised model of itself - 'idealised' in the sense that it is abstracted from everyday concrete practices, in the further sense that it reflects the ideals and goals of the institution, and in the final sense that it pictures the institution and its members as more heroic and pure-hearted than reality warrants. Such a model is not just a self-flattering pat on the back but plays a crucial role in the working of the organisation. It determines what is seen as normal and what abnormal. Debates within the organisation and proposals for innovation are steeped in a rhetoric imposed by the model. Such a model is in fact the unwritten constitution of the organisation.⁵³

This idealised model can sometimes have a greater impact on foreigners than on the institution itself. The ideal model of the English Parliament is a

case in point. In a similar way, the SPD model was normative for all of European Social Democracy, as described by Gary Steenson:

When Jean Dormoy wrote his first-hand account of the founding congress of the first French workers' party, he referred to the congress's decision 'to organise itself into a party similar to that which existed in Germany'; seven years later in a letter to Engels, Paul Lafargue referred to his group as 'we who hold up the German party as a model'. An anarchist opponent of the first united workers' political party in Austria objected strongly to the repeated, almost exclusive reference at its founding congress to the German model. And one prominent historian of the Italian worker-socialist movement has argued that the German organisational example was at least as influential with the founders of the first national socialist party as was the northerners' presumed marxian theory, and, in fact, that the former fostered widespread acceptance of the latter. 54

Although Steenson might be surprised to hear it, he could and should have added the Russian Social-Democratic Worker Party to this list. As we sketch out the features of the SPD model that are particularly relevant to WITBD, we shall see that the model was fundamentally narrative in form: it told a story about the SPD's past, present and future. We shall start with the ways in which the Party in the 1890s saw its own past. When the Party looked back, it saw its origin in a double act of independence from liberals and bourgeois democrats. We have already seen how Lassalle urged the workers to reject the tutelage of the liberal Progressive Party. The other wing of the movement - the more Marx-oriented groups led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht - had a more gradual but no less determined break with its radical-democratic middle-class sponsors. In the case of Bebel and Liebknecht, it was an internal evolution in their views as well as an external organisational evolution that led them by 1869 to embrace the programme of Marx's International and the accompanying ideal of an independent, class-based political party. [55] In contrast to Lassalle, however, Bebel and Liebknecht retained from their days as radical democrats a firm conviction of the primordial importance of political freedom.

The next great episode in the Party's story of itself was the heroic outlaw period. In 1878, at Bismarck's instigation, very harsh anti-socialist laws were put into effect that essentially outlawed the Party with the bizarre but crucial exception of its ability to elect parliamentary representatives. [56] The period of persecution ended in 1890 with a resounding victory for the SPD and a resounding defeat for the Iron Chancellor. Despite the persecution, the SPD votes swelled during this period until it became the largest single party in the German Empire. In 1890 the laws were allowed to

lapse. By the end of 1890, Bismarck was gone but the SPD was still there.

The tactics used by the German socialists during this period were, of course, of consuming interest to Russian Social Democrats, for whom absolutist repression was an ongoing reality and not just a matter of 'exceptional laws'. At the centre of these tactics was the role of exile organisations in giving the movement a continuing voice and sense of direction. The most important role here was played by Eduard Bernstein as editor of the newspaper weekly *Sozialdemokrat*, published in Switzerland. One of the sagas of the outlaw period told how this paper continued to be distributed by the 'red postal service' right under the noses of the Imperial gendarmerie. As Bertrand Russell remarked in the 1890s, 'this paper, which was secretly distributed with the greatest energy, and soon began to make a large profit for the party funds, restored, in some measure, the connection between the central authority and the individual members'. 57

Sozialdemokrat's role in keeping the Party together was due just as much to its editorial line as to its successful distribution. In his influential party history first published in 1898 (just when the Iskra plan was taking shape in Lenin's mind), Franz Mehring commented that 'Bernstein well understood how to maintain the newspaper as an organ of the whole party and to give it, at the same time, a definite, firm, clear direction that took into account all tactical demands without violating principle'. 58 Thus the Russians had a ready-made model for the party-building role of a newspaper published abroad.

Above and beyond the tactical and organisational successes of the outlaw period, it demonstrated what a sympathetic but not uncritical British observer called 'the extraordinary vitality of the movement' - so vital that absolutist repression could not destroy it (an encouraging thought for Russian Social Democrats). This British observer, Thomas Kirkup, goes on to explain:

The Social Democrats had shown a patience, resolution, discipline, and, in the absence of any formal organisation, a real and effective organisation of mind and purpose which are unexampled in the annals of the labour movement since the beginning of human society. They had made a steady and unflinching resistance to the most powerful statesman since the first Napoleon, who wielded all the resources of a great modern State, and who was supported by a press that used every available means to discredit the movement; and as a party, they had never been provoked to acts of violence. In fact, they had given proof of all the high qualities which fit men and parties to play a great rôle in history. The Social-Democratic movement in Germany is one of the most notable phenomena of our time.[59]

The triumphal outcome of the outlaw period did more to confirm a sense of the coming revolution's 'natural necessity' than all the learned proofs of scientific socialism.

We turn now the SPD's view of the present, that is, the 1890s. The SPD model interpreted the innovative institutions of the Party as the embodiment of the Marxist political strategy, namely, to bring to the workers the insight and organisation that they needed to enable them to carry out their great mission. The emphasis on insight led to the Party's educational thrust. The Party's job was to teach the workers not only how to carry out their mission but, more fundamentally, the very fact that they had a mission. As Gary Steenson states, a key assumption of the SPD model was that 'while the conditions of their experience might predispose workers to adhere to social democracy, specifically socialist consciousness had to be taught and learned'.^{fio}

This essential point is stated in more detail by H.-J. Schulz: Merger of Socialism and Worker Movement « 67

In a movement which began in the 1860s with the establishment of liberal education clubs for craftsmen and workers, the original and paradigmatic act of proletarian emancipation was not the strike or street protest but the reading of authorised texts, the acquisition of approved knowledge for the intellectual, moral and aesthetic improvement of the individual. The equation 'knowledge is power' attended the birth of the socialist movement and remained, despite all criticism, a central metaphor of its discourse The progressive worker who entered the movement was obliged to become, first of all, a reader of canonised texts. He was taught to approach each of these texts as containing coherent, self-evident and class-transcending scientific truth.*'

This educational thrust was supported by an agitation machine of unprecedented elaborateness. Already in the 1870s, prior to the anti-socialist laws, this machine amazed observers:

A staff of skilful, intelligent, and energetic agitators advocated the new creed in every town of Germany, and they were supported by an effective machinery of newspapers, pamphlets, treatises, social gatherings, and even almanacs, in which the doctrines of socialism were suggested, inculcated, and enforced in every available way." In 1911, the German sociologist Robert Michels made a similar observation.

The tenacious, persistent, and indefatigable agitation characteristic of the socialist party, particularly in Germany, never relaxed in consequence of

casual failures, nor ever abandoned because of casual successes, and which no other party has yet succeeded in imitating, has justly aroused the admiration even of critics and of bourgeois opponents.

Michels goes on to note that the emphasis on agitation means that 'in democratic organisations the activity of the professional leader is extremely fatiguing, often destructive to health, and in general (despite the division of labour) highly complex'.* 68 ¢ Chapter One

The single most impressive feature of this agitation machine was the party press. In 1895 there were 75 socialist newspapers, of which 39 were issued six times a week. These newspapers catered to a broad variety of workers. There were newspapers for worker cyclists and worker gymnasts, for teetotaling workers and even for innkeepers. By 1909 the total circulation was over one million, a figure that implies a great many more actual readers.* But the printed word was embedded in an even wider context of the face-to-face spoken word. Social-Democratic agitation was carried on by public meetings, smaller conferences for the party militants and agitation by individual members.

Nor did the SPD confine itself to political propaganda and agitation. The Social-Democratic movement in Germany consisted of a wide range of institutions that attempted to cover every facet of life. Party or Party-associated institutions included trade unions, clubs dedicated to activities ranging from cycling to hiking to choral singing, theatres and celebratory festivals. The broad scope of the movement's ambitions justifies the title of Vernon Lidtke's classic study *The Alternative Culture*. Looking just at Lidtke's index under the letter 'W', we find the following: workers' athletic clubs, workers' chess societies, workers' consumer societies, workers' cycling clubs, workers' educational societies, workers' gymnastic clubs, workers' libraries, workers' rowing clubs, workers' samaritan associations, workers' singing societies, workers' swimming clubs, workers' temperance associations, workers' theatrical clubs, workers' youth clubs.

The reader will have noticed the repetition of the word 'worker'. This observation leads us to the central importance of the word *Arbeiter*, worker, as the symbolic core of the SPD model. The centrality of *Arbeiter* is also reflected in the high ideological discourse of the SPD. The key terms in this discourse are *Arbeiter*, *Arbeiterklasse* [worker class], *Arbeiterbewegung* [worker movement], *Arbeiterpartei* [worker party]. This close verbal and symbolic link is also present in the vocabulary of Russian Social Democracy. An individual worker is *rabochii*, *rabochii klass* is 'worker class', and so on.

In English, these verbal links are broken. One German-English dictionary translates the terms given above as 'working class', 'labour movement' and 'workers' party'. [67] The English language cannot jam nouns together as easily as German. (The Russians could match German usage in this instance because the noun *rabochii* happens to be adjectival in form.) At the cost of subverting the genius of the English language, I translate the key Social-Democratic terms as 'worker class', 'worker movement', 'worker party'. A few words in justification of this decision will not be amiss.

One motive is to preserve the centrality of the complex of associations attached to the word *Arbeiter* in the German Social-Democratic movement. Lidtke calls it 'the central code word' of the movement. On the one hand, the symbolic and ideological use of *Arbeiter* marked the separateness of the workers, their sense of exclusion, their hostility to German society. On the other hand, the word emphasised the unity of all participants in the movement, and this usage had paradoxical implications.

This broad ideological usage [of Arbeiter], in conjunction with the ubiquitous comrade (Genosse), sanctioned the presence of a substantial number of middle-class people, found especially among the movement's intellectuals, in a party that proclaimed both its confidence in the necessity and ability of workers to emancipate themselves and its unrelenting hostility to everything bourgeois and capitalist.^{6R}

Preserving 'worker' as a link between the key terms of Social-Democratic discourse also helps us see the underlying narrative in which the worker class is a subject, an actor, a protagonist, in a world-historical epic. The English term 'working class' defines the class in terms of a function, one function among many needed for society. Engels once wrote:

The moment the workers resolve to be bought and sold no longer, when, in the determination of the value of labour, they take the part of human beings [Menschen], possessed of a will as well as of working power [Arbeitskraft], at that moment the law of wages and the whole political economy of today is finished.^{6•}

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We might put this as follows: bourgeois political economy ends when the workers stop seeing themselves as 'the working class' with the function of providing labour power, and begin seeing themselves as 'the worker class', possessed of a will that allows them to play an active role in world history.

'Worker class' also defines the class in terms of the concrete and active individuals making it up. Nineteenth-century English usage allowed another

way to bring this out. For example, the first German editions of Engels's book on the English working class had a dedication in English which began: 'Working Men! To you I dedicate this book'." For obvious reasons, this usage is no longer acceptable. At least when translating and paraphrasing the historical documents of Social Democracy, I compensate by using 'worker class' to preserve the sense that the class is made up of living, breathing individuals.

The Social-Democratic narrative relied heavily on preserving the links between the various key terms. Take the following crucial sentence from Kautsky's Erfurt Programme:

So bildet sich allmählich aus qualifizierten und unqualifizierten Proletariern die Schicht der in Bewegung befindlichen Arbeiterklasse - die Arbeiterbewegung."

