

"thesis" of such a strike would then be the subject of all-round discussion, taking into account all conditions of time and place. It would be risky, to say the least, to adopt such a policy in advance.

In summarising my views on the subject, I shall say that the decisions of the 1891 Brussels International Congress still retain all their profound meaning.⁵⁵ The best means of struggle against militarism is not this or that possible—or assumed as possible—action of the working class, *but the whole range of successes of the proletarian emancipation movement*. Our struggle against militarism generally cannot be adjusted to isolated actions. It is a whole process.

On the question of labour legislation, I think I can reply very briefly. None of us international socialists doubt that this legislation must be *international*. Doubt may arise only when speaking of competition in the sale of labour power between the less exacting proletarians of the backward countries and the more exacting proletarians of the advanced countries. In this connection, some of our comrades have adopted the idea of *prohibitive legislation*. I find this idea at variance with the principles of international socialism. It is my firm conviction that we have to keep to another method of fighting this competition. *The revolutionary proletariat of the advanced countries must try to awaken class-consciousness in the minds of their competitors in the backward countries, and organise them for joint struggle against capitalism, not protect themselves with the help of frontier guards.*

That, Comrades, is what I can say in reply to your questions. Forgive me if I have taken up too much of your time.

Yours sincerely,

G. Plekhanov.

ON A. PANNEKOEK'S PAMPHLET

Anton Pannekoek, *Socialism and Religion*.

Translated from the German by A. Ratner. Edited by P. Rumyantsev.

Cheap Library of the Znaniye Society, No. 121.

Price 5 kopeks. 1906

Mr. P. Rumyantsev, who edited the Russian translation of this pamphlet, wrote a brief foreword to it. Here it is in full. "This pamphlet represents a lecture delivered in Bremen by Dr. Anton Pannekoek of Leiden, Holland, on September 14, 1905, to a very large meeting of workers and sponsored by the Education Committee of the Bremen Trades Cartel and the Social-Democratic Union. The consistency of the author's views on historical materialism, the lucidity and popular style of his presentation, prompt us to recommend the pamphlet to Russian readers, especially since such a large gap is felt in our literature on the relationship of socialism to religion."

There is indeed a large gap in literature—and not only Russian literature—on the question of the relationship of socialism to religion. Therefore, it can be said with certainty that this pamphlet will be read by very many people; that is why I think it my duty to devote special attention to it here.

I shall begin by saying that Anton Pannekoek is not pronounced Pannekek but Pannekuk, since the Dutch "oe" is like our Russian "u". So now we may pronounce his name properly.

Pannekoek's pamphlet does not bridge any gaps for the simple reason that it contains too many gaps itself. You cannot plug a hole with a hole, as some wiseacre remarked. And if Mr. Rumyantsev deems it necessary to recommend Pannekoek's pamphlet to Russian readers he is simply confirming the presence of numerous gaps in his own world-outlook.

Anton Pannekoek undoubtedly possesses a sufficiently remarkable ability as well as good intentions. He belongs to the left—*Marxist*—wing of Dutch Social-Democracy. But *even though* he is a "Dr." or, more truly, *because* he is one, he did not graduate from a strict Marxist school. This was already noticeable from the philosophical articles with which he transgressed in the columns of *Neue Zeit*⁵⁶ two years ago; the articles were very poor. And this pamphlet on socialism and religion is conclusive evidence that our young Dutch Marxist has mastered little of his teacher's method.

He says: "There are two scientific systems for which we are indebted to Karl Marx and which, taken together, provide the foundation of our ultimate aim. They are political economy and historical materialism" (p. 29). But that is not at all so. There is one "system", the system of dialectical materialism, which includes both political economy and the scientific explanation of the historical process and much else besides. Anyone who has studied *Capital* understands that this outstanding work is nothing but the materialist explanation of economic relations in bourgeois society, which itself is of a transient, i.e., historical nature. Many people describe *Capital* as a historical work, but by far not all of these comprehend the whole profound meaning of this description. Anton Pannekoek is obviously among those who are completely blind to the fact that Marx's fundamental economic views are permeated throughout with the materialist conception of history. For a Marxist, this is an unpardonable failing.

Further, in speaking of "bourgeois materialism", A. Pannekoek launches on talk about the bourgeois Enlighteners who "hoped by disseminating knowledge to tear the masses away from the priests and the feudal lords". Perhaps you think he means the famous French materialists—Holbach, Diderot, and Helvétius? You are wrong. He has in mind "the now rather outmoded popular writings of L. Büchner" (p. 22). It is simply ridiculous. He asserts that "there was no trace of sociology" in "bourgeois materialism". That is untrue as regards Helvétius, in whose works one can find extremely interesting and remarkable rudiments of the materialist conception of history. But A. Pannekoek went through a poor school and therefore has not the slightest notion about French materialism. He attributes to the materialists the "establishment" of the truth that "ideas are born in the brain-matter" (p. 29). The classical materialists expressed themselves otherwise.

