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INTERNATIONAL

COUNCIL

CORRESPONDENCE

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By the Groups of Council Communists of America

The period of progressive capitalist development is historically closed. The decline period of capitalism, a permanent condition of crisis, compels to ever greater convulsions of economy, to new imperialistic and military conflicts, to ever increasing unemployment and to general and absolute impoverishment of the workers. Thus is given the objective situation for the communist revolution in the capitalist countries. For the working class, there is only the revolutionary way out, which leads to the communist society. No one can deprive the workers of this task, which must be carried out by the class itself.

The publishers of Council Correspondence see in the acting self-initiative of the workers and in the growth of their self-consciousness the essential advance of the labor movement. We therefore combat the leadership policy of the old labor movement, and call upon the workers to take their fate in their own hands, to set aside the capitalist mode of production and themselves to administer and direct production and distribution in accordance with social rules having universal validity. As a fighting slogan and statement of goal we propose:

All power to the workers' councils! The means of production in the hands of the Workers!

THE POWER OF THE CLASSES.

I.

The power of the capitalist class is enormous. Never in history was there a ruling class with such power. Their power is first, money power. All the treasures of the world are theirs, and modern capital, produced by the ceaseless toil of millions of workers, exceeds all the treasures of the old world. The surplus value is partly accumulated into ever more and new capital; partly it must be spent by the capitalists. They buy servants for their personal attendants; they also buy people to defend them, to safeguard their power and their dominating position. In capitalism everything can be bought for money; muscles and brain as well as love and honor have become market goods. Said old John D. Rockefeller: "Everyone can be bought if you only know his price". The statement is not exactly true, but it shows the capitalist's view of the world.

The capitalists buy young proletarians to form a fighting force. In the same way as they buy Pinkertons against strikers, they will, in times of greater danger, organize huge armies of volunteers provided with the best modern arms, well-fed and well-paid, to defend their sacred capitalist order.

But capitalism cannot be defended by brutal force alone. Being itself the outcome of a high development of intellectual forces, it must consequently be de-

fended by these same intellectual forces. Behind the physical struggle in the class war, stands the spiritual contest of ideas. Capitalists know that, often better than the workers. Hence they buy all the good brains they can. Often in a coarse, open way; most often however, indirectly. This is done, for instance, by donating money for cultural purposes. Numerous students of science the world over have profited in their researches from the "Rockefeller Foundation". Thus the name 'Rockefeller' has a reputation in the field of natural sciences where 'Ludlow' is never heard of. This kind of philanthropy serves capitalism well. Capitalists have founded universities all over the United States where among other sciences sociology is taught, to demonstrate the impossibility and wickedness of communism. The young people leave the universities imbued with these ideas and they know high salaries and public honor await them if they do not deviate from the straight path of capitalism.

The capitalists buy the press; they buy the editors; they buy all the means of publicity, and in this way they mould public opinion. It is an invisible spiritual despotism by which the entire nation is made to think as the capitalist class wish it to think. Money reigns over the world, thus it can buy the brain power available.

Capitalist power in the second place is political. The State is the organization of the capitalist class. Its task is to render possible private production, and to enable the individual capitalists to carry on their businesses by protecting and regulating their intercourse.

The government makes laws for the protection of "honest" businessmen against "thieves" and "murderers". Against strikers and revolutionists, who are far more dangerous to the existing social order, laws even more drastic are made. For the enforcing of these laws, the police and jail are used. In every strike, in every political demonstration, the workers find the police arrayed against them, clubbing and throwing them into jail for the benefit of the capitalist class and to protect the capitalists profits. Gangs of hired thugs are sworn in as deputy sheriffs and given police authority; and when the workers cannot be subdued in this way, militia and citizen guards are mobilized against them.

In each capitalist country the army is the strongest force in the service of the capitalist class, because for its wars with other countries, it needs the fighting power of the whole country, all classes included.

The army is an organized body bound together by the strictest military discipline, provided with the most cruel, refined and effective means of killing and destroying. If it is used in political wars, where in the worst case the capitalist class suffers only heavy losses, is it not to be used then in case of revolution where the capitalist class is menaced with complete loss of all it possesses?