My translation tries to preserve this narrative thrust: 'From skilled and unskilled proletarians there gradually forms the stratum of the worker class that finds itself in movement — the worker movement.'

One final motivation for using 'worker class' is that German Social Democrats also used the term 'working class', die arbeitende Klasse. Engels, for instance, uses this in the title of his book that is appropriately translated The Condition of the Working Class in England. Often, the term 'working classes' means everybody in the class except the urban proletariat. In the same passage as the quotation just given, Kautsky talks about the growing influence of the militant proletariat on 'die anderen arbeitenden Klassen'."?

Returning now to the SPD model, we note that the job of the Party itself was to ensure that all these institutions worked together to carry out the movement's central mission of raising proletarian awareness. Thus observers were impressed not only by the scope of the SPD agitation but also by its superb organisation. 'So efficient is the organisation that the Socialists boast of being able to flood all Berlin with a titation leaflets in two hours. ' [73] Particularly striking was the extent of what might be called the SPD's apparat: the salaried bureaucracy both in the Party itself and its offshoots. The party apparat was the outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible grace of discipline and organisation. For the SPD model, these were highly positive qualities. As Karl Kautsky put it in a comment cited by Lenin:

The proletarian is never an isolated individual. He feels great and strong as part of a strong organisation ... His individuality counts little beside it. He

struggles with full devotion as a part of an anonymous mass, without prospect of personal gain or personal fame, fulfils his duty in the post in which he is placed, in voluntary discipline which fills his whole feeling and thought.[74]

Another innovative feature of the SPD model that arose out of the Manifesto strategy was the fact that it was a truly nation-wide party - indeed, in many ways, it was the only truly nation-wide party in the German Empire. The SPD attempted to run candidates in as many electoral districts as possible, including many in which it had no chance of victory. Its aim, here as everywhere, was 'to spread the word to the masses, even to the reluctant, unhearing, and scornful masses'.[75]

A final aspect of the SPD that was extremely important for Lenin can be described using Lenin's own image: it acted as the people's tribune. As an English journalist put it in 1912, the German Social Democrats were

the only un terrified, tooth-and-nail foes of reaction, insensate militarism and class rule, the one voice which cries out insistently, fearlessly, implacably, against the injustices which, in the opinion of many patriotic men, are retarding the moral progress and sapping the vital resources of the German nation.[76]

Thus, the Party stood not just for worker-class interests and not even just for socialist transformation, but for the principles of democratic decency in society as a whole. One central forum for this activity was parliament. We sometimes tend to equate 'parliamentary activity' with mild-mannered reformism. But, at the end of the nineteenth century, when oratory in general and parliamentary oratory in particular was much more popular and prestigious than today, the SPD's use of the parliamentary forum was an essential means of taking its stand and spreading its message. Since later we will hear Lenin talk of 'Russian Bebels', we should remember that the basis of Bebel's vast influence was his activity as a parliamentary orator whose enormous talent was all the more striking because he personified 'the entrance to power of the men of toil ... No other member [of the Reichstag] exercises a personal influence equal to his and one can actually feel a thrill of excitement pass through the chamber when he rises to speak'.[77] At a time when parliamentary debates could attract excited crowds, Bebel was a figure of Europe-wide import. Bebel's prestige should be kept in mind when we consider Lenin's dream of 'hegemony' - leadership in the revolutionary movement as a whole - for Russian Social Democracy.

The existence of parliament and especially the right of interpellation (the right of an ordinary member to demand an answer of a cabinet minister on any topic) allowed small parliamentary minorities to obtain a nation-wide hearing for their criticism of the government. An observer such as the

American Robert Hunter felt that the right of interpellation as employed by the Social Democrats in their role as tribune was one of the main bulwarks of political liberty in Europe.

Except in Russia, and a few of the more backward countries, it is inconceivable that in Europe men should be shot, deported from their homes, denied every constitutional protection, and put at the mercy of martial law, - as happened for a period of many months a year or so ago in Colorado, - without the entire country knowing both sides of the case.^{7H}

Another weapon used by the SPD in its role as people's tribune - one of central importance to Lenin and Iskra - was what Lenin called political indictments: the exposure of corruption and scandal. Uncovering abuses, often with the help of sympathetic whistle-blowers who passed on incriminating documents, was a major activity of the socialist press. Observers attributed an 'incredible influence' to the embattled Party due to the 'unfriendly and relentless eye' it cast on events affecting all classes of society.[79]

Besides its heroic past as defier of Bismarck and besides its energetic present as educator and organiser of the worker class and as people's tribune, the SPD also included the future in its narrative of identity - that is, it defined itself as a party inspired by a final goal of social transformation and, as such, unique. The inspiration provided by the final goal had two sources: the idea of the mission, the task, the calling, the great duty, plus the idea that the final outcome was guaranteed by the forces of history. Much commentary on Marxism and Social Democracy is fascinated by a supposed contradiction between these two sources. If the outcome is inevitable, why devote your life to ensuring that it will come about? Such commentary misses the point that in practice the two sources complemented and strengthened each other. I will close with two contemporaneous observers who made exactly this point, so we can better understand some of the reasons why the would-be founders of the Russian Social-Democratic Party thought that 'theoretical clarity' was a life-and-death matter.

Bertrand Russell, writing in a book published in 1896 - that is, prior to the furore caused by Bernstein's revisionism - tells us:

Those who have seen the daily support, in the midst of the most wretched conditions, which the more intelligent working men and women derive from their fervent and religious belief in the advent of the Socialist State, and from their conviction that historical development is controlled by irresistible forces, in whose hands men are only puppets, and by whose action the diminution and final extinction of the capitalist class is an inevitable decree of fate - those who

have seen the strength, compactness and fervour which this religion gives to those who hold it, will hardly regard its decay as likely to help the progress of the party.so

Russell was a sympathetic outsider. The Austrian Social-Democratic leader Victor Adler may be considered an insider. Writing after the Stuttgart Congress of 1898 - that is, after the German Party had semi-officially repudiated Bernstein's position, but before his famous book *Presuppositions of Socialism* had appeared, Adler exclaimed:

How unpractical these practical people so often are! The strength of our party, the efficiency of every single one of our comrades depends on his knowledge that the extraordinary amount of labour, sacrifice, courage, and endurance which he must daily exact from himself and from others is not just devoted to the welfare of the individual groups around him, but that he is the vehicle for a bit of history, that he is working not only for the present but also for the future. H 1

Kautsky and class leadership

In support of his argument in WITBD, Lenin quoted a rather long passage by Karl Kautsky. Much ink has been spilled on the relationship between Lenin's views and Kautsky's views as presented in this passage. 82 But most of this discussion is beside the point, since Lenin's real debt to Kautsky is much earlier and much more basic. One might say that Kautsky's influence is hidden in plain view, since the crucial text is the final chapter of Kautsky's Erfurt Programme - probably the most fundamental statement of what Social Democracy is all about.

Kautsky is remembered as the most influential theoretician of international Social Democracy, but in certain key respects - particularly in the case of the fledgling Russian Social Democracy - Kautsky's role went beyond influence. In 1892, Kautsky wrote the Erfurt Programme, a semi-official commentary on the recently adopted programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany. This book defined Social Democracy for Russian activists - it was the book one read to find out what it meant to be a Social Democrat. In 1894, a young provincial revolutionary named Vladimir Ulianov translated the Erfurt Programme into Russian just at the time he was acquiring his life-long identity

H 1 Tudor and Tudor 1988, pp. 316-17. H2 This Kautsky passage is discussed in detail in the Annotations Part Two.

as a revolutionary Social Democrat. Despite the canonical status of the Erfurt Programme for Lenin's generation, it is ignored today, at least by

English-speaking scholars. Few are even aware that the existing English translation - first issued in 1912 - is a bowdlerised abridgement that serves only to obscure what someone like Lenin might have taken out of the book.

Besides the Erfurt Programme, the principal text for my reconstruction of Kautsky's outlook is *Parliamentarism* (1893), cited directly by Lenin in WITBD as an authority for some of his key arguments. This book really has been totally forgotten (the copy I read was one of the hardest to obtain and most decrepit of the texts I consulted for this commentary).⁸³ *Parliamentarism* is unjustly forgotten, since it is one of the very few works in the Marxist tradition dealing entirely with political theory and, in my view, compares favourably with Lenin's *State and Revolution*. And, since I have mentioned *State and Revolution*, let me say that we should not anachronistically see Kautsky defending parliamentary democracy as opposed to, say, soviet democracy. What Kautsky means by 'parliamentarism' in the 1890s is essentially representative democracy. As such, it cannot really be opposed to soviet-style democracy, itself a form of representative democracy. For our purposes, *Parliamentarism* is important not only because of the arguments that Lenin uses explicitly but also because the book brings together better than anywhere else the logic behind what the Russians labelled the strategy of proletarian hegemony in the democratic revolution.

I occasionally use revealing passages from other works by Kautsky, including one or two that were written after the publication of WITBD. But since both the Erfurt Programme and *Parliamentarism* are, in different ways, forgotten works and since their influence on Lenin is indisputable, I rely mainly on them for my exposition. H4

Circles of awareness

Kautsky conceived of Social Democracy as the inner ring in a series of concentric circles. A key passage in the Erfurt Programme describes these circles and their

⁸³Kautsky 1893. *The French translation is more easily located (Kautsky 1900).*

⁸⁴Among the useful secondary literature on Kautsky is Steenson 1978, Geary 1987,

Hiinlich 1981, Gilcher-Holtey 1986, Salvadori 1979, J. Kautsky 1994, Donald 1993. mutual relationship. (NB: the term usually translated 'conscious', *bewusst*, is here translated 'aware'.)

From skilled and unskilled proletarians there gradually forms the stratum of the

*worker class that finds itself in movement - the worker movement. This is the part of the proletariat that fights for the common interests of its class, its ecclesia militans (fighting church)."*⁵ *This stratum grows at the expense of the arrogant worker 'aristocrats' sunk in their egoism as well as the dull 'rabble', the lower strata of the wage proletariat that vegetates in hopelessness and powerlessness. We have seen that the worker proletariat is constantly increasing; we know further that it becomes ever more decisive for the other working classes, whose living conditions and whose way of feeling and thinking is ever more influenced by it. Now we see that in this ever-growing mass the fighting section grows not only absolutely but proportionately. No matter how fast the proletariat grows, the fighting section grows even faster. But the fighting proletariat is by far the most important and productive recruiting ground for Social Democracy. Social Democracy is nothing other than the part of the fighting proletariat that is aware of its goal. [In turn,] the fighting proletariat has a tendency to become more and more synonymous with Social Democracy; in Germany and Austria the two have in actuality become one."*⁶

Using this passage, I have created a diagram called ' Kautsky's Circles of Awareness' (see Figure 1.[1]). The remainder of this discussion of Kautsky will be devoted to teasing out the implications hidden in this chart.

The first point - a very important one for understanding WITBD - is that the term ' worker movement' used in the merger formula is a technical one with a fairly precise meaning within Social-Democratic discourse. The worker movement is neither the proletariat as a whole, nor is it Social Democracy. It is the militant or fighting proletariat - the section of the proletariat animated by a spirit of organised resistance.

A5 The usual translation of *ecclesia militans* in English is 'church militant'. Note the strong verbal link in German between 'fighting church', *kämpfende Kirche*, and class struggle, *Klassenkampf*

Social Democracy

Figure 1. 1: Kautsky's Circles of Awareness

At any one point in time, members of the outside circles will always have less awareness - that is, less insight into their own class position, basic interests, and therefore historic mission. Yet, viewed over time, there is a tendency for the inner, more aware, circles to expand. Social Democracy becomes a greater and greater portion of the worker movement, while the worker movement becomes a greater and greater portion of the whole proletariat. At the limit, all the circles collapse into one circle of complete awareness.