Let us go on to religion. On page 8 of Pannekoek's pamphlet there is the following remark: "In the question we are now discussing, we understand by religion that which has always been its essential feature: the belief in a supernatural being who is supposed to govern the world and to direct the destinies of men."

That, too, is wrong and in two respects. Firstly, the majority of religions ascribed the governing of the world not to one but to many supernatural beings (polytheism). And secondly, belief in the existence of such beings still does not constitute the main distinctive feature of religion. Our author has a poor conception of the process which one English researcher called "the making of religion".*

* [The words: "The making of religion" are written by Plekhanov in English.]

Religion begins only when a tribe starts to believe that between the tribe and the particular supernatural being or beings there is a certain relationship which is binding not only on the people but even on those beings. The main distinctive feature of religion is belief in a god or gods. Pannekoek is very much mistaken if he imagines that god means the same thing as a supernatural being. Of course, every god is a supernatural being; but not every supernatural being by far is considered a god. To become a god, such a being must go through an entire evolution.

Note the grounds upon which Pannekoek makes his hapless reference to the distinctive feature of religion. There are people who say that because the contemporary proletariat displays much selflessness and devotion to a lofty ideal, it cannot be said, as Pannekoek does by the way, that this class is becoming less and less religious. These people cannot even conceive of non-religious morality. Pannekoek's reply to them is that morality and religion are two distinct things and that the essential feature of religion is belief in supernatural beings. Then he goes on: "Hitherto, all of man's lofty and moral impulses were closely connected with this belief and were displayed in the garb of religion. This can be readily understood when one considers that the whole world-outlook was embodied in religion, so that everything beyond the pale of everyday life sought refuge in religion; for everything the origin of which was unknown, a supernatural explanation was sought and believed to be found in religion. The fact that the virtues and moral urges which are recognised by all men occupy first place in religious teaching does not, however, constitute the essential and particular feature of religion; its essence is rather the justification which it provides for them, the way in which it explains them as emanations of God's will. We know a natural cause of the higher moral urges of the proletariat; we know they stem from its special class position."

So, "we" explain the higher moral "urges" of the proletariat by a natural cause. Commendable, indeed. And how do "we" explain the moral "urges" of the other classes in society? By supernatural causes? Probably and even certainly not. But if not, then we should speak, not of the proletariat, but in general of the man whom Marx called social man. Marxists do, in fact, consider that the development of the morality of social man is conditioned by the development of the social relations, which in turn is conditioned by the development of the social forces of production. And precisely because Marxists are convinced of this, Pannekoek's assertion that "virtues" are explained "as emanations of God's will", sounds highly strange to them. Surely it would follow from this that virtues arise on a completely idealist basis. I am willing to concede that this is not confusion of thought, but simply an un-

fortunate expression (perhaps even an unfortunate translation: I do not have the original at hand); but no matter how the muddle has arisen it is there and will only mislead the reader. Then, what is "this religion" Pannekoek talks about? The one whose distinctive feature is belief in supernatural beings? But did he himself not say that this essential feature belongs to *all religions*? Why then "this" religion? Again an extremely unfortunate expression, which confuses the author's meaning. Finally—and this, of course, is the most important point—it is again clear from our last extract that Pannekoek is completely unfamiliar with the historical process of the formation of religion. He thinks that "hitherto" morality was always "closely connected with this religion", i.e., with belief in supernatural beings. But that is wrong. *In the first stages of social development, morality existed quite independently of belief in supernatural beings.* Confirmation of this may be found in the Russian translation of Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. If Pannekoek knew this fact, he had only to cite it in order to refute those who unreasonably affirm that there cannot be morality without religion. But he did not know this, although he ought to have known it, so he had to launch into perplexing arguments that demonstrated only too plainly that he himself, to use a German expression, was not sitting firmly in the saddle.

On page 23 of his pamphlet, Pannekoek says: "This exposition will suffice to show that the old bourgeois materialism and the new bourgeois religiosity* are both directly opposed to the proletarian world-outlook." In regard to *religiosity*, this is correct, but in relation to *bourgeois materialism* it is totally incorrect.

According to Pannekoek, there is no trace of sociology in "bourgeois materialism". I said earlier that this was not quite so, now I shall take it for granted and shall ask: does this prove that "bourgeois materialism" is *opposed* to the world-outlook of the proletariat? No, it does not. It proves only that "bourgeois materialism" was *one-sided* in comparison with present-day dialectical materialism. We cannot speak of *opposition*. "Bourgeois materialism", or to be more exact, the classical materialism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, did not "die away", as Pannekoek assures us, but was reborn in the "system" of Marx.