Thus the nation is the stronghold of capitalism. As a strongly organized power, nation-wide, directed by the uniform will of the central government, provided with a powerful army, it protects the capitalist class. Physical force, however, is not sufficient to subdue a people or a class. How many strong governments in history, though well-armed, have been overthrown by rebellions. Spiritual forces in most cases are decisive above mere physical power. In capitalism the rule holds good that in the long run it is more effectual to fool people than to beat them.

So capitalist power consists thirdly in its intellectual power. The ideas of a ruling class pervade the majority of the members of society. Certainly the capitalist class could not buy guards and intellectuals if these fellows did not share its ideology and sentiments. Capitalist government could not govern, even with its strong physical force, if the mass of the people were not filled with the same spirit as the government itself. How is it possible that in the mass of the people, even in the working class, this capitalist spirit prevails?

The main force is tradition and inheritance. The ideology of the capitalist class is nothing but the ideology of the former middle classes, the petty producers. The idea of private property as a natural right, the belief that everyone should build his own fortune and that free competition guarantees the best results, the maxim that everyone has only to care for himself and God will take care of the rest, the conviction that thrift and industry are the virtues which secure prosperity, and that America is the best country and should be defended against other nations, all these beliefs are inherited from the time and the class of small business. And this is the very creed big business wants the masses to believe in as eternal truths today.

The fathers or grandfathers of the proletarians of today were such small business men themselves; small farmers, settlers, craftsmen, even small capitalists, ridden down by competition. They, too, have inherited these ideas, and in their youth found them to be true. Then society changed rapidly and big industry developed,

and they became forever proletarians. Their ideas, however, could not change so rapidly and their mind clings to the old ideology.

Still, the school of life is powerful and impresses the mind with new ideas in line with the changing world. But now the capitalist school comes into action. With all available means, the capitalist ideas are propagated and artificially forced upon the minds of the people. At first in the schools when the children's minds are flexible and impressionable; afterwards for the adults from the pulpit, in the daily press, by the radio, the movies, etc. Their task is not only to keep the capitalistic way of thinking alive in the working class minds, but still more, to prevent them thinking at all. By filling their time and their minds with exciting futilities, they kill every wish for serious reading and thinking.

May this be called fooling the workers? The capitalistic class is sincere in this propaganda; it believes what it tries to urge upon the workers. But capitalistic ideology is foolishness for the workers. The workers have to foster the new ideas that are growing out of the changing world; they have to acquire the knowledge of the evolution of labor and of the class struggle as the way to communism.

Thus the power of the capitalist class is more than their money and political power alone. The small business men, the small farmers, who believe they will succeed by personal effort--as sometimes they do--are a part of the capitalist power. Every workman who only cares for himself and not for the future of his class, every workman who only reads capitalist newspapers and finds his chief interest in boxing matches, etc., by so doing contributes to the power of the capitalist class.

In the rapid development of technical and economic forms of production, the mind of man is left behind. This mental backwardness of the working masses is the chief power of the capitalist class.

II

What power can the working class set forth against it? First, the working class is the most numerous class in society. By the growth of industry it continually increases, whereas the number of independent businessmen has relatively decreased. The available statistics show that in the United States the working class is the largest class. Only the farmers and the salaried employees follow at some distance as important classes. The capitalist class proper is insignificant in num-

bers; and the small and middle class men and petty dealers are much less numerous than the wage workers. But number is not the only thing that counts. A number of millions, dispersed in widely separated homes all over the land, cannot exert the same power as the same number of millions pressed together in the towns. The big towns are the centers of economical, cultural and political life. The millions of workers, forming the majorities in the population in these centers, assembled into big class-agglomerations, must, under these conditions exert a strong social power.

In ancient Rome the proletarians were numerous also, and strongly concentrated. Their social power, however, was nothing because they did not work. They were parasites; they lived from public moneys. With the modern proletarians, the matter is the reverse.