What we still do not know is the nature of the forces that are working to

bring the circles together. Kautsky's brief description of the process might leave the impression that the whole thing is automatic. This impression is strengthened by the frequent occurrence of one of Kautsky's favourite words, *Naturnotwendigkeit*, natural necessity. We therefore need to ask, what are the amalgamating forces in Kautsky's model and in what direction do they operate? Does the worker movement give rise to the highly aware inner circle through forces internal to itself? Or does Social Democracy move out to transform the worker movement in its own image?

The answer is somewhat complicated by the fact that Kautsky has two aims in this section of the Erfurt Programme. One is to provide an ideal model of the past and future of Social Democracy: its origin and its destiny. The other aim is to set out an explicitly counterfactual and highly unlikely scenario in order to make a theoretical point about the 'natural necessity' of socialism. We will first examine Kautsky's thought experiment, which is all the more important to us because it was cited at length in disputes within Russian Social Democracy about the orthodoxy of WITBD.[87]

For various rhetorical and theoretical purposes, Kautsky wants to show that socialism is an inevitable natural necessity even if there were no Social Democracy - in fact, even if the workers did not accept socialist ideas. He therefore invites us to consider the outcome even if Social Democracy were absent from the picture. The chain of inferences proceeds as follows:

- It is inevitable that the workers will resist capitalist exploitation, that is, *it is inevitable that there be a worker movement.*
- It is inevitable that this resistance lead to a nation-wide worker political party.
- It is inevitable that this party will take over control of the state. • It is inevitable that the workers will use this power to introduce socialism, *because - as they will discover after much trial and error - socialism is the only way to protect their essential interests.*

Thus, only at the very last minute, just as the curtain goes down, the workers discover and accept the merits of socialism (NB: this last-minute conversion could also be called Social Democracy). The point of this thought experiment is to show that even in a worst-case scenario, socialism is still inevitable. Nevertheless (Kautsky immediately adds), this is indeed a worst case scenario because socialism arrives only after 'a great many misconceptions, errors and unnecessary sacrifices and useless expenditure of strength and time'.[89]

I call this the 'sooner or later ' argument. It turns up rather frequently in Social-Democratic writings as a way of combining the core Social-Democratic claim of inevitability with the core Social -Democratic urgency about proselytising the workers. As the young Stalin put it when he recycled Kautsky's argument in 1905 in order to defend the orthodoxy of WITB D:

Of course, at some point, after long wanderings and sufferings, the stikhiyni [elemental] movement, even without the help of Social Democracy, will come into its own and arrive at the gates of socialist revolution.⁹¹

Having made his worst case scenario, Kautsky returns from his thought experiment to the real world. He hastens to assure us that the chances that events will play out in this manner are vanishingly small. The following extensive but crucial passage explains the forces that actually are at work to expand the circles of awareness.

Nevertheless there is absolutely no reason to expect that the proletariat of any country will adopt such a negative attitude [toward socialism] after it comes to power. This would mean that in relation to awareness and knowledge it remains at the level of a child, while economically, politically and morally it has become an adult, one with the power and the capability of overcoming its powerful opponent and imposing its will. Such a misshapen development of the proletariat is highly unlikely. We have already noted more than once that thanks to [mechanised industry], there is in the proletariat (once its original degradation has been overcome) a theoretical sense, a capacity for great problems and goals that lie outside the realm of immediate interests, that one searches for in vain in the other working and labouring classes under it and over it. At the same time, furthermore, the economic development of present-day society proceeds so rapidly and manifests itself in such a mass of conspicuous phenomena that it is recognised even by an uneducated person, once his attention is called to it. And there won't be any lack of attention-calling, since simultaneously, thanks to the continuation by Karl Marx of the work begun by bourgeois classical economy, insight into the course of economic development and the whole economic mechanism becomes exceptionally deep and comprehensive. This all comes together to make the fighting proletariat extremely receptive to the socialist teaching. Socialism is no message of woe for the proletariat but rather good news, a new gospel [ein neues Evangelium]. The ruling classes cannot recognise socialism without committing moral suicide. The proletariat finds in socialism new life, new power, inspiration and the joy of hope. Will the proletariat remain indifferent or even hostile to such a teaching for any length of time? Once an independent worker party has been formed, it will with natural necessity sooner or later adopt a socialist outlook - if it has not been filled with such an outlook from the very beginning - and finally it must become a socialist worker party, that is, Social Democracy. We now see the chief recruiting ground [of Social Democracy] set out clearly before us. In

brief, the conclusion of our discussion is as follows: the bearer of the socialist movement is the fighting strata of the industrial proletariat that has attained political self-awareness. The more the influence of the proletariat on the social strata nearest to it grows and the more the thinking and emotions of these strata are influenced, all the more will they also be drawn into the socialist movement. The class struggle of the proletariat has socialist production as its natural goal; it cannot end before this goal is reached. Just as the proletariat will with certainty come to be the ruling class in the state, so equally is the victory of socialism certain.[91]

We can now describe more concretely the forces at work in Kautsky's model. First, there is a force that comes about automatically from within the worker movement: the spirit of resistance. As we have seen, this resistance is capable of eventually getting us to socialism all by itself, but this point is almost irrelevant in real life. What is more important is that the spirit of resistance (along with other features of the industrial proletariat) makes the worker movement receptive to the good news brought by Social Democracy. And, since Social Democracy and its message do exist, we have a new natural necessity: any worker party will 'sooner or later' adopt a socialist programme.

This natural necessity does not detract from the fact that, in real life, Social Democracy is the active force that transforms the worker movement by expanding awareness. Social Democracy realises that the militant proletariat is the ideal 'recruiting ground' and so it directs its efforts there. Social Democracy definitely does not emanate automatically from the worker movement in order to serve the movement's own ends more efficiently. It is, rather, the force of a particular insight that comes originally from Marx and Engels.

We can now see the relevant meaning of 'confidence' in the Social-Democratic context. In terms of the worst case scenario, the Social Democrat is confident that the workers will eventually introduce socialism. In terms of the real-life scenario, the Social Democrat is confident that the worker movement will hear, mark and inwardly digest the Social-Democratic message as soon as it is in a position to receive it. Even the unlearned, the Ungelehrter, will achieve this insight.

Since this new natural necessity - 'a worker party will sooner or later adopt the socialist programme' - is dependent on insight, the actual timing is not closely tied to the course of capitalist development.[92] The most advanced Social Democracy need not be found in the most advanced capitalist country. It could conceivably be found, say, in Germany rather than England. Indeed (says Kautsky at one point), even the workers in

economically backward Russia a re more politically advanced in their thinking than the English workers.[93] The driving force in this respect is the quality of class leadership rather than the level of productive forces.

Thus, we see that the circles of awareness are constantly shifting in their relation to one another. The basic formula defines Social Democracy as the merger of socialism and the worker movement. But only context can inform us, when Social-Democratic writers use the term 'worker movement', whether they mean the worker movement prior to Social Democracy (defined by its militant resistance alone) or after its transformation by Social-Democratic insight and organisation.

Much of the m i sunderstanding about the orthodoxy of this or that formulation is caused by the resulting ambiguities. The best way to avoid such misunderstanding is to keep in mind the underlying narrative. On one side, we have a worker movement animated by the spirit of resistance, and, on the other, we have Social Democracy animated by the inSight that a merger is necessary. (Note that when an individual worker becomes convinced of the truth of scientific socialism, he becomes by virtue of that very fact a part of Social Democracy rather than simply the worker movement - thus making it almost a matter of definition to assert that awareness comes from Social Democracy.) The inner forces of the two protagonists drive them in each other 's direction and eventually lead to their melding.

We may sum up the moral of the circles of awareness in the following way: Social Democracy is needed and will be heeded. It is not needed to achieve socialism, since this will come about regardless. It is needed to avoid the human tragedy that would be caused by socialism corning 'later ' rather than 'sooner '. It will be heeded because its good news brings the proletariat new life, new power, inspiration and the joy of hope.

Merger vs. continued isolation

In order to bring out the crucial importance of the Social-Democratic merger, Kautsky stresses that the two partners - socialism and the worker movement - were originally separate. What might be called the foundation myth of Social Democracy describes how these two separate forces come together. Kautsky's rendition of this story served as a template for many other more detailed accounts of Social-Democratic origins, including the one given by Lenin in WITBD.

In the Erfurt Programme, Kautsky traces the growth of the worker

movement from its early beginnings in the Middle Ages. The driving force of the movement was always resistance to capitalist exploitation. This resistance grew more and more organised and effective, but resistance in and of itself does not generate the realisation that capitalist private property had to be abolished. To make this point, Kautsky sets out the thought experiment described earlier and describes a worker movement that remains separate from socialism until long after it takes political power.

Just as worker resistance in and of itself does not generate insight into the need for socialism, possession of the insight about socialism does not in and of itself generate the realisation that only a militant worker movement can bring it about. Kautsky's narrative tells how 'socialism' (= all those who advocated social control of the economy as the only answer to the problems of society and the problems of the poor in particular) comes to the worker movement from without - in other words, how socialism was originally separate from the worker movement. But the intention of the narrative is not to laud the socialists. On the contrary, their haughty condescension towards the militant worker movement and indeed their overt fear of it meant that worker rejection of socialism as a bourgeois whim was entirely understandable.

From the early socialists' point of view, the proletariat was much too crude and raw to be credited with the capacity for independent political initiative. And, when a militant worker movement did come into existence in the 1830s, the socialists were hostile because worker militancy threatened to scare off the bourgeois philanthropists and the elite politicians whom the socialists wanted to win over. The 'utopian' rejection of the worker movement can be illustrated with a North-American example. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* is a classic of utopian socialism: published in 1888, it contrasts the world of its time with the enlightened world of 2000.⁹⁴ Bellamy made no distinction between 'the labor parties', 'followers of the red flag', and bomb-throwing anarchists. In the following exchange, the narrator who grew up in the world of the nineteenth century learns the point of view of the enlightened twentieth century from the lips of his host, Doctor Leete:

As we sat at table, Doctor Leete amused himself with looking over the paper I had brought in. There was in it, as in all the newspapers of that date [1887], a great deal about the labor troubles, strikes, lockouts, boycotts, the programs of labor parties, and wild threats of the anarchists. 'By the way', said I, as the doctor read aloud to us some of these items, 'what part did the followers of the red flag take in the establishment of the new order of things? They were making considerable noise the last thing that I knew.' 'They had nothing to do with it

except to hinder it, of course', replied Doctor Leete.

Doctor Leete then announces as historical fact that the followers of the red flag were subsidised by the capitalists in order to delay reform. (The narrator adds in a footnote that this assertion is undoubtedly incorrect even though it is the only theory that makes intelligible their actions.) Doctor Leete then explains that the 'national party' that ushered in the utopian system of 2000 had nothing to do with the labour parties:

1[[Editorial note: for more on Bellamy and other late-Victorian utopias, see another book in the HM Book Series, Beaumont 2005.]