Pannekoek's final conclusion is that there will be no place under socialism for belief in supernatural forces. This is right, but it has been known since Marx's time. Pannekoek confined himself to advancing several incorrect postulates as proof of this correct idea and revealed his utter ignorance of the subject. That is not enough.

* Prior to this he had said correctly that religiosity is spreading among the contemporary bourgeoisie.

I have far from exhausted all Pannekoek's errors. But those I have dealt with do indicate the need to approach this pamphlet sceptically. In offering it to their Russian readers, the publishers of the Cheap Library indeed presented them with an article that is truly too "cheap".

The reader will see that there is nothing to thank Mr. Rumyantsev for either. We have very many people around just now editing and "recommending" works on subjects about which they themselves have not the faintest idea. These people, zealously disseminating their self-opinionated ignorance among the public, are the curse of our popular—mostly translated—literature.

Ernest Unterman, *Antonio Labriola and Joseph Dietzgen, A Comparison of Historical Materialism and Monistic Materialism.*

Translated from the German by I. Naumov. Edited by P. Dauge.

St. Petersburg, 1907, published by P. Dauge.

Joseph Dietzgen, *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy; Letters on Logic, Especially Democratic Proletarian Logic.* Translated from the German by P. Dauge and A. Orlov, with a Preface to the Russian Edition by Eugene Dietzgen, and a Portrait of the Author.

St. Petersburg, 1906

A section of the reading public in Germany, Holland, and Russia is now very much interested in Joseph Dietzgen. His philosophical works, which until recently were known only to a few, have begun to exert an influence on the development of philosophical thought among the enlightened European proletariat. That is why we consider it useful to discuss the books mentioned above.

The first of these is from the pen of the American Socialist Ernest Unterman in the form of a postscript to the English translation of the famous work by Antonio Labriola, *Discorrendo di socialismo e di filosofia* (the translation was published in Chicago in 1906).

Mr. Dauge thought it would be worthwhile to publish Unterman's work in the Russian translation by I. Naumov. But he was wrong. This book will not and cannot bring anything of value to Russian readers. The author knows too little of the subject which his book, or more correctly, his pamphlet, professes to explain. Anyone who does understand it—true, there are few now in Russia, and abroad too, unfortunately—may assure himself of this by reading the following—in its own way valuable—passage from Unterman's pamphlet.

"The founders of scientific socialism inverted Hegelian dialectics and transformed it into a practical method of historical research. They had, indeed, squared their own accounts with German classical philosophy and eighteenth and nineteenth century bourgeois materialism. But they limited themselves from the outset to the practical social implications of their new theory. They had to specialise in order to accomplish something great, and they selected with keen insight those specialties which bore most directly upon the practical problems of their time. To what extent they had penetrated independently into the problem of cognition before they made this choice, no one can know but those comrades who have charge of the unpublished joint manuscript of Marx and Engels written in 1845-46.⁵⁷ But it is safe to say that this manuscript would have been published by this time, if it

contained such a contribution to historical materialism as that supplied by Joseph Dietzgen. This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that Marx and Engels acknowledged Dietzgen's merit and called him 'the philosopher of the proletariat'. And it is further borne out by the fact that even the latest writings of Engels, such as *Anti-Dühring* and *Feuerbach*, in the passages dealing directly with the problems of cognition, free will, moral consciousness, do not contain anything which materially modifies the original conception of human consciousness formulated by Marx" (p. 9).

What then was this "original conception of human consciousness formulated by Marx"? Mr. Unterman admits frankly that he does not know. But on the other hand he knows very well that the founders of scientific socialism inverted dialectics, placing it on its feet. But what is meant by placing dialectics on its feet? Mr. Unterman says nothing about that, so let us turn to the original. Marx says: "To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurges of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea'. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."⁵⁸

What is that? It is a *theory of cognition* and, besides, a theory of a definite type, a *materialist theory of cognition*. Consequently, Mr. Unterman had every opportunity to form some idea of the "conception of human consciousness formulated by Marx" without waiting for the publication of the philosophical work of Marx and Engels, which has not been published to this day. But, evidently, he did not even realise that this opportunity was there for him to take. Like others before him, he repeated that "Marx and Engels inverted dialectics", but it seems to have escaped his notice that it would have been impossible for them to have done so without the aid of a definite theory of cognition. A most penetrating writer is Mr. Unterman! True, it looks as though he can plead an extenuating circumstance; the Marxist theory of cognition is still unelaborated. But he could have helped in this misfortune by exercising his own powers ... if he had had any. In the lines quoted from Marx that to Hegel the process of thinking is transformed into a subject, there is an idea taken wholly from *Feuerbach*. This should have reminded even Mr. Unterman of the generally known fact that Marx's theory emerged *by way of criticism* from Feuerbach's philosophy, just as Feuerbach's philosophy emerged *by the same way* from Hegel's philosophy. If Mr. Unterman had taken the trouble to acquaint himself with Feuerbach's philosophy he would have had plenty of data at hi