The second element of power for the working class is its importance in human society. It is on their work that society is founded. The capitalists might be dismissed, the petty producers and dealers might be dispensed with, without impairing the production of life necessities which mostly takes place in the big factories. But the working class cannot be dispensed with. With its essential, fundamental role only the work of the farmers can be compared.

The workers have their hand on the production apparatus. They manage it; they work it; they command it; they have direct power over it. Not legally, for legally they have to obey the capitalists, and police and soldiers may come to enforce this legal right. But actually it is theirs, for without them the living producing machinery is a dead carcass. If they refuse to work, society cannot exist. It has happened already, that a general strike has paralyzed the entire economic and social life, and thereby wrung important concessions from the unwilling ruling class. Then for a moment, like a flash of lightning, that mighty power of the proletarian class, its intimate connection with the production apparatus, was disclosed.

To be sure, if this possible power is to become a living, actual power, a weighty condition must be fulfilled. Such united action of the whole class is not possible, if it is not sustained by a strong moral force. So, as the third element of proletarian power, we find solidarity, the spirit of unity, organization. Solidarity is the bond that unites the will of all the separate individuals into one common will, thus achieving one mighty organized action.

Is it right to speak of a specifically proletarian

virtue? Does not capitalism itself practice organization and united action in its factories, in its trusts, in its armies? Here the unity is based upon command, upon fines, upon penalties. Certainly, for common interests combined action must take place in each class, but here again the true economic position manifests itself, that capitalists are competitors, and workers are comrades.

Capitalism is based upon private business, private interests. The more eagerly the capitalist pursues his personal interests, the better for his business. Hence a hard egotism is developed that submerges natural human sympathies. The workers, on the other hand, cannot win anything by egotism. So long as they face capital individually, they are powerless and miserable; only by collective action can they win better conditions. The more they pursue personal interests, the more they are beaten down. The more they develop a feeling of fellowship, of mutual aid, of self-sacrifice for their class, the better it is for their interests.

When at the dawn of civilization, private property came into being, men separated, each to work on his own lot, in order to develop productivity of labor in mutual competition. In this century-long development, from small crafts to modern industry, civilized man rose to a sturdy self-determinism, to independence, to confidence in his own powers and to a strong feeling of individualism. All his energies and faculties were awakened to the service of his fighting powers. But this was at the cost of moral losses; egotism and cruelty grew in mankind, and distrust and enmity sprang up amidst fellowmen.

Now the modern proletariat is coming up, for the first time a class without property, hence without real interests one against the other. Still endowed with the personal energies and faculties inherited from their ancestors, they are trained by the machine into the discipline of common action. And though their attempts for a better living standard are helplessly beaten down by the overwhelming power of capitalism, much good comes from these attempts. Their common interests against the capitalist class awakens in them the feelings of brotherhood.

As the working class finds strength in its moral superiority over the capitalist class, it also finds strength in its intellectual superiority. To the feeling is added the knowledge. First comes the deed, the action of solidarity, that springs spontaneously from the depth of emotion and passion. After that comes the

insight that there is an unavoidable conflict of opposing interests. It is the first form of class-consciousness. With the deepening of knowledge, the ways of action, the fighting conditions are seen more clearly; and as is the case of all science, this insight will lead future actions along the most efficient ways of getting results.

After their number, their social importance, their moral force of solidarity, this knowledge is the fourth element in proletarian power. It is the science developed chiefly by Marx and Engels which explains, first, the course of history from the growth of society in its primitive beginnings, thru feudalism and capitalism, thence to communism, basing this analysis upon the development of labor and its productivity. And second, it explains the structure of capitalist production and shows how capitalism must break down by means of its own forces, by developing and exploiting the proletarian class, by driving it into revolt thru its own collapses, and by increasing thereby the proletarians fighting powers.

This science, Marxism, is a proletarian science. The capitalist class rejects it; its scientists deny its truth. Indeed, it is impossible for the capitalist class to accept it. No class can accept a theory that proclaims its own collapse and death; for by accepting it, it could not fight with full confidence and with full force. To fight against annihilation is a primary instinct, in a class as well as in an organism.