The labor parties as such never could have accomplished anything on a large or permanent scale. For purposes of national scope, their basis as merely class organisations was too narrow. It was not till a rearrangement of the industrial and social system on a higher ethical basis, and for the more efficient production of wealth, was recognised as the interest, not of one class, but equally of all classes, of rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, old and young, weak and strong, men and women, that there was any prospect that it could be achieved.[95]

Kautsky lays great stress on this kind of hostility toward militant labour on the part of the early socialists. Even worker socialists shared this hostility. The point of Kautsky's narrative is not that socialism was originally separate from the workers as such but that it was originally separate from the worker movement. Individual workers such as Wilhelm Weitling could and did become socialists - but that very fact alienated them from the worker movement and kept them apart from the militant day-to-day struggle. An 'elemental' [unwirschig] class instinct of hatred for the bourgeoisie made early worker socialists reject any doctrine coming from it. As a result, their own rough-hewn theories were crude and violent [gewalttätig]. Furthermore, despite their hostility to bourgeois intellectuals, they themselves had no real faith in the worker movement.

This early form of proletarian socialism lacked the patience and the confident sense of strength needed to contemplate a long, drawn-out class struggle. It remained a form of utopian socialism, only instead of hoping like earlier utopians for a bourgeois millionaire to bankroll the new Jerusalem, it placed its hopes on 'the Revolution' with a capital R that would give power to a small dictatorial group of visionaries. Any form of class struggle besides an immediate call to the barricades was perceived as a betrayal of 'mankind's cause'.

Usually such worker revolutionaries end up as anarchists, or, if they do join in the day-to-day class struggle, they forget about socialism altogether. This

kind of 'elemental' revolutionary militancy is one of the growing pains [Kil1derkrallkheit] of a genuinely socialist worker movement, since it tends to crop up whenever recent backward recruits to the proletariat still lack 'clear insight' into social relations. The paradoxical conclusion of this discussion is that even a socialism that grew directly out of proletarian soil failed to overcome the gap between socialism and the worker movement.

How then to overcome the gap - indeed, conflict - between socialism and the worker movement? Kautsky provides the answer in a basic passage that brings together the Communist Manifesto, Social Democracy, and the logic of the merger formula. The following paragraph begins the climactic section entitled 'Social Democracy as the Merger of the Worker Movement and Socialism'.

In order for the socialist and the worker movements to become reconciled and to become fused into a single movement, socialism had to break out of the utopian way of thinking. This was the world-historical deed of Marx and Engels. In the Communist Manifesto of 1847 they laid the scientific foundations of a new modern socialism, or, as we say today, of Social Democracy. By so doing, they gave socialism solidity and turned what had hitherto been a beautiful dream of well-meaning enthusiasts into a earnest object of struggle and [also 1 showed this to be the necessary consequence of economic development.⁹⁶ To the fighting proletariat they gave a clear awareness of its historical task and they placed it in a condition to speed to its great goal as quickly and with as few sacrifices as possible. The socialists no longer have the task of freely inventing a new society but rather of uncovering its elements in existing society. No more do they have to bring salvation from its misery to the proletariat from above, but rather they have to support its class struggle through increasing its insight and promoting its economic and political organisations and in so doing bring about as quickly and as painlessly as possible the day when the proletariat will be able to save itself. The task of Social Democracy is to make the class struggle of the proletariat aware of its aim and capable of choosing the best means to attain this aim [zielbewusst und zweckmässig].^[97]

% 'Necessary' = *notwendig*. Note the combination of will and determinism in

this sentence that many commentators find so paradoxical but which Kautsky evidently saw as mutually supporting. The heroic contribution of Marx and Engels could only have come from people who had mastered all of modern 'scientific' political economy and extended it further - in other words, bourgeois intellectuals (albeit very exceptional ones). This is one reason for the failure of the early self-taught proletarian socialists. The

necessary role of bourgeois intellectuals, however, begins and ends with Marx and Engels. Once the great insight is achieved, anybody can understand, accept and pass on the good news.

Furthermore, the great contribution of Marx and Engels should not be seen as a rejection but as a synthesis of what went before. As Kautsky put it later, each of the warring socialist sects contained a little bit of the truth, 'ein Sttckchen des Richtigen'.^[98] In what we can now see as a version of the 'sooner or later' argument, the contribution of Marx and Engels is to bring clarity and insight to what was previously instinctive groping.

A glance at these beginnings [of early socialist organisations always reveals] a chaotic germ, an uncertain, instinctive seeking and groping of numerous proletarians, none perceptibly more prominent than the others, all moved forward on the whole by the same tendencies, but often displaying the most striking individual deviations. Such a picture is, for instance, presented by the beginnings of the proletarian socialistic movement in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century ... Had it not been for Marx and Engels, the teachings [of the League of Communists] would have continued to remain in the stage of ferment for a long time. The two authors of the Communist Manifesto were only enabled to secure their dominant and determining position by virtue of their mastery of the science of their times. 99

Kautsky's narrative stresses the original separation of socialism and the worker movement in order to bring out the absolute necessity of their merger. And this is not just an inspiring story of the past - it also defines the tasks of Social-Democratic polemics in the present. Even at the present time, some participants of both the worker movement and the socialist movement still refuse the great synthesis, with the result that even their little bit of truth becomes debased. What was pardonable one-sidedness in the past becomes dangerously harmful in the present.

Thus, the merger narrative laid the foundation for a two-front polemical war aimed against all who defend the continued isolation of either socialism or the worker movement. The technical term within Social-Democratic discourse for the effort to keep the worker-class struggle free from socialism was *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*, 'trade-unions-only-ism'. A similar 'Nur' term could have been coined for bomb-throwing revolutionaries who continued to think that it was a waste of time to try to propagandise and educate the worker class as a whole prior to the revolution.

These two enemies of Social Democracy are often invoked by means of national stereotypes. Over here, we see the frantic French anarchist or syndicalist who scorns parliamentary politics. Over there, we see the stolid

British trade unionist who is a brilliant organiser but who openly rejects socialism. And, somewhere in the middle, the German Social Democrat who is both solidly organised and inspired by a high ideal.

If we only look at one front in this polemical war, we will come away with a equally one-sided view of the Social-Democratic outlook. This is the conclusion reached by Robert Stuart in his very useful study of the French Marxists led by Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue. The standard comment on the French Marxists is that they flip-flopped back and forth between a sectarian hard-line and an opportunist soft line. After reading party literature throughout the period, Stuart stresses rather the continuity in outlook, once we take into account the Party's multiple targets. One aim of my commentary is to bring out in a similar way the continuing two-front polemical war in Lenin's Iskra-era writings, very much including WITBD.

Insight and organisation

Now that we have witnessed the origins of the great synthesis, we can look closer at Social Democracy as the active force that works to bring about the merger. The key goals are summarised by the eloquent German words Kautsky used in the passage just cited, *zielbewusst* and *zweckmassig*, 'aware of one's aim' and 'capable of choosing the best means to attain it'. Or, as Kautsky elaborated in 1899,

Stuart 1992. Unfortunately, Stuart's book does not take up the question of the influence of the SPD model or of Kautsky on French Marxists during this period.

Social Democracy is the party of the militant proletariat; it seeks to enlighten it, to educate it, to organise it, to expand its political and economic power by every available means, to conquer every position that can possibly be conquered, and thus to provide it with the strength and maturity that will finally enable it to conquer political power and to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. 101

Out of Kautsky's extensive discussion of this topic, we will concentrate on the themes with the most impact on Russian Social Democracy. These include the primordial importance of political freedom; the strength that a clear final goal gives to the struggle here and now; the high value given to party organisation and discipline; the Social Democrats' own exalted sense of mission.

The Social-Democratic mission of educating and organising on a national

level is crippled at the outset if political freedom is absent. Secret organisations are a highly ineffectual substitute for 'open' [oiffell tiich, public] ones for purposes of a nation-wide class struggle. The crucial weapon of the socialist press is particularly dependent on political freedom.

To bring these masses into contact with one another; to awaken their awareness of their broad community of interests and to win them over for organisations capable of protecting their interests - this implies the possibility of speaking freely to the great masses, this implies freedom of assembly and the press ... Without the help of the press, it is absolutely impossible to unite the huge masses of today's wage-labour into organisations and to get them to the level of unified action. \02

For all these reasons and more, there is no worse sin from a Social-Democratic point of view than to disparage the crucial role of political freedom:

Where the working class bestirs itself, where it makes the first attempts to elevate its economic position, it puts political demands next to purely economic ones - namely, demands for freedom of association, of assembly, of the press. These freedoms have the greatest significance for the working class: they are among the conditions that makes its life possible and to which

Cited by]. Kautsky 1994, p. 86. Kautsky 1965, p. 218. it unconditionally owes its development. They are light and air for the proletariat; he who lets them wither or withholds them - he who keeps the proletariat from the struggle to win these freedoms and to extend them - that person is one of the proletariat's worst enemies. It doesn't matter how great a love for the proletariat he feels or fakes, it doesn't matter whether he calls himself an anarchist or a Christian-Socialist or whatever. He harms the proletariat just as much as a declared foe; it is all the same whether he does this from evil will or simply from ignorance - he must be fought against in the same way as acknowledged opponents of the proletariat. HJ3

The history of the 'light and air' metaphor is a revealing one. It can be traced back at least to 1865, when Engels wrote 'The Prussian Military Question and the German Worker Party'. On the subject of proper relations to liberal bourgeois opposition to absolutism (a subject with obvious relevance to Russia), Engels gave this advice:

Even if the worst came to the worst and the bourgeoisie was to scurry under the skirts of reaction for fear of the workers and to appeal to the power of those elements hostile to itself for protection against the workers - even then the worker party would have no choice but, notwithstanding the bourgeoisie, to continue its agitation for bourgeois freedom, freedom of the press and rights of assembly and association which the bourgeoisie had betrayed. Without these

freedoms it will be unable to move freely itself; in this fight it is fighting to establish its own life-element, to obtain the air it needs to breathe. 104

In 1882, Engels wrote a letter to Kautsky in which he remarked

Polish socialists who fail to put the liberation of the country at the forefront of their programme remind me of those German socialists who were reluctant to demand the immediate repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law and freedom of association, assembly and the press. To be able to fight, you must first have a terrain, light, air and elbow-room. Otherwise you never get further than chit-chat. 105

Whether he got the phrase from 'The Prussian Military Question' or from Engels's letter, Kautsky used it when he wrote the Erfurt Programme in 1892. The Russian Social Democrats immediately understood its application to their own situation. In 1897, the underground Social-Democratic paper *Rabochaia gazeta* [Worker Newspaper] wrote:

The Russian worker movement is still tightly held in the iron grip of governmental oppression. As a living being needs air, so we need political freedom. Without achieving freedom of strikes, assembly, unions, speech and press, without achieving the right to take part in the administration of the country or in making its laws, we will never cast off the chains of economic slavery that oppress us. That is why the struggle with the autocratic government for political freedom is the most urgent task of the Russian worker movement. 106

In 1898, the abortive First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Worker Party (RSDWP) declared *Rabochaia gazeta* the official organ of the new party - although the paper was never able to publish another issue. The First Congress also issued an influential manifesto drafted by Petr Struve. In this document - the first official programmatic document of the RSDWP - we read that 'political freedom is as necessary for the Russian proletariat as fresh air is for healthy breathing. It is the fundamental condition for its free development and for its successful struggle both for partial improvements and final liberation'. 107 In the first issue of *Iskra* that came out in late 1900, the same point is hammered home using the same metaphor. 108 To complete the circle, Kautsky repeated the metaphor in his *Social Revolution* - published in 1902 and promptly translated into Russian with Lenin as editor.

We can now understand why it was fatal for a Russian Social Democrat to be labelled as an 'economist'. An individual or group who really did argue that political rights were unimportant, or that it was no part of Social Democracy's job to fight for them, or that political goals should be restricted

to economic legislation - such a person, if the charge held, was not a 'moderate'

Lead article from Rabochaia gazeta No. 2, November 1897, from a reprint of the article in Lenin 1958-65, 2nd edition, 2, pp. 612-15.