disposal on which to judge Marx's theory of cognition. Unfortunately, he did not take that trouble. Further. Marx's well-known—*long since published*—theses on Feuerbach's philosophy would have revealed to our learned author precisely in what respects Marx considered Feuerbach's philosophy *unsatisfactory*.

This would have furnished him with new facts upon which to judge Marx's gnosiology. And if he had only put all these facts to use, he would not have found the perusal of Engels' *Anti-Dühring* and *Feuerbach* so fruitless, and would have understood in the end that it is out of the question to use Dietzgen to "supplement" Marx.

But Mr. Unterman has a very superficial knowledge of Marx's theory and knows nothing at all of its philosophical origin. Finally, and almost the most important point, E. Unterman is not even a dilettante in philosophy, but simply an ... ignorant philistine.

We are not surprised that he finds it necessary to "supplement" Marx. It is a well established custom nowadays that as soon as some self-professed Marxist finds rents and gaps in his own world-outlook he at once says to himself anxiously: "Marx's theory needs correcting and supplementing."

Mr. Unterman tells us also that Marx and Engels "squared accounts" with classical German philosophy and French bourgeois materialism. Good. But *how* did they do that? By utilising what had been acquired by both German philosophy and materialism. German philosophy, while keeping to the dialectical method, was saturated with idealism; "bourgeois" materialism,* on the other hand, ignored dialectics almost completely. *In making materialism dialectical*, Marx and Engels *rejected idealism for all time*. But this does not mean that by *making materialism dialectical* they rejected materialism, just as to place dialectics on its feet is not to finish with dialectics. Of course, the dialectical materialism of Engels and Marx differs in many respects from, say, eighteenth-century French materialism. But this difference is the simple and inevitable *result* of the historical development of materialism.

After all eighteenth-century French materialism in its turn differed not only from the materialism of Democritus and Epicurus but even from the materialism of Hobbes and Gassendi. It is plain from one of Engels' articles in the newspaper *Volksstaat*, in which he recommended the French socialists to popularise "the splendid materialist literature of the eighteenth century"⁵⁹

* Evidently Mr. Unterman thinks that the materialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was "bourgeois" in character, but the idealism of the same period was not. Why he should think so is something he himself cannot explain.

among the French working class, that the founders of scientific socialism were not by any means as scornful of this "bourgeois" materialism as is the erudite Mr. Unterman.

But Mr. Unterman knows nothing at all of all this and very proudly considers himself, thanks to J. Dietzgen, as being farther advanced in comparison with Marx and Engels.

However that may be, our author is firmly convinced that Marx's original (and to him, Unterman, quite unknown, as may be seen even more clearly from his pamphlet than from his own admission) understanding of human consciousness has been considerably supplemented by J. Dietzgen.

What arguments did he use to substantiate this conviction in lecturing the "narrow Marxists"? Some excerpts from J. Dietzgen's works which prove unquestionably that this highly gifted German workman—J. Dietzgen was actually a manual worker—had great philosophical talent, but which do not contain a single theoretical principle that could be acknowledged as new in comparison with those enunciated in the works of Marx, Engels, and Feuerbach.

Mr. Unterman is naive enough to believe that his excerpts throw new light on the "problem of cognition". Comparing them with some quotations from the works of the late Antonio Labriola, he takes great satisfaction in pointing out to us that this comparison "reveals at a glance their characteristic theoretical difference. Historical materialism takes its departure from human society", proletarian monism from the "natural universe (Weltall)" (p. 24). This strange man, who has read both *Ludwig Feuerbach* and *Anti-Dühring*, has nevertheless not understood that historical materialism was only the application to sociology of the method of materialist dialectics, whose starting point is precisely the "Weltall". It would seem as if he had not really read that part of Engels' preface to *Anti-Dühring* where the author says that Marx and he *applied materialism to history*.⁶⁰ What is the point of "departure" of the materialism which *explains* social development? Society. The earth rests on whales, the whales rest on water, water on the earth.* Clear?