The capitalist class cannot see beyond the horizon of capitalism. So it sees the growing concentration of capital, the growing power of big finance, the heavy crises and the impending world wars, the rising tide of the proletarian fight with its threat of revolution, it sees all these phenomena without drawing one rational conclusion from them. It sees no sense in history, though its ablest scientists investigate every detail; it sees no light in the future, uncertainty and mysticism fill its mind. But it has one determination, to fight for its supremacy.

For the workers this science enlightens their arduous course to the future. It makes clear to them their life, their work, their poverty, their relation to their employers, and to the other classes. It explains to them the reality of the world as they experience it, different indeed from the capitalist teachings. Whereas the school of life impresses their minds with new ideas in line with the new world, it is this science of society that moulds these ideas into a firm consistent knowledge. And so the workers will eventually acquire the wisdom they need in their fight for freedom.

COMMUNISM AND RELIGION

I.

The fierce struggle which Bolshevism has waged and is still waging against religion in Russia is particularly well adapted to throw light on the essence of the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks are conducting this struggle in the name of Marxism, just as all the rest of their policy is put thru. They invoke in this connection the marxian dictum which stands engraved as a motto on the facade of the Moscow community center: that religion is the opium of the people. At the time when the youthful Marx wrote that, in his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" (1843), his own struggle had points of similarity with the later struggle of Bolshevism in Russia. He stood, that is, as the most advanced among the Young Hegelians, foremost in the struggle for civil liberty against feudal absolutism in Prussia. The bourgeoisie was still without political power but was coming up; public life was harassed by arbitrary action of the police, intellectual life by the censorship, and the best minds were living abroad. Narrow-minded princes were using religion as justification of their right to suppress all liberty. Therefore, according to Marx's expression at the time, the criticism of earth had to begin with the criticism of heaven.

The rise of bourgeois society was always accompanied by a struggle against the Church, against certain forms of religion or against religion in general. This was quite in the nature of things, since under feudalism Church and Society formed a strictly interrelated unity. The Church fulfilled political and social functions which in later centuries were taken over more and more by the State and its organs: law-giving, instruction, administration, safe-guarding of communication, promotion of technics. In particular, everything intellectual in the guidance of society was its task, in the smallest village as well as thruout the body politic; the Church ruled like a super-monarchy over the whole of Christendom, and was the most formidable exploiting power. It was natural then that during the rise of the bourgeoisie any resistance to this exploitation should assume the form of heresy (Albigenses, Hussites). And in the following centuries when this resistance assumed the proportions of a seizure of power by the bourgeoisie, it came about under the banner of a renewal of religion, as the Reformation among the Protestants, the Calvinites and Puritans.

In the class struggles of the 16th and 17th centuries the religions were what political parties were in the 19th, the living organizations of that struggle; later they fossilized into churches with dead dogmas.

When the way was being paved for the revolution in France in the 18th century, the movement was directed not merely against the nobility and monarchy, but also against the Church. Obedience to the Church was bound up with obedience to the Prince; religion was the most important means of holding the masses in subjection. A powerful opposition, socially, to the ruling power determined therefore, spiritually, a breaking away from the Church. The principal form of this latter opposition was that of a hazy personal religious sentiment, apart from all clerical doctrine, as in the case of Rousseau, tho materialistic views were even at this time to be met with in a number of thinkers. Thru the discoveries of natural science, particularly of the law of gravitation by Newton, it had become established that nature is subject to a fixed order of natural laws precluding any arbitrary interference. This provided the rising bourgeoisie with weapons of free critical thought in its struggle against the Church. There was also the fact that the peasants and bourgeoisie looked with envy upon the great neglected landed property of the Church, a domain which they themselves had liked to possess in order to cultivate and improve it. And in the French Revolution of 1789 they did, as a matter of fact, rob the Church of those possessions. In view of the enormous state deficit, that was the only way in which state bankruptcy could be avoided: the seizure and sale of the holdings of the Church, so that they could be put to further use for agricultural and industrial purposes. Since that time, the Church has been the sworn foe of revolution. And consequently the revolutionary bourgeoisie was obliged to attack the Church more sharply than it would otherwise have been inclined to do, by way of the struggle against religion. The fact that in France, even down to the present day, rationalism and free thought are so widespread among the middle classes is in good part owing to that historical conflict.