Lenin 1926-35, 2, p. 616 (an English translation of the Manifesto of the First Congress can be found in Harding 1983).

IOH 'Achievements of International Social Democracy', Iskra, No. 1 (December 1900).

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Social Democrat and certainly not (as some scholars seem to think) a more orthodox Marxist than his 'political' opponents. No, such a person had read himself out of Social Democracy altogether. 'He who lets political freedoms wither or withholds them — he who keeps the proletariat from the struggle to win these freedoms and to extend them - that person is one of the proletariat's worst enemies.'

Thus, a nation-wide political party — not nation-wide economic organisations — was the highest form of the class struggle. As Kautsky rather extravagantly defends the crucial role of a worker political party:

The adherents of trades-union-only-ism are conservative even when they put on radical airs, while [in contrast] all worker parties are revolutionary by their very nature even when their attitude or indeed the awareness of their members is moderate.'

The creation of a nation-wide and effective organisation — whether political or economic — has implications that were rejected by anarchists and the oldstyle liberals of Kautsky's time but accepted by Social Democrats. The Social- Democratic movement requires 'permanent organs in the course of its growth, a sort of professional bureaucracy in the party, as well as in the unions, without which it cannot function, which are a necessity for it, which must continue to grow and to obtain duties that grow in importance'." This bureaucracy consists not only of salaried officials but parliamentary representatives and party journalists." Coupled with this functional division of labour is a spirit of discipline unique to a worker-class organisation. These organisational imperatives were partly the result of the capitalist transformation of society and partly a necessary condition of any effective fighting organisation. 'One finds [these features] present any time that the large-scale masses are fighting for a weighty battle-prize and where

victory can be won only with the strictest co-ordination and the most decisive unity of action all tending toward the same end'."? Thus Kautsky laughs at liberals who excoriate trade-union tyranny but who always vote at their party's call 92 « Chapter One and never think of thinking for themselves at all. Equally ridiculous are anarchists who sneer at the discipline of parliamentary parties while praising trade unions - proletarian trade unions! — as the home of unconstraint.

In order to combat the dangers inherent in this situation, representative democracy within the party is required. But representative democracy is in its way just another manifestation of a modern division of labour and the spirit of voluntary discipline. Any effective nation-wide political organisation will follow this imperative: 'our century is not only the century of parliamentarism but also the century of [party] congresses'.⁴* Leave to the anarchists the absurdity of assembling in party congresses in order to denounce the inevitable corruption of representative democracy!"*

But worker-class parties have a better chance than others of keeping organisational bureaucracy under control precisely because of the proletarian sense of discipline. This sense of discipline does not only mean the workers are good at following orders - it also means that the workers will stand for no nonsense from party officials, parliamentarians and journalists. The class origin of party spokesmen is no predictor of their behaviour: middle-class activists have been among the workers' best defenders while worker activists have sometimes betrayed their class. What is crucial is the workers' ability to 'constantly oversee and influence' those who speak in their name." Neither the middle classes nor the non-proletarian classes of the people (peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie) are capable of such organisational discipline.

Social-Democratic political organisations are powerful not only because they are modern large-scale organisations and not only because they are proletarian organisations that understand the value of discipline but also because they are Social-Democratic Parties and therefore inspired by a grand historical mission. Only a few years after the Erfurt Congress, Eduard Bernstein became notorious for his epigram 'The movement is everything, the final goal is nothing'. We can understand the horror occasioned by the epigram when

"3 Kautsky 1893, p. 79; Kautsky 1900, pp. 110-12.

4" As Lenin observes in WITBD (1958-65, 6, pp. 142-3 [802-3]), there is a substantial overlap between Kautsky's defence of representative democracy within organisations and the similar defence mounted by Sidney and

Beatrice Webb a few years later in *Industrial Democracy* (Webb, Sidney and Beatrice 1965 [1897]). I note that Kautsky's Erfurt Programme is listed in the Webbs' bibliography.

"5 Kautsky 1893, p. 109. we look at the Erfurt Programme and Parliamentarism - both written prior to any revisionist controversy - and observe Kautsky's insistence that an inspiring final goal was a unique source of strength for the Party in its ongoing day-to-day struggle.

Any worker movement - especially when operating under the oppressive environment of semi-absolutist countries like Germany and Austria - is going to face heartbreaking defeats as well as victories. The only thing that can prevent these failures from wreaking devastating demoralisation is a firm sense of the big story in which all failures are no more than passing episodes. After the class struggle is transformed by 'the fusion of the socialist and the worker movement',

the worker movement now has an aim to which it visibly comes closer, now all sides of the struggle are significant, including those that do not bring any immediate practical consequences, if only they further the self-awareness and prestige of the proletariat, its comradesly unity and discipline. Now many battle that seems to end in defeat is equivalent to a victory, now every strike and every rejected legislative proposal that would have served the interests of the proletariat is a step forward toward the aim of achieving an existence worthy of mankind. 116

Kautsky's mention of prestige and human dignity point to larger themes. Faced with the formidable self-righteousness of Victorian bourgeois civilisation, a worker political party faced a life-and-death problem of protecting what we might now call worker self-esteem. Kautsky argued that scientific socialism provided a goal that was superior in its sweep and generosity of vision to bourgeois parties. Not only that, it also provided the necessary confidence that this goal could and would be achieved. Thus only a firm sense of the final goal could give the workers self-respect and the respect of other classes. 11[7]

The final goal was also the only thing that made a unified nation-wide class party even feasible.

What gives a political party cohesion - especially if, like the socialist party, it has a great historical task to fulfil - is the final goal ... There will always be differences of opinion within the party and sometimes these differences reach a disquieting intensity. But the more the great common goals really live in the awareness of party members, the less easily will these internal disputes cause party splits. 11M

The final goal is not just words inscribed on a banner. It imposes the obligation of learning to grasp the big picture. As Kautsky wrote in 1908:

Today, in a society whose market embraces the entire world, a society which is in a process of constant transformation, of industrial and social revolution, in which the workers are organising themselves into an army of millions, and the capitalists are accumulating billions in money, it is impossible for a rising class - a class that cannot content itself with the retention of the status quo and that is obliged to aim at a complete reconstruction of society - to conduct its class struggle intelligently and successfully by a mere resort to 'plain common sense' and to the detail work of practical men. It becomes a necessity for every combatant to broaden his horizon through scientific understanding, to grasp the operation of great social forces in time and space, not in order to abolish the work in detail, or even relegate it to the background, but in order to align it in a definite relation with the social process as a whole. 119

The dire consequences of the absence of a final goal are exemplified by the fate of the English workers. The power of individual trade unions was hardly compensation for the resulting narrowness of spirit that caused the 'worker aristocrats' who should have been the champions of the masses to act instead as their oppressors. Even more striking was the political helplessness of even these economically powerful workers. Writing in 1902 and citing the research of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Kautsky stated that the impact of the English workers on British politics was in fact steadily decreasing.

Even the latest scourgings by their opponents have not served to rouse the proletariat of England. They remain dumb, even when their unions are rendered powerless, dumb when their bread is made more costly. The English workers today stand lower as a political factor than the workers of the most economically backward and the least politically free country in Europe - Russia. It is their thriving revolutionary awareness that give the Russian workers their great practical strength. It is the renunciation of revolution, the narrowing of interest to the interests of the moment, their so-called Realpolitik, that have made the English workers a nullity in actual politics. 120

If the inspiring final goal was so vital for effective worker-class influence, then the mandate for Social Democrats was clear: it is

the duty of every man who has made the advancement of the proletariat his life work, to oppose this tendency toward spiritual stagnation and stupidity, and to direct the attention of proletarians to great points of view, to large prospects, to worthy goals. 121

This comment leads us to one final aspect of Kautsky's outlook: the insistence not only on the proletariat's but also on Social Democracy's own

high and inspiring mission. Just as the Social-Democratic narrative gave strength to the workers to fight against seemingly hopeless odds, it also gave strength to the Social-Democratic activists who devoted themselves to their Kleinarbeit, the seemingly insignificant detail work needed to run the impressive party machinery.

To lead the economic and political class struggle - to carry out enthusiastically one's small duties but also to fill them with thoughts of a wide-encompassing socialism - to bring together by these means the organisations and activities of the proletariat, in a unified and harmonious way, into a massive whole that rises up ever more irresistible - this is what Marx and Engels taught was the task of anyone, whether proletarian or not, who adopts the viewpoint of the proletariat and wishes to liberate it. 122

We end this section with the final words of Kautsky's Path to Power, written in 1909 and much admired by Lenin. This kind of exalted rhetoric rarely makes it into secondary accounts, yet it is a vital part of the context for a book like WITBD.

Already today the elite [of the proletariat] forms the strongest, the most farsighted, most selfless and boldest stratum - the one united in the largest free organisations - of the nations of European culture. And in the same way the proletariat will, in and through struggle, take up into itself the most selfless and farsighted elements of all classes; it will organise and educate in its own bosom even its own most backward elements and fill them with the joy of hope and with insight. Its elite will be raised up to the height of culture, making it capable of leading the immense economic transformation that will finally, throughout the whole world, put an end to the misery that arises out of slavery, exploitation and ignorance. Happy are they who are called to take part in this high struggle and this glorious victory!123

Leadership of the people (the hegemony scenario)

Social Democracy, Kautsky tells us, has a tendency

to become more and more a national party - that is, a Volkspartei, in the sense that it is the representative not only of the industrial wage-labourers but of all the labouring and exploited strata - and therefore the great majority of the population, what is commonly known as 'the Volk'.124

This feature of the Social-Democratic narrative was overwhelmingly important for Russian Social Democracy.

Social Democracy will ultimately be able to lead the non-industrial labouring classes because socialism is in the interest of all labouring classes. But this long-term perspective does not exhaust the potential for

leadership of the Volk in the here and now. Precisely because Social Democracy is the merger of socialism and the worker movement, it is not restricted to preaching socialism and defending worker interests.

Social Democracy cannot defend exclusively the interests of the proletariat. Its historical mission is to precipitate social evolution in every domain in which it can act, and to take in its hands the cause of all the exploited and all the oppressed. 125

Kautsky 1909, p. 104. 12; Kautsky 1965, p. 250.