All this does not stop Mr. Dauge from thinking of Mr. Unterman as a serious writer and warmly recommending him to Russian readers. But Mr. Dauge appears even more naive than the quite naive Mr. Unterman. He says: "Joseph Dietzgen discovered dialectical materialism simultaneously with Marx and Engels and—as the latter openly acknowledged—independently and apart from them" (p. IV). One might conclude from this that J. Dietz-

* [In Russian folklore there is a saying that the earth rests on three whales.]

gen was a dialectical materialist. But further on in the same work of Dauge's we read: "We indeed find many points of similarity between Bogdanov and Dietzgen and we are certain that the former, by developing and extending the philosophical work he has begun, will arrive finally and by the logic of things—'independently' of Dietzgen, as Dietzgen did 'independently' of Marx—at *proletarian natur-monism*, to which, perhaps, he may give another name, but which will have the same philosophical content" (p. VIII). So Mr. Bogdanov's "philosophical" thinking is developing naturally in the direction of dialectical materialism.... You have no fear of God, Mr. Dauge! Conclusion: the reader will lose exactly nothing even if Mr. Unterman's pamphlet never came into his hands. Productions like these are instructive only in one sense. The very fact that they can appear at all shows to what a low level philosophical education in the international socialist movement of our day has sunk. But there is little need to emphasise anew this most distressing truth. Suffice it to recall that in "the land of thinkers" Mr. Bernstein's "critical" remarks on materialism and dialectics did not get their deserts by being laughed out of court by the Social-Democrats.⁶¹

Now to Joseph Dietzgen. His son, Eugene Dietzgen, in a preface to the Russian translation, also describes his father's philosophical teaching as an important supplement to Marxism (p. IV). He says: "If the founders of historical materialism, and their followers, in a whole series of convincing historical investigations, proved the connection between economic and spiritual development, and the dependence of the latter, in the final analysis, on economic relations, nevertheless they did not prove that this dependence of the spirit is rooted in its nature and in the nature of the universe. Marx and Engels thought that they had ousted the last spectres of idealism from the understanding of history. This was a mistake, for the metaphysical spectres found a niche for themselves in the unexplained essence of the human spirit and in the universal whole which is closely associated with the latter. Only a scientifically verified criticism of cognition could eject idealism from here" (same page).

Despite all our respect for the noble memory of the German worker-philosopher, and despite our personal sympathy for his son, we find ourselves compelled to protest resolutely against the main idea of the preface from which we have just quoted. In it, the relationship of J. Dietzgen to Marx and Engels is quite wrongly stated. If Engels wrote that historical materialism had driven idealism from its last refuge, that is to say, from the science of human society, he believed that the triumph of materialism over idealism, as regards both "the nature of the universe" and the human spirit, was an incontestable fact. Engels was a convinced

materialist. Of course, one may dispute his materialism, but he ought not to have reproaches hurled at him which he does not at all deserve. Evidently, Eugene Dietzgen thinks that materialism does not have its own "criticism of cognition". But that too is an error that could only have been committed by someone ill-informed on the history of materialism. Marx's words about materialist dialectics which I referred to earlier contain the basic foundation of historical materialism and at the same time, *even in the first place*, a very definite "criticism of cognition". It could be argued that this "criticism" is expounded there much too briefly, but even if that is the case, we are still confronted with the question of how this—perhaps indeed too briefly expounded—"criticism of cognition" stands in relation to the "criticism" set forth by the author of *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*. If these two "criticisms" *contradict* each other, we have to *choose between them, not supplement one by the other*. If, on the other hand, J. Dietzgen's "criticism of cognition" *does not contradict* the criticism elaborated much earlier by the founders of scientific socialism, but is simply a more detailed and more or less successful exposition of it, then, surely, it is at least strange to talk of J. Dietzgen *supplementing* Marx, and supplementing in the sense meant by Eugene Dietzgen, viz., of giving a new philosophical *substantiation* of historical materialism. We must add that the "*criticism of cognition*" contained in Marx's characterisation of materialist dialectics is set out in much greater detail in Engels' works, especially in Part I of *Anti-Dühring* (Philosophy).*

True, it is expounded there in a polemical rather than a systematic form. However, *if* this is a shortcoming, then it is a purely *formal* one, in no way affecting the *content* of the philosophical ideas enunciated by Engels in his controversy with Dühring. Moreover the polemical form might, perhaps, make it difficult for some *novice in philosophy* to understand Engels correctly. But for people who venture to talk about the extent to which Marx's theory requires to be supplemented, such a formal difficulty should not be an obstacle to understanding the philosophical section of *Anti-Dühring*. But Eugene Dietzgen does not even mention these philosophical views of Marx and Engels. It is as if he had not even heard of them, which is very strange! After this, what value can be placed on his indication that Marx's theory is "*incomplete*"? Eugene Dietzgen says: "In our opinion, four main phases of dialectics can be distinguished in the nineteenth century: Hegelian, or purely reflective; Darwinian, or biological; Marxist, or histor-

* [Note from the collection *From Defence to Attack*.] Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel's speculative philosophy served as the basis for this very criticism. (See my pamphlet *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*.)⁶²

ico-economic; and Dietzgenian, or universal natur-monistic" (p. VI).