In the 19th century, the bourgeoisie was obliged to continue this struggle, not only in France but in other countries in which it was coming up, in order to gain the complete mastery. And in this connection the struggle against the prevailing religion had to be carried on for a double reason:

In the first place, the traditional forms of religion had their origin in an outmoded and backward mode of production, to which they were well adapted,--a world

of handicraft and small peasantry, from which society was now lifting itself. This religion rested upon outward forms of devotion and was a narrow, stupid superstition of petty bourgeois and peasants, among whom the pastor or priest was the one and only literate intellectual. In the developed bourgeoisie itself, a different religion was growing up, one which conformed to the needs of a commodity-producing society: the personal faith of an independent bourgeois thrown upon his own resources. In him, the traditional doctrines were losing their force. To this may be added the rapid development of natural science, which, as the basis of the rapid development of technics and of the flowering of capitalism, received at the hands of the bourgeoisie a special care. This science taught the extension of the universe, the laws of nature, the millions of years of the history of life on earth, the evolution of the animal kingdom to man; in all fields of knowledge it contradicted the bible stories as primitive ignorance. And here we have the advent of the keenest among the new views, namely, bourgeois materialism, which is often also given the name of natural-science materialism. It taught that the entire world, inclusive of life and the development of humanity, is governed only thru natural laws, that these natural laws are capable of explaining all riddles of life and fate, and that a higher mysterious power is not needed to that end, and does not exist. Because these thinkers of the bourgeoisie believed that the capitalist development would bring about general well-being and remove all misery, all poverty and all stupidity, they saw all problems as solved or soluble, and no longer had need of any higher power.

The bourgeoisie could not be content, however, with its own abandonment of the old religion, but was obliged also to attack and combat it. For the bourgeoisie wanted to win the power in society out of the hands of princes, nobility and landed proprietors. The power of all these reactionary classes, who wished to maintain what was old and outworn, rested upon the submissiveness of the unenlightened masses, the peasants and petty bourgeois; and this submissiveness was anchored in their religion. Because religion was the foundation and the Church the ally of the traditional power, therefore the bourgeoisie was obliged to conduct the spiritual struggle against religion and church. It had to break this mass away from its spiritual leaders, and convert it into its own following. And this was done by spreading enlightenment and education among this mass and filling it with new ideas. Innumerable are the literary works of a popular scientific cast which came into being around the middle of the 19th century, for the purpose of "enlightening the people", that is,

in order to win the masses for the bourgeoisie, to inculcate them with the political and religious views of the bourgeoisie and so to take the foundation out from under the old ruling elements. And where the struggle became hard and furious, the most radical views were disseminated and materialism attained an added significance.

The reason why this struggle soon came to nothing and was discontinued when the bourgeoisie was master of the state power, and frequently even before that time, will be seen farther on.

II.

In Russia the struggle had to be waged against the same powers against which the bourgeois revolutions were directed in western Europe: the princely absolutism which by means of a horrible police regime held down all stirrings of a libertarian development, and against big landed property which held the peasants in thrall. The struggle had to be waged in the midst of a population which in intellectual respects resembled most the peasant masses of medieval Europe, long before the bourgeois revolution. The Russian muzhiks were, in fact, much more ignorant and backward than these latter. In Russia also the Church was a foundation-pillar of the princely power, and even without reserve a subordinate organ of Czarism. There also religion, in harmony with the primitively barbarous economy, was a barbarous blind belief in the miraculous power of saintly bones and of candles, and the simple souls were charmed and intoxicated by means of sumptuous light and glittering gold vestments.

The means by which the Bolshevik Party was able to win the political power and demolish Czarism and the bourgeoisie was this: it championed the economic interests of the peasants, their striving to get possession of the land, against the landed proprietors, set this up as the goal of the revolution and thus won the peasants for its program. But next it had to take care that the peasants should not, subsequently, after they had attained their goal, turn against the Party, take up with a bourgeois policy of their own and to that end make use of their old spiritual power, the Church, as a rallying point. For this reason the reactionary power by which the peasants had hitherto been dominated had to be destroyed, so that the peasants should become supporters of Bolshevism spiritually as well as materially. That was possible only by way of a struggle against the Church, in the most radical form by way of an intensive propaganda against religion in general.