Thus Social Democracy encourages the proletariat to see itself as ' the sworn enemy of any exploitation or oppression, in whatever form they might take - it is the champion [Vorkiimpferl of all exploited and oppressed'.126

What this means in concrete terms is that Social Democracy can defend the present-day, acknowledged interests of all labouring classes better than any other party. These interests are enshrined in the so-called ' minimum programme'. The logic of the minimum programme would be easier to grasp if it were called the maximum programme - that is, the maximum that can be achieved prior to proletarian rule. (Conversely, the logic of the so-called 'maximum programme' is that it contains the minimum that has to be realistically achievable before the worker class is justified in taking power.) ' Minimum' indeed seems a misleading epithet for a set of measures that would have entailed a vast political and social transformation of Imperial Germany: full representative democracy, full political liberties, religious tolerance, 'socialised' medicine, progressive tax, labour protection laws. This list also shows how justified the SPD was in regarding itself as the principal voice of the ethical decency of modernism in Imperial Germany. According to Kautsky, some of these demands can only be championed by an anticapitalist party. Others are officially part of the programme of 'bourgeois democracy', that is, those sections of the middle classes that are actively (or at least publicly) interested in democratic transformation. But - and this is a crucial observation - 'even the bourgeois-democratic demands will not be championed by any party with as much energy as by Social Democracy'. 127

Along with Social Democracy's role as the champion of the interests of all labouring classes as a whole is the influence that results as the proletarian way of life becomes more of a model for other classes. I have already cited Kautsky on this point, so I will document this aspect of the Social-Democratic narrative with some words written in 1898 by Parvus, a Russian-born Social- Democratic activist who was at this time an influential

spokesman for the SPD Left:

The overwhelming majority of the population are in industry, trade, etc. These are therefore the people who determine the economic character of the

Kautsky 1965, p. 251. country. This is not merely a matter of numerical superiority; it means that this industrial urban population with its interests, conflicts, views, and demands dominates the historical character of Germany, brings all other things under its sway, shapes them in its own likeness, makes them dependent upon itself, and, inevitably, establishes its moral hegemony over them by the vast tide of public opinion it generates. 12M

The reader will notice that Parvus used the word 'hegemony' in the passage just quoted. This allows us to segue nicely into the political strategy labelled 'hegemony' by the Russian Social Democrats. Our interest is much more in the logic of this political strategy than in the word used to label it (for a word-history of 'hegemony', see the appendix to this chapter). 'Hegemony' was used to describe Social-Democratic hopes for inter-class leadership in the Russian context. The core idea of the hegemony strategy is that the Russian proletariat is the only force capable of leading the bourgeois-democratic revolution that would overthrow the tsar. As Plekhanov put it in 1889, 'The Russian revolution [Plekhanov means the anti-tsarist revolution] will either triumph as a revolution of the worker class or it will not triumph at all'. 129

This strategy has struck many as a surprising, even paradoxical, one for Marxists to adopt. According to the Marxist schema, it is said, the bourgeois revolution is carried out by the bourgeoisie - otherwise, why label it a 'bourgeois revolution'? - while the proletariat carries out the socialist revolution at a later date. What I want to show here is that the hegemony strategy follows - perhaps even with natural necessity - from the accepted premises of Social-Democratic thinking that I have already described. In fact, the appropriate conclusions from these premises were already drawn by Kautsky in his book on parliamentarism in 1893. 130

Premise Number One is that political freedom is an absolute necessity for Social Democracy. From this premise, it follows that 'in countries where there

12" Tudor and Tudor 1988, p. 182, originally published in Siichsische Arbeiter-Zeitung,

is only a pretend parliamentary regime [Scheinkonstitutionalismus], another weighty task falls to the proletariat: the conquest of a genuinely parliamentary regime'. \31 Perhaps, before the rise of Social Democracy, a

revolutionary could really believe that a parliamentary regime would only benefit the elite and not the people, but ' today it becomes clearer every day that [the struggle for proletarian political power] takes the form, at least in the east of Europe, of a struggle for a parliamentary regime, against militarism and absolutism'.[132]

Premise Number Two is that the people as a whole also have an interest in the political freedom that will protect them from abuse of power. Of course, Social Democracy is the force that will most effectively use political freedom to fight abuses. A parliamentary system - even such a ' servile and weak' one as Austria - ensures that a single ' inflexible and brave' individual can throw the glare of publicity on abuses and set a certain limit to arbitrary action. Parliament provides ' a tribune from whose height the accusers of present- day society can speak to the entire people'. \33

Premise Number Three is that the bourgeoisie's interest in political freedom goes down as the proletariat's interest in it goes up. The bourgeoisie certainly would not mind having political freedom for themselves, and they have no qualms about enlisting proletarian help in getting these freedoms - as long as the bourgeoisie can be sure that the proletariat will not use them in a dangerous way. Perhaps the proletariat can simply be banned from political participation, as in France after 1830, or perhaps the bourgeoisie feels unthreatened by a docile proletariat, as in England.

But the bourgeoisie has begun to notice, correctly, that it can no longer exploit the revolutionary services of the proletariat in this way. In fact, the evident success of Social Democracy makes political freedom itself rather less attractive. For German Social Democrats, it was axiomatic that the cowardly bourgeoisie had betrayed their own cause after 1848. As Kirkup recounts:

It is a standing charge brought against German liberalism by the Social Democrats, that it has never led the progressive forces against the reaction with any degree of courage or resolution. They maintain that in the revolutionary struggles of 1848 the German Liberals never trusted the working class, that when the choice came to be made between the reaction and a strenuous democratic policy supported by the proletariat, they preferred to transact with the reaction, and so committed treason on the sacred cause of progress ... ' The treason of the bourgeoisie', ' the abdication by the bourgeoisie' of its historic place at the head of the democratic movement: these phrases sum up the worst accusations brought by the Social Democrats against the German middle class.

1M

Kautsky generalised the failure of the German bourgeoisie with the

following epigram:

*In fact, the European bourgeoisie east of the Rhine has become so weak and so cowardly that in all likelihood the regime of the sabre and of the bureaucracy cannot be broken until the proletariat is in a position to conquer political power, so that the fall of absolutist militarism will lead directly to the seizure of political power by the proletariat.*¹³⁶

Put all these premises together, and we see that 'Social Democracy, the party of the class-aware proletariat, is by that very fact the most solid support of democratic aspirations, a much more reliable support than - the [bourgeois] democrats themselves'.¹³⁶ The Social-Democratic proletariat was the most reliable supporter of democracy because it saw democracy not as an end in itself but as a means - an absolutely vital means. Social Democracy would love democracy less, loved it not socialism more.

The Russians may have been the first to use the word 'hegemony' to describe proletarian leadership in the bourgeois revolution, but the strategy itself was impeccably Social-Democratic. The basic idea was simply this: bourgeois

1M Kirkup 1906, pp. 200-2. Compare the comment by Michels on German liberalism's

'partisan struggle against socialism and its simultaneous and voluntary renunciation of all attempts to complete the political emancipation of the German bourgeoisie' (Michels 1962, pp. 49-50).

in Kautsky 1900, p. 194. Compare this statement from the Manifesto issued by the Russian Social-Democratic Worker Party at its first congress in 1898: 'The further east we go in Europe, the more weak, cowardly and base becomes the bourgeoisie in regard to politics and the greater are the cultural and political tasks that fall to the lot of the proletariat.' *Kommunisticheskaia partiia v rezoliutsiiakh* 1983, pp. 15-18. If

...

he had been so minded, Lenin could have cited this statement in justification of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917.

¹³⁶Kautsky 1900, p. 194. political freedoms are much too important to be left to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie would try to exploit the revolutionary services of the proletariat to get as much for themselves and as little for the labouring classes as possible. A proletariat led by Social Democracy would instead lead the whole people to ensure the most extensive democratic constitution available. Political freedom made Social

Democracy possible and it was therefore the duty of Social Democracy to make political freedom possible.

According to the hegemony scenario, Social Democracy assumes leadership not just of the worker movement and of the proletariat, but the people [das Volk, the narod] as a whole. Thus we find ourselves now in the outer circles of the spread of awareness. The battle for leadership is more difficult in these outer circles. There is more incomprehension, vacillation and even hostility. The resulting complex set of expectations is brought out in a passage written by Kautsky in the 1920s:

As the mass, the economic importance, and the intelligence of the industrial population grow, so too does the attraction exerted by the proletariat on strata of the people that do not entirely belong to it but are close to it with respect to their standard of living and their economic relations. This attraction becomes the stronger, the greater the intellectual and organisational independence and unity of the proletariat are ... The classes in society are in reality not so rigorously distinct as they have to be in theory ... Thus, there are numerous intermediate grades between the class of wage-labourers and the other working classes, peasants, artisans, and petty trades, just as there are between them and the intellectuals. Vacillating between the proletariat and capital, individual members and even whole groups of these classes and strata decide more in favour of or against the proletariat, depending on particular personal influences, historical situations, and economic constellations. Thus, a part of the peasants, petty bourgeois, and intellectuals can become ever more bitterly antagonistic to the proletariat. A constantly growing part, especially of the poorer strata, will be drawn to the proletariat and make the proletarian cause its own ... In this way, too, the mass army grows that marches under the proletariat banner. m m Kautsky 1988, p. 409. If this commentary aimed at providing a full account of

Social Democracy as good news

We have canvassed Karl Kautsky's pronouncements on a number of topics and we shall see echoes of all of them in Lenin's writings. The power of these pronouncements does not stem merely from Kautsky's authoritative status. His various opinions are unified and anchored in three ways: by the narrative logic of the merger formula, by the authority of the Communist Manifesto, and by the prestige of actually existing Social Democracy in Germany. We might even say that, for a reader such as Lenin, the Communist Manifesto and the Erfurt Programme stand in a Old Testament / New Testament relation to each other. The New Testament tells us a story that is supposed to govern our lives and then backs up this claim by arguing that

the events of the story have unfolded *secundum scriptu ras*, as predicted by earlier authoritative writings. The Erfurt Programme tells an idealised version of the story of the SPD - past, present and future - as a confirmation of the predictions of the Communist Manifesto. In this way, it strengthens the authoritative status both of the Manifesto and the SPD model.

The merger formula - 'Social Democracy is the merger of socialism and the worker movement' - pulls all Kautsky's various arguments together. The expanding circle of awareness, the original and nearly fatal separation of socialism and the worker movement, the two-front polemical war against those who refuse the great Marxian synthesis, political freedom as light and air for the proletariat, the strength that comes from an inspiring final goal, the need for disciplined modern parties of nation-wide scope, the aspiration to become a Volkspartei, the need to carry out the democratic tasks that the bourgeois is too scared to undertake, and finally, Social Democracy's own exalted sense of mission - all these flow from the merger narrative. In order for the worker class to accomplish its socialist mission, it must understand this mission and make itself capable of overcoming all resistance to its completion. Social Democracy can provide the requisite insight and organisation only if it builds up an efficient nation-wide organisation. It can only do this if it has obtained political freedom. Political freedom, along with the many

Bolshevism, we would have to go into the subject of inter-class leadership in much greater detail. In particular, the figure of the vacillating peasant or urban petty bourgeois is central to the Bolshevik view of the world. I have examined various aspects of inter-class leadership in Bolshevik doctrine in Lih 1999, Lih 2000 and Lih 2002. other demands of the 'minimum programme', allows and indeed compels Social Democracy to become a tribune of the people.

The merger formula was not confined to Kautsky. In fact, if there was one thing that united both orthodox and 'opportunists', it was loyalty to the merger formula as a definition of Social Democracy. A brief survey will bring out the foundational nature of the merger formula.