In view of what we have said, it is clear that to describe *materialist* dialectics as *historico-economic* dialectics is to commit a serious blunder. And this blunder clearly proves by its very existence that Eugene Dietzgen completely fails to understand the place of Marx's theory in the history of philosophy and its relation to the philosophy of Feuerbach, whose views were also, without any doubt, "*natur-monistic*".

Since he fails to master this highly important fact it would have been better if Eugene Dietzgen had refrained from trying to show just what is "lacking" in Marx's theory.

It will be useful to note here one more point, that Eugene Dietzgen describes Hegel's dialectics as *purely reflective*.

We need only ponder the following lines written by the same Eugene Dietzgen to understand just how naive this is.

According to him, his father's dialectics furnishes us with the cognitive-critical key to:

"1) The solution of all riddles" (sic!) "by the consistent application of the dialectical-productive method of investigation which, proceeding consciously from sensuous or concrete reality, and basing itself on the organic unity of being, is able to reconcile all contradictions and at the same time sharply distinguish temporally or spatially limited, relative opposites.

"2) The more fundamental understanding of historical materialism and the Marxist analysis of the capitalist mode of production, clearly showing to the proletariat the means and aim of its economic emancipation in socialism.

"3) Solving the problem of beginning and end, the relationship between form and content, appearance and essence, might and right, the individual in contrast to society and nature, the subject and the object, freedom and dependence, equality and distinction, the temporary and the eternal, the relative and the absolute, the particular and the general.

"4) The knowledge of the essence of things and phenomena, or the criterion of relative truth.

"5) Abolishing the opposition between materialism and idealism" (same page).

As regards a more thorough understanding of historical materialism and analysis of capitalism, we shall wait till these are disclosed in the collected works of Eugene Dietzgen himself, or those of Pannekoek or any of the other writers who prefer Joseph Dietzgen's "*key*" to Karl Marx's *method*. In regard to the solution of "all riddles" concerning the questions of beginning and end, relation of form to content, etc., etc., we would ask Eugene Dietzgen: Is that not just "*purely reflective dialectics*", and did Hegel's

philosophy not deal with all that? He will tell us, perhaps, that Hegel resolved those reflective questions (*that is to say, questions concerning the mutual relations of concepts*) in an idealist sense, whereas the author of *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy* gives them a "natur-monistic" solution. But this can only mean that Hegel's dialectics has an *idealist* basis, while J. Dietzgen's dialectics has its basis in a "*natur-monistic*" world-outlook. From this it inevitably follows that Hegel's dialectics has as its main distinguishing feature its idealist basis. Why then does Eugene Dietzgen not call it idealist, instead of conjuring up a new, very inexact and very clumsy title for it? Inexact philosophical terminology leads to unclarity of philosophical concepts and sometimes, incidentally, the latter gives rise to the former and is evidence of it. But Eugene Dietzgen is reluctant to use the terms "*idealism*" and "*materialism*". They remind him of "one-sided" conceptions, the opposition between which was "abolished" by his father's monism. Let us see exactly how J. Dietzgen "abolishes" the opposition between idealism and materialism.

To abolish the opposition between two given concepts, it is essential to have at least an accurate idea of the one and the other. What idea did Joseph Dietzgen have, say, of materialism?

On pages 62-63 of the book we are analysing, *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, we read: "In order to explain the process of thought, we must elucidate it as a part of the universal process. It is not the cause which created the world, either in the theological or in the idealist sense, nor is it a mere act of the brain substance, as the materialists of the last century present it. The process of thought and its cognition are a particularity in the general cosmos."

Thus the materialists of the last, that is to say, the eighteenth century, did not understand that the process of thought is a particularity in the general cosmos. They thought it was "a mere act of the brain substance". However, we can distinguish three or even four shades in the materialism of the eighteenth century: the materialism of La Mettrie and Diderot; the materialism of Helvétius; the materialism of Holbach; and the materialism of the Englishmen Hartley and Priestley. Which of these shades of materialism has J. Dietzgen in mind? No one knows. And what is meant by *not a mere act of the brain substance*? Again, nobody knows. But to proceed. Maybe the matter will be cleared up in the following exposition.