This struggle, which was waged directly thru the "League of the Godless" but with the support of the State, was scarcely distinguishable in character and content from the one which was waged earlier in western Europe by the bourgeois materialists and free thinkers. It had nothing whatever to do with Marxism. And the philosophical polemics of Lenin dating from the time prior to the Revolution (in the complete edition of his works, collected under the title "Materialism and Empiriocriticism") are quite on the level of bourgeois materialism; which, of course, is quite natural since his struggle in Russia was directed against the same sort of opponents. The propaganda in Russia was distinguished from that of western Europe only in the circumstance that it was waged with still more primitive arguments and cruder instruments, because it was directed against a still more barbarous superstition. The procedure has, of course, been described before: the muzhik's understanding of the arguments based on natural science is rather limited; but he sees and hears these godless ones direct the fiercest sort of attacks against God, give utterance to the most terrible blasphemies,--and no flash of lightning from heaven strikes the evil-doers. That proves to him that God doesn't exist, or at any rate doesn't care about what people do here below. And so he draws his conclusions: he lets the priest go hungry, converts the cross into kindling wood and the church into a stable, hangs pictures of Marx and Lenin in his room and perhaps burns candles to them. The younger generation, however, takes up with the youth groups which educate themselves in national economy and natural science, and it takes over Materialism as a recognized and matter-of-course doctrine. In Russia a new generation is growing up, and has been growing up a sufficient number of years to form a new stratum of adults to whom religion is only an historical phenomenon, a superstition of elderly people belonging to the past. The Russian Church has gone under with Czarism.

This is not to say that religion generally, in Russia, has disappeared or is surely disappearing. First because we have in fact the occurrence, in limited measure, of what was posited above: where the peasants come into conflict with the government, their revolt assumes the form of a churchly resistance. When their allegiance to the old small-peasant mode of economy comes into conflict with the semi-violent introduction of modern agriculture and large-scale operation in the kolhozes, the peasants seek strength by coming together in the Church, in the old religion, the symbol of what is old and which likewise is being suppressed by the State. The economic struggle is waged in the ideal form of a religious conflict; and the western-european press prints stories about horrible religious persecu-

tions in Russia without a suspicion that these so-called persecutions signify mainly an economic-political conflict regarding the building up of Russian agriculture. As a focus of all economic reaction, religion remains in existence.

Besides, as is well known, on the Volga the peasant villages of the Germans maintain their evangelical faith, remaining unphased by the atheistical propaganda. Religion is here a much more deeply rooted personal conviction, brought along from the petty-bourgeois commodity production of western countries, and therefore practically immune to the primitive arguments of the "godless". These peasants become involved in conflicts with the bases of the state-socialist economic system. And so it is quite natural that the prevailing system comes into conflict also with these German peasants; and because the opposed social ideas express themselves in the form of opposed religious ideas,--Atheism on the one hand, and Protestantism on the other--here also the struggle assumes the form of a religious persecution.

Religion is not simply a superstition invented by priests and rulers and which can be combatted by atheistical propaganda. Nor is it a mere outcropping of ignorance which can be destroyed thru indoctrination with natural science. It arises from the incapacity of human beings to control their own destiny. It is an expression of the feeling that unknown and overpowerful forces, of either natural or social origin, are masters over life and destiny. Whether and in what form religion will continue to exist in Russia depends therefore on the country's further economic development. The atheism of the youthful Russia is in harmony with this first period of the rise of state capitalism: the Russians see before them an unrestricted and boundless development toward well-being and superfluity; they see the problems of life as solved and no higher power is needful. But Russia is already becoming involved in world policy, which at the present time is issuing in the derailment of capitalism toward world war, decline, revolution; the dangers which menace the rest of the capitalist world cannot be evaded by Russia, she is not the master of her destiny. Recent press reports are significant in this respect; they state that the Russian government, after the treaties with the west-European governments, has now negotiated with the Roman Catholic Church regarding permission of Catholic propaganda. If by the side of the prevailing state capitalism there should still remain or arise in Russia private property and commodity production in considerable measure, the acquired Materialism, as against the spiritual effects of this material reality, would become a mere outward form.