Conrad Schmidt was a member of the German Social-Democratic Party who leaned toward revisionism. In an article devoted to showing the many ways in which the Communist Manifesto had become dated, he started off with an appreciation of its fundamental contribution (NB: 'modern socialism' is a synonym for 'Social Democracy'):

The essence of modern socialism lies in the connection between the working

class movement and a final goal beyond bourgeois-capitalist society. Modern socialism found itself faced, firstly, with a spontaneous working class movement which had arisen as a reaction to unrestricted capitalist exploitation and, secondly, with the conception of collectively organised production and distribution of goods, which had arisen outside the mainstream of practical life, from criticism of the irrationality of bourgeois property. What socialism achieved was the combination and mutual interaction of both these moments, an interaction which stripped the actual working class movement of its native limitations and the socialist idea of its utopian character. The materialist conception of history ... provided the conceptual means of achieving this reconstructive combination. I 3H

In 1908, our American socialist Robert Hunter published an informative and useful survey of the European socialist movement. In this book, he looks into the conflict within Social Democracy between 'Marxists' and 'reformists', but he insisted that there was still a fundamental difference between committed

1311 Tudor and Tudor 1988, pp. 205-10 (originally published in Vorwiirts, 20 February 1899). I do not know what German word is here translated as 'spontaneous'. Note this statement by Bernstein himself in 1898: 'We talk of "proletarian" ideas. And the way this is sometimes presented in our literature suggests that these ideas are not merely accepted by a large section of the workers of all civilised countries but were actually first produced by the intelligence of the modern working class. But this is at best a metaphor, an ideological inversion of the actual process ... Just think how much ideology is required for workers to see themselves as proletarians!' (Tudor and Tudor 1988, pp. 233-9). Social Democrats of either camp and socialists such as the Fabians who thought they could dispense with an independent political organisation of the proletariat. To bring out the fundamental difference, he cited with approval the words of the 'reformist' Jean Jaures, one of the leaders of the French Socialist party. The reader will find little that is new in Jaures's words, but some repetition is inevitable when one wants to document the existence of a commonplace:

To Marx belongs the merit, perhaps the only one of all attributed to him that has fully withstood the trying tests of criticism and of time, of having drawn together and unified the labour movement and the socialist idea. In the first third of the nineteenth century, labour struggled and fought against the crushing power of capital, but it was not conscious itself toward what end it was straining; it did not know that the true objective of its efforts was the common ownership of property. And, on the other hand, socialism did not know that the labour movement was the living form in which its spirit was embodied, the concrete practical force of which it stood in need ... [Marx] enriched the

practical movement by the idea, and to the theory he added practice; he brought the socialist thought into proletarian life, and proletarian life into socialist thought. B'

I have just given the words of a Frenchman as cited by a contemporaneous

American, and now I will give the words of a Belgian, Emile Vandervelde, as cited by a contemporaneous Russian: 'The theory of socialism, born of compassion, remained divided from day-to-day socialism, born of suffering. It required long years, full of heavy ordeals, for the thinkers and proletarians to join forces and extend a hand to each other.' The Russian Social Democrat who cited these words, Vladimir Akimov, did not himself like the emphasis on separation, but nevertheless acknowledged that 'this image has been used repeatedly as a figurative description of the development of the social labour movement'. 140

The merger narrative was used as a template for developments in Russia by Iulii Martov when he published a pioneering historical sketch of the struggle of the Russian proletariat in 1900. The work begins with the words

Hunter 1908, pp. 206-7. Akimov 1969, p. 118. The Vandervelde citation is from 1898.

'The contemporary international socialist worker movement consists of two streams that for a long time developed independently of each other'. There follows a very familiar account of Western developments lifted from Kautsky's Erfurt Programme, ending with the consummation devoutly to be wished:

Socialism came to the economic movement of the worker class, it took on itself the task of becoming the expression of the common interests of this class movement. And meanwhile the worker movement came to socialism: the worker masses started to see in socialism the final aim of their own historical movement. Thus took place the fusion of the practical worker movement with theoretical thought - thus was realised what Lassalle called the union of science with the workers. The idea of socialism became the idea of the worker class, the socialist party became its advance detachment [or 'vanguard']. This is how things turned out in all countries. Speaking of the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, we also must trace both the development of the economic struggle of the worker masses and the development of socialist thought up to the moment when it became the patrimony of the proletariat. H I

In the rest of the pamphlet, Martov traces the intermingling of socialism and the worker movement in a way that brings out both the canonical essence and the local peculiarities of the Russian story. Thus, in absolutist Russia the Social Democrats themselves had to take over much of the job that trade

unions and the like had done in the West, namely, 'to give an organised and sensible character to the stikhiinyi [elemental] worker movement'. The trust earned by the Social Democrats in this line of activity helped them in their more basic task of

sowing in the masses an awareness of the class interests of the proletariat, of the necessity of uniting in the struggle for socialism, and of the necessity of conquest of political freedom as the first stage on the path to the full liberation from exploitation. '[42]

We have seen the merger narrative's canonical status endorsed in various ways by a Czech, a German, a Belgian, an American, a Frenchman and a Russian. I believe we may consider as established its role as a central part of international Social Democracy's doctrinal identity.

The aim of this chapter has been to provide the Social-Democratic context for WITBD. Today, when scholars can affirm that the Communist Manifesto was neglected by Kautsky and by Social Democrats in general or that Marx was nihilistic about political freedom, the view of Social Democracy presented here may be surprising. A hundred years ago, it was a commonplace to any informed observer. To bring this out, I will conclude this chapter by looking at the spirit of Social Democracy through the eyes of two observers, one from the beginning and the other towards the end of the era of pre-World-War Social Democracy.

These two passages will anchor my 'good news' interpretation of Social Democracy. According to this interpretation, the self-appointed mission of Social Democracy was to bring the good news of their world-historical mission to the workers in the confident expectation that they would receive the message and carry out the mission. The first passage by John Rae reveals the Marxian roots of the political strategy implied by Social Democracy's mission and the second passage by Robert Hunter reveals the emotional exaltation that surrounded the mission.

John Rae was a learned economic historian who wrote one of the first scholarly biographies of Adam Smith, from which we may accurately deduce his hostility to socialism. Nevertheless, his 1884 publication *Contemporary Socialism* contains a chapter on Karl Marx that must be one of the very first academic discussions of Marx in any language - and, in my opinion, an excellent one (in particular due to his recognition of the importance of Marx's Young-Hegelian background). In the first edition of 1884, Rae noted that it was remarkable that the works of Marx were so little known in England even as they stirred up a commotion as far away as Russia, especially since *Das Kapital* is so imbued with things English. But

an English translation of *Das Kapital* had appeared in 1887, leading Rae to remark in the second edition of 1891 that 'we have therefore grown more familiar of late with the name and importance of Karl Marx'.^[143] In his chapter on Marx he quotes Marx's criticism of the original outlook of the Communist League (the organisation for which he drafted the *Communist Manifesto*):

its work could have no tenable theoretical basis except that of a scientific insight into the economic structure of society, and this ought to be put into a popular form, not with the view of carrying out any utopian system, but of promoting among the working classes and other classes a self-conscious participation in the process of historical transformation of society that was taking place under their eyes. 144

Rae comments that 'this is always with Marx the distinctive and ruling feature of his system'. After noting Marx's belief in inevitable economic evolution, he describes at length the practical political strategy implied in Marx's system. I cite this passage in extenso, not only because I think it one of the best things ever written by an academic scholar about Marx but because it proves that even in 1884, the year after Marx's death, when German Social Democracy was still struggling to come into existence, the political strategy that inspired Lenin was clearly apparent to an attentive reader of Marx.

Marx thought the League should also change its method and tactics. Its work, being that of social revolution, was different from the work of the old political conspirators and secret societies, and therefore needed different weapons; the times, too were changed, and offered new instruments. Street insurrections, surprises, intrigues, pronunciamentos might overturn a dynasty, or oust a government, or bring them to reason, but were of no avail in the world for introducing collective property or abolishing wage labour. People would just begin the day after to work for hire and rent their farms as they did before. A social revolution needed other and larger preparation; it needed to have the whole population first thoroughly leavened with its principles; nay, it needed to possess an international character, depending not on detached local outbreaks, but on steady concert in revolutionary action on the part of the labouring classes everywhere. The cause was not political, or even national, but social; and society - which was indeed already pregnant with the change - must be aroused to a conscious consent to the delivery. What was first to be done, therefore, was to educate and move public opinion, and in this work the ordinary secret society went but a little way. A secret propaganda might still be carried on, but a public and open propaganda was more effectual and more suitable to the times. There never existed greater facilities for such a movement, and they ought to make use of all the abundant means of popular agitation and

intercommunication which modern society allowed. No more secret societies in holes and corners, no more small risings and petty plots, but a great broad organisation working in open day, and working restlessly by tongue and pen to stir the masses of all European countries to a common international revolution. Marx sought, in short, to introduce the large system of production into the art of conspiracy. 145

I present the next passage by Robert Hunter with some hesitation. I read it out in 2001 at a conference on WITBD in Essen, Germany, and was told later that I was perceived as making a hysterical attack on Lenin. I was also told that any comparison between Marxism and religion was nothing but a typical bourgeois ploy. But, speaking as a historian, I say that the emotional fervour and dedication evoked by this passage was an essential part of Social Democracy, very much including the Russian Social Democrat Lenin. Anyone who is embarrassed by Hunter's rhetoric will also be embarrassed by the Marxist Left at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But my motive in bringing the passage forth here is not to make the should-be-banal point that the socialism of this era can be compared to religious belief in its intensity and its demands (a point that the revolutionaries themselves often made). I rather want to demonstrate how this socialist fervour expressed itself in the story of the inspired and inspiring activist who is spreading the word of Social Democracy and by this means is building up a world-wide army of fighters for the cause.

Almost unknown to the world outside of Labour a movement wide as the universe grows and prospers. Its vitality is incredible, and its humanitarian ideals come to those who labour as drink to parched throats. Its creed and programme call forth a passionate adherence, its converts serve it with a daily devotion that knows no limit of sacrifice, and in the face of persecution, misrepresentation, and even martyrdom, they remain loyal and true ... From Russia, across Europe and America to Japan, from Canada to Argentina, it crosses frontiers, breaking through the barriers of language, nationality, and religion as it spreads from factory to factory, from mill to mill, and from mine to mine, touching as it goes with the religion of life the millions of the underworld. Its converts work in every city, town and hamlet in the industrial nations, spreading the new gospel among the poor and lowly, who listen to their words with religious intensity. Tired workmen pore over the literature which these missionaries leave behind them, and fall to sleep over open pages; and the youth, inspired by its lofty ideals and elevated thought, leave the factory with joyous anticipation to read through the night. I ••

Appendix on 'hegemony' Given the notoriety of the term today, the following history - although, I stress, highly speculative - might be of interest to readers. According to the Oxford English Dictionary's account

of late nineteenth-century usage, 'hegemony' meant most particularly the leadership deriving from a predominant position of one state in a confederacy or union of states. Applied originally to ancient Greece, it was transferred thence to the multi-state system of pre-imperial

Germany. In 1860, the Times wrote 'it is no doubt a glorious ambition which drives Prussia to assert her claim to the leadership, or as that land of professors phrases it, the "hegemony" of the Germanic confederation'.¹⁴⁷ Of course, Social Democrats were greatly interested in the Prussian question - indeed, it was a principal bone of contention between the Lassalleans who favoured German unification under Prussian auspices and the Bebel-Liebknicht group who opposed it. So, the word was a natural one to use when evoking the influence of the worker class beyond the borders of the urban industrial workers, as in the Parvus citation above. In 1900, the French translation of Kautsky's *Parliamentarism* used it to translate Kautsky's description of the confident class domination of the English bourgeoisie.¹⁴⁸

The first Russian to apply the word to Social-Democratic political strategy seems to have been Pavel Akselrod in the late 1890s. Akselrod's use of the

I • Hunter 1908, pp. v-vi. Compare to Lassalle's rhetoric half a century earlier. W Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. 'hegemony'.

I 10 • Chapter One term should not, of course, suggest that he originated the strategy. The credit here belongs to Plekhanov. Lenin later defined Bolshevism as the faction most loyal to the original strategy of hegemony, and his close lieutenants Kamenev and Zinoviev imbibed this respectful use of the term. After the 1917 revolution, Zinoviev made hegemony the centrepiece of his own exposition of Leninism and even described the dictatorship of the proletariat as the hegemony strategy applied after taking power. As head of the Communist International, Zinoviev no doubt expounded the conception to Comintern activists such as Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's use of the word - when rediscovered decades later - started it off on its way to its present eminence (although, in my own opinion of Gramsci's usage, the originality of his concept and its alleged anti-Leninist thrust have been greatly overestimated). As we look over the history of the term, we are struck by the movement over time from a confident and even daring set of connotations ('we can use proletarian influence over other classes to achieve great aims') to a fearful and pessimistic set ('the influence of the bourgeoisie over even the proletariat keeps us from achieving very much').