On page 97, in the *Letters on Logic*, J. Dietzgen says: "The human skull performs the function of thinking as involuntarily as the chest does that of breathing. However, we can, by our will, stop breathing for a while.... In the same way, the will can control the thoughts." We shall not dwell here on the question

of the extent to which thought can be controlled by will, but shall ask our reader to pay attention to the words: "The human skull performs the function of thinking ... as the chest does that of breathing." That, according to our author, is exactly what the eighteenth-century materialists said. Why then does J. Dietzgen declare them to be one-sided? And what, *in his opinion*, is the difference between *function* and *action*? This, too, remains unknown.

On page 72 of the same book, it says: "The old logic could not lay down any valid laws of thought, because it had too high an idea of thinking itself. For it thought was not only an attribute, a mode, a particle of true nature, but the nature of truth was spiritualised by it into a mystical substance. Instead of forming the concept of spirit out of flesh and blood, it tries to resolve" (explain) "flesh and blood by means of the concept."

There is something very wrong said here about the "old logic".* It is quite true that not "*flesh*" must be explained by *concept* but *concept* by "*flesh*". However, this is precisely what the eighteenth-century materialists said and what Feuerbach repeated after them in the nineteenth century, when he rebelled against Hegel. Why then does J. Dietzgen declare that materialism is one-sided? This also remains his secret.

On the following page, J. Dietzgen reproaches the "old logic" that "it elevates the spirit to the first place and" (but?—*G.P.*) "relegates flesh and blood to the last". Here, too, is a clumsy expression, probably the work of Messrs the Translators (traduttori traditori!) but the clumsily expressed idea is quite correct, and again it proves to be a completely *materialist* one. Once more: Why does J. Dietzgen declare that materialism is one-sided?

To put the matter bluntly, J. Dietzgen had only a vague idea of materialism. He says of himself (p. 169): "As a rule, I acquaint myself with philosophical works of the second and third order merely by glancing over the preface, the introduction and perhaps the first chapter. Then I am approximately informed as to what I may expect further on." It is our view that J. Dietzgen, because of the extremely widespread contempt for French materialism which prevailed in Germany, "*acquainted himself*" in just that way with the works of the French materialists too, and, having acquainted himself with them in such a superficial and totally unsatisfactory manner, he concluded that materialism

* It is possible, though, that the incorrectness is the fault of the translators. They did not translate J. Dietzgen into Russian literary language, but into some kind of special one of their own, which is more worthy of the title *barbarian*. I am sorry not to have at hand the original works of J. Dietzgen, which were so kindly sent to me by his son, with whom I now have to cross philosophical swords.

was really one-sided, as all the German pastors kept on repeating, and undertook to "abolish" its one-sidedness, to "reconcile" it with idealism. Such a method of "abolishing opposites" was, of course, doomed to utter failure from the start. And we must add that though J. Dietzgen had a much more correct conception of idealism than he had of materialism, he was not fully correct even in that. For instance, what he had to say about Kant was often far from true, although it did conform, we agree, to the widespread current opinions on that philosopher. Even Hegel's philosophy he obviously knew only in *general outline*. We get this impression because J. Dietzgen often seems to be knocking at an open door and solving with incredible effort contradictions that were long ago resolved incomparably better, more fully and deeply, in Hegel's *Logik*. Why should he have knocked at an open door if he knew that the door was already open? But that was just the trouble—he didn't know.

Marx and Engels, who were thoroughly familiar with both *idealism* and *materialism*, did not "abolish" the opposition between these two concepts, but firmly declared themselves to be materialists. Dietzgen son will probably tell us that this is what constitutes their one-sidedness.

But we take a different view of the matter, and to substantiate this we invite the reader to examine with us J. Dietzgen's key "to the solution of all (excusez du peu!) riddles".

The philosophical significance of this remarkable "key" could be characterised by a very brief sentence from J. Dietzgen himself: "Nature comprises all" (p. 12). But that is comprehensible only to people well-versed in the history of philosophy, and there are few such people. Consequently a more detailed exposition is needed.

"The red thread winding through all these letters," J. Dietzgen says in his Thirteenth Letter on Logic (p. 154), "refers to the following point: the thinking apparatus is a thing like all other things, a part or attribute of the universe. It belongs in the first place to the most general category of being, and is an apparatus which produces a detailed picture of human experience by classification or distinction into categories. In order to use this apparatus correctly, one must clearly recognise that world unity is multiform and that all multiformity is a monist whole."

The same thought is expressed in different words in the Fifth Letter:

"The zoologists have always known that all species of animals belong to the animal kingdom; but this order was, with them, more of a mechanical affair.... The grouping of all animals, from the minutest to the biggest, in one kingdom, appeared before the time of Darwin to be an order which had been accomplished

by thought alone, as an order of thought, while since Darwin it has been known as an order of nature.