III.

Just as the Communist Party carried over the bolshevist methods into the political class struggle of western Europe and America, so it has also copied here the russian method of combatting religion. And so in this question also we are presented with an instructive example of the great opposition between Bolshevism and Communism, as an outcome of the opposition between the primitive russian society of czarist times and the developed capitalism of the West.

Communism, the emancipation of the working class, signifies the end of religion. With the vanishing of earthly misery, there vanishes also the heavenly reflex of this misery. When humanity directs the labor process with conscious design and its own existence is thereby assured, when man is the master of his destiny and is not mastered by any enigmatic superior forces, he then sees the whole world before him with open clarity, and no phantasmagoria of an anguished mind can any longer cloud his insight. But even when this goal is not yet attained, the realization that it will be attained has a liberating effect upon the mind. Historical Materialism, the marxian doctrine, teaches us to understand the social forces. The workers see that there are no mysterious supernatural powers which bring them poverty, misery, war, destruction, but that all these things are outcomes of capitalism; things which they, thru their struggle, can conquer and set aside. Therefore these forces, altho still very powerful, are no longer mysterious; and hence religion vanishes among the working masses who, thru Socialism or Communism, have acquired a basis of marxist insight. This does not come about thru the force of atheistical arguments against religion, by which the workers are convinced and won over. Rather, by reason of the new social insight, the feeling of timid uncertainty is dissipated and vanishes from their consciousness, so that their minds become accessible to arguments which in reality they scarcely need any more, and their religion goes by the board.

A profound difference exists between the marxist historical Materialism and the bourgeois Materialism dating from the middle of the last century. The latter thought to be able to explain human society by means of natural laws and was quite unaware of the fact that society has its own laws. Marxism points out these laws of society by which the development of humanity is conditioned. Bourgeois materialism believed that thru knowledge of the natural laws and thru their application in technics, man could master his destiny

and thereby also become spiritually free. But this application, the development of Capitalism, gave rise to still greater misery and to unknown powers which were still more formidable. Marxism explains these powers and enlightens the workers regarding the manner in which the workers themselves, with the aid of this science, can conquer them. The opposition of the two kinds of materialism comes forth most clearly in their respective conceptions of religion, the one regarding it as a simple effect of ignorance regarding nature, the other as an effect of social factors. And on this basis we see that the manner in which religion is combatted by Bolshevism is quite on the plane of bourgeois materialism.

If religion were nothing more than a product of ignorance, it would have had to vanish more and more among the educated class, the bourgeoisie, in the last half-century of increasing scientific knowledge and constantly better instruction. But what do we see? That during this time this class, even its intellectual part, has grown more and more religious. Of course it is often said that this is merely owing to the fact that the bourgeoisie has an interest in maintaining religion among the people and therefore supports religion by its own example. No doubt this comes into play among other things, but it is not the main matter. With such superficial views regarding its opponents, the proletariat can only weaken itself. The bourgeoisie is not made up, intellectually, of hypocrites any more than it is composed, economically, of evil-doers and politically of blockheads,--regardless of what the propaganda of party politicians thirsting for power would have us believe. The religious sentiments in this class are for the most part genuine, and we shall endeavor to show that such is quite in the nature of things.