Notes

2. The Manifesto in 1889 and the Erfurt Programme in 1894.

4. Engels 1962c, pp. 103-4.

13. Ibid.

14. Marx 1984a [1864].

15. Engels 1962b, p. 228. The necessity of some sort of organisation aimed at political power is inherent in the new world view. Marx's views on the role of 'the party' are less basic, especially since the appropriate institutions and terminology were still inchoate at this period. With this proviso, the discussions by Molyneux 1978 and Johnstone 1967 of Marx's view of the party provide valuable insights.

31. Eley 2002.

12. Brandes 1911, p. 16 (preface dated 1881). 31 Takhtarev 1924, p. 24

34. Lassalle 1899, p. 53 (Worker Programme). When possible, I have used translations made in the nineteenth century as less academic and closer to Lassalle's agitational spirit. Quoted passages have been checked against the original German text (Lassalle 1919a, pp. 193-4).

41. Ensor 1910, pp. 45-6; Lassalle 1919c, pp. 89-90. Note Lassalle's inspiration by the middle-class anti-Corn Laws agitation campaign in England.

50. Hunter 1908, pp. 1-2, 5.

51. Wolfe 1964 [1948], pp. 160-1.

54. Steenson 1991, p. 80.

57. Russell 1965, p. 106. The man who ran the red postal service was Julius Motteler; for detailed discussion, see Lidtke 1966, pp. 89-97. 511 Mehring 1898, 2, p. 463; see also Gay 1962, pp. 60-1.

60. Steenson 1981, p. 130.

61. Schulz 1993, p. 2.

62. Kirkup 1906, p. 214. (Kirkup is describing the causes of the Party's excellent showing in the Reichstag election of 1877.) 6.1 Michels 1962, p. 91.

66. Lidtke 1985, pp. 298-9. The full title of Lidtke's book is The Alternative

Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany.

70. Engels 1959, p. 235; Engels 1993, p. 9. See also the title of the International under Marx: The International Working Men's Association.

71. Kautsky 1965, p. 216.

72. Kautsky 1965, pp. 216-17. In Russian Social Democracy, the term *trudiaschiesia* has the same technical meaning of workers in a very broad sense, as opposed to the industrial proletariat by itself.

80. Russell 1965, p. 161.

81. Kautsky 1965, pp. 216-17.

88. Kautsky 1965, pp. 225-31.

90. Stalin, 1946-52, 1, p. 98, see also 1, p. 105. For other instances of the same kind of argument, see Gorin, a speaker at the Second Congress cited by Stalin (Stalin 1946-52, 1, p. 104) and Kanatchikov 1986, p. 267.

103. Kautsky 1965, p. 219.

104. Engels 1962a, p. 77. \05 Letter of 7 February 1882 in Marx Engels Werke, Band 35, p. 270; Marx Engels Collected Works, vol. 20, p. 192.

109. Kautsky 1900, p. 188. Kautsky 1925 [1908], p. 463.

111. Kautsky 1925 [1908], pp. 464-6. Kautsky 1893, p. 42. In German, Kautsky calls for a combination of *Zusammenhalten* and *Zusammenwirkell*.

115. Kautsky 1893, p. 109.

116. Kautsky 1965, pp. 241-2.

117. Kautsky 1965, Section 12, pp. 238-42.

118. Kautsky 1900, p. 183 (written before Bernstein's 'revisionism').

119. Kautsky 1925, pp. 16-17.

120. Kautsky 1902, p. 55.

121. Kautsky 1925, pp. 16-17.

122. Kautsky 1908, p. 37.

125. Kautsky 1900, p. 165.

127. Kautsky 1965, pp. 254-6.

128. Kautsky 1893 and Kautsky 1900 (French translation). All further

Kautsky citations in this section are from this book.

131. Kautsky 1900, p. 166.

133. Kautsky 1900, p. 105. Lenin explicitly wanted the newspaper *Iskra* to be a temporary substitute for parliament as a tribune that could address the whole people.

141. Martov 1900, pp. 27, 30.

142. Martov 1900, pp. 92-3.

144. Rae 1884, p. 127. The passage comes from Marx's *Herr Vogt* (Marx 1984, p. 107). Rae's translation is rather free but (I believe) does not betray the spirit of Marx's point.

145. Rae 1884, pp. 127-9.

148. Kautsky 1900, pp. 56, 146.

Notes

1. Lenin 1958-65, 4, p. 189, an unpublished newspaper article from late 1899.

3. Marx and Engels 1959, p. 462.

5. Marx 1996, p. 13 (Carver translation). (, Marx and Engels 1978, p. 518 (Marx 1984a, p. 12).

7. Kautsky 1899, pp. 5-6.

8. Lenin 1958-65, 2, p. 8. Lenin's emphasis.

9. Engels 1959, p. 453. The nineteenth-century English translation supervised by Engels and published in the 1880s adds two noteworthy glosses: the Chartists are 'theoretically the more backward', etc., and the post-merger worker class will be 'the true intellectual leader of England' (Engels 1993, pp. 244-5, emphasis given to added words).

10. Marx and Engels 1959, p. 492.

17. Marx and Engels 1959, pp. 470-1. This section of the *Manifesto* forms the background to Lenin's metaphor of 'artisanal limitations' as a stage in the development of party organisation (see Chapter Eight). Marx and Engels 1959, pp. 485-8. According to Gareth Stedman Jones, Marx is unfair here to the actual 'True Socialists' (Stedman Jones 2002). Jones's assertion does not detract from the centrality of the tactical point Marx is making.

19. In his biography of Plekhanov, Samuel Baron brings out the importance of this section of the *Manifesto* for Plekhanov. Unfortunately, he also argues that this section and its tactical implications were 'little more than an aside' for Marx and Engels (Baron 1963, p. 112).

22. Marx and Engels 1960, p. 251. As we shall see, the German SPD followed this electoral advice to the letter.

23. Kolakowski 1978, 1, p. 1. It is hard to find in Kolakowski's account even a mention of the conquest of state power by the proletariat, much less a recognition of its central role.

24. Eley 2002, p. 38. Eley has an excellent description of the new 'independent mass party of labour': 'independent, because it organised separately from liberal coalitions; mass, because it required broadly based public agitation; labour, because it stressed the need for class-based organisation; and a party, by proposing permanent, centrally organised, programmatically co-ordinated, and nationally directed activity' (pp. 39-40). Unfortunately, he contrasts this to 'vanguardism', although this strategy is precisely what Social Democrats (including Lenin) meant by a vanguard party.

25. Hobsbawm 1962, p. 289.

26. Draper 1977-90.

27. Lenin 1958-65, 33, p. 226. 211 Michels 1962 [1911], p. 95.

35. Lassalle 1899, pp. 53-9; Lassalle 1919a, pp. 194, 199 (Worker Programm e).

36. Lassalle 1899, pp. 59-60; Lassalle 1919a, pp. 200-1 (Worker Programm e). Note how this passage combines determinism (you are destin ed to be a ruling class) with a call to passionate activity to bring about this inevitable denouement.

37. Lassalle 1919c, p. 47 (Open Letter). The nineteenth-century English translation of the Op en Letter freely adds considerable glosses to Lassalle's text. For example, it says in this passage that universal suffrage is for the worker party 'a sentiment to be inscribed on its banners, and forming the central principle of its action' (Lassalle 1898, p. 8).

38. For background on the emergence of the SPD, see Barcla y and Weitz 1998.

39. Lassalle 1919c, p. 42 (Open Letter); compare Lassalle 1898, pp. 4-5.

40. Lassalle 1898, pp. 9-10; Lassalle 1919c, pp. 48-9 (Op en L ett er). Later Social-Democratic opinion concluded that Lassalle overdid his hostility to reforms as such.

42. Ensor 1910, p. 46; Lassalle 1919c, pp. 90-1 (Opell Letter). 4] Ensor 1910, p. 46; Lassalle 1919c, p. 90 (Open Letter).

44. Lassalle 1900, p. 44 (Science and the Workingman, translated by Thorstein Veblen); Lassalle 1919b, p. 247. Compare Lassalle's dictum 'die Wissenschaft an das Volk zu bringen' with Lenin's notorious formula about bringing socialist awareness to the workers from without.

45. As cited by Russell 1965 [1896], pp. 77-9.

46. Draper 1977-90, 4, pp. 266-9. According to Draper, 'this book was one of the most acute Marxist analyses ever published'.

47. Bernstein 1970, pp. 190-2 (translated by Eleanor Marx Aveling). The song is the anthem quoted at the beginning of this section.

48. Hunter 1908, p. 1.

49. Hunter 1908, pp. 4-5.

52. Hall 1977, pp. 17, 58 (Bebel in 1903, Prussian official in 1897). The cited comment by Prussian Minister of the Interior von der Recke was in defence of a bill that would have prohibited the SPD from holding public meetings. This bill almost passed. Hall's excellent study is an effective response to Wolfe's rosy view cited above. 51 A comparison can be made to what John Kay calls the American Business Model: an

idealised model of the American economy that is not a reliable empirical guide to the actual workings of this economy but that nevertheless is fervently believed in by many of the practitioners within the economy and that has acquired prestige throughout the world as an explanation of the perceived successes of the American economy (Kay 2003).

55. Steenson 1981; Barclay and Weitz 1998.

56. 'Not only were party organisations proper outlawed, but also trade unions with even the faintest socialist connections, cultural and exercise clubs, workers' lending libraries, consumer co-operatives, and on occasion even taverns and cafes popular with workers were shut down by overzealous police officials' (Steenson 1981, p. 35).

59. Kirkup 1906, p. 222. I suspect that this passage comes from the first edition of 1892, that is, fresh after the triumph of the SPD.

67. See the Collins German-English English-German Dictionary 1981, s.v. Arbeiter. 6R Lidtke 1985, p. 200. 6. Engels 1959, p. 436; Engels 1993, p. 227.

73. Russell 1965 [1896], p. 124.

74. Pierson 1993, p. 170; written by Kautsky in 1903-4 and cited in Lenin in Two Steps Forward (1904), Lenin 1958-65, 8, pp. 309-10.

75. Steenson 1981, p. 45.

76. Hall 1977, p. 20, citing Frederick William Wile.

77. Hunter 1908, pp. 225-7. 7H Hunter 1908, pp. 213-14.

79. Hunter 1908, p. 30. For a full-length study of SPD indictments, see Hall 1977.

87. For example, by Plekhanov in his 1904 article attacking WITBD (Iskra, No. 70 and 71 [25 July and 1 August 1904], reprinted in Plekhanov 1923-7, 13, pp. 116-40).

89. Kautsky 1965, p. 229.

91. Kautsky 1965, pp. 230-1.

92. Kautsky 1 901b (this article is cited by Lenin in WITBD).

93. Kautsky 1902, pp. 55-6.

95. Bellamy 1968, pp. 263-5 (this particular example of utopian socialism, originally published 1888, is not used by Kautsky).

97. Kautsky 1965, pp. 238-9.

98. Kautsky 1908.... Kautsky 1925 [1908], p. 442.

6. February 1898, as part of a series directed against Bernstein. I have consulted only the English translation provided by the Tudors and therefore I am not absolutely certain that 'hegemony' appears in the German text. Zinoviev 1924, p. 54. On the basis of this statement, Zinoviev labels Plekhanov the father of the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

132. Kautsky 1893, p. 138; Kautsky 1900, pp. 193-4.

143. Rae 1891, pp. 128-9.