Religion is the fantastic form in which people give expression to their unconscious sentiment of their connection with the universe, so long as they do not know the real connection. Man has always been dependent on the world for his existence and this dependence will continue to exist because man always remains a part of the world and his life is a part of the total process of universal history. But in the periods of history which lie behind us he failed to realize clearly this dependence and to master it. In the early times of primitive cultural conditions, the means of living were offered him by way of natural phenomena independent of his will, (sunshine, rain, fertile soil); but at the same time, powerful forces were capable of destroying him. More recently, by means of technical devices, later supported by natural science, he learned

to direct these natural forces, to use them and draw them into his service. His life became richer and more secure. This was followed, however, by the advent of social forces, arising out of the forms of production in which, with advancing technology, people worked together in ever greater units: tribes and, later on, cities and nations, leading to states and classes. Struggle of the tribes for land, struggle of the cities and states for trade and profit, struggle of all against all in sharp competition, struggle of the classes for their share of the product and for power, war and crisis in modern times -- all these things, as mighty forces, drove people forward and brought them success or decline. The individual felt powerless, and was so in fact; happiness and disaster were not dependent on himself. While he lived in the midst of a world of constantly richer possibilities, brought about by way of collective human effort, but without conscious design and plan, he was visited by catastrophes and threatened with extinction by forces which he did not understand and failed to master, forces which likewise were brought about by way of collective human effort, but also without conscious design and plan. This dependence on a world totality standing high and mighty above him and beyond his understanding expressed itself in a feeling of fear and dejection, occasionally of confidence and calmness, but always of subjection to the sublimated personifications of these forces, hence in religious feelings.

In the modern capitalist class, two tendencies are working counter to each other. On the one hand, its technical power has never revealed itself so mighty as in the present period, the period of the rise and perfection of aerial navigation, the enormous acceleration of international communication, spiritual and material, of the refinement of machine technique and of the more substantial interweaving of labor and science. That which previously had been noted as an astonishing compendium of unconscious growth -- man's mastery over nature and the natural forces -- was now proudly proclaimed as the program of a consciously directed technico-scientific advance. Thus there arose in the bourgeoisie the consciousness of unlimited possibilities, the feeling of being capable of everything. This was especially true of the masters of production, the world's economic leaders, who saw themselves as the directors of human destiny. The spiritual reflex of this tendency was not so much materialism, insight into the natural forces of the world, as cynicism, contempt for what others revere.

In the midst of this feeling of confidence, however, another sentiment was at work even long before the advent of the present world crisis in which the anarchy

of capitalist production has driven its masters to desperate exertions and fearful doubt regarding the future. For the menace of the proletarian Revolution has hung like a sword over the bourgeoisie from the very time of its rise to power. As soon as the working class, a half-century ago, began to organize, took up the struggle and proclaimed its socialist goals, it was all up with the self-confidence of the bourgeoisie. And thereupon the bourgeois Materialism melted away, and only feeble remnants of it have been at work since that time in a part of the petty bourgeoisie and of the workers. For it was now revealed that natural science could not liberate humanity and that technics under capitalism could bring no general happiness, no peace, no freedom. The future grew dark and uncertain; the bourgeoisie saw its world full of incomprehensible and menacing forces. And so there arose in the class all sorts of mysticism and superstition.

The bourgeoisie has been shaken in its self-confidence by two catastrophes: first the World War, then the world crisis. And now there hangs over it like a tormenting storm cloud the menace of a still more devastating world war. The bourgeoisie does not have its world in hand. Powerless and without an idea as to what is to be done, it stands confronting the irresistible power of these social forces. And when they have again been unleashed, it sees the rise of the working class, which is still for the time being calmed by means of unemployment relief to exorcise hunger revolts, and still held in check thru the possibility of parliamentary protests or thru hope of a better economic order promised from above. But after all it hears the rumbling in the depths, it sees here and there the flashing up of the new ideas which lend force to a coming revolution, it is thinking more about the revolution than the workers themselves do, and it is making ready to proceed against it with the sharpest means at command. For the bourgeoisie can see in revolution and Communism nothing other than chaos, extinction of all culture and the end of humanity. And yet it feels instinctively that it is powerless to evade this catastrophe. Thus there arises in this class more and more strongly the belief in a super-human, supernatural power by which the world is governed. And it clings still more strongly to this belief because of the feeble hope that in this way perhaps the workers may be held back from their goal and the strength which lies in their unity may be broken.

IV

The rise of the socialist labor movement in the last half-century is the first case in the history of humanity in which irreligion has become a mass pheno-