"What the zoologist did to the animal kingdom, must be done by the logician to being in general, to the infinite cosmos. He must show that the whole world, all forms of its being, including the spirit, are logically connected, related and welded together.

"A certain narrow materialism asserts that everything is done when it has pointed out the interconnection between thought and brain. A good many things may still be discovered with the help of the dissecting knife, microscope and experiment; but this does not make the function of logic superfluous.

"True, thought and brain are connected just as intimately as the brain and the blood, the blood and oxygen, etc.; but thought in general is connected quite as intimately with all being as is the whole of physics.

"That the apple is not dependent only on the stem which attaches it to the tree, but also on the sunshine and rain, that these things are not one-sidedly but universally connected, this is what logic shall especially teach you in regard to the spirit, to thought" (p. 110).

We shall not stop here to prove what was well known to all, even to the "narrowest" of materialists of all times: that "thought" is connected not only with the "brain", but also with all being in general.

Here again Joseph Dietzgen is knocking at an open door, and again he need not have done so had he known better the subject he undertook to expound. He would have found many pages in Holbach's *Système de la Nature* explaining the connection between "thought" and "being".

The fallaciousness of J. Dietzgen's charge against materialism is at once plain to anyone familiar with eighteenth-century materialism.* We shall not enlarge on the point that it is awkward to oppose the classification by "*thought*" to classification by "*nature*", since the latter is certainly at one and the same time *reflective*. We have already said something about this. Now we are not *arguing* with J. Dietzgen, but trying to *understand* him. To do this we must pay the greatest attention to that part of the extract quoted where it says that the whole world, all forms of being, are logically connected, related and welded together.

* It is interesting to note, by the way, that Feuerbach also advanced the same fallacious charge against materialism. And this, too, is explained by the fact that Feuerbach, in keeping with the good old German custom, had only a very vague idea of the history of materialism. He shunned "La Mettrie's truffle-pie" in the self-same work where he (Feuerbach) fully agreed with the views of the author of *L'Homme-machine*.

This idea is the basis of all J. Dietzgen's logic, or—since his logic embraces his theory of cognition,—his gnosiology.* And this idea, in the most varied ways—with endless, wearisome, inessential, and often lumbering repetition—is set forth both in his *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy* and *Letters on Logic*. And it is, of course, a correct but badly expounded idea, which was developed by Heraclitus in ancient times (and he had nothing in common either with the proletariat or with a "proletarian logic" of some special kind) and in the nineteenth century by Hegel and the Hegelians, including the materialists Feuerbach, Marx, and Engels.** In "*Anti-Dühring*" and "*Ludwig Feuerbach*" and in the extract from "*Anti-Dühring*" published as a pamphlet entitled "*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*", this idea is a great deal better expounded, is more simply and lucidly explained than in J. Dietzgen's "*Letters on Logic*" and "*The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*". *This idea is the basis of all dialectics.* And since it is the basis of all dialectics, it alone is insufficient to characterise a particular dialectical method. We know of the *idealist* dialectics of Hegel and the *materialist* dialectics of Marx. What was J. Dietzgen's dialectics? We know that his son calls it "natur-monist". What variety of dialectics is this? Well, listen.

On page 45 of the book we are analysing, *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, J. Dietzgen says: "I have thus explained that logic has as yet not been conscious that the knowledge it produces with its basic principles does not offer us truth itself, but only a more or less accurate picture of it.*** I have, furthermore asserted that the positive outcome of philosophy has substantially added to the clearness of the portrait of the human mind. Logic seeks to be 'the science of the forms and laws of thought'. Dialectics, the legacy of philosophy, aims to be the same, and its first paragraph runs: not thinking produces being, but being produces thinking, of which (being) thinking is the part which is engaged in *portraying* truth. From this follows a fact which can easily obscure the meaning of the theory, viz., that the philosophy which has bequeathed to us logical" (?) "dialectics or dialectic logic, must explain not only thinking, but also, at the same time, the original, of which thinking furnishes copies."

* "Our logic," says J. Dietzgen, "is a theory of cognition."

** Feuerbach was most undoubtedly a materialist, although he liked to attack the "limited" materialists, so great was the strength of this much honoured custom in Germany, from whose influence many, many German Social-Democrats, including the most "radical", have still not freed themselves.

*** J. Dietzgen is not responsible for the style; we have already mentioned that Messrs Dauge and Orlov have translated his book not into Russian but into a ponderous, barbarous language of their own which Herzen would have called "bird language".

Without stopping to consider some *awkward and inaccurate expressions*, we shall observe that the *principal idea* in this passage is *purely materialistic*. Even Engels' words are used, although according to Engels it is not that being *produces* thinking, but that it *determines* thinking. This is a substantial difference, but we shall not dwell on it since it is obviously a *slip of the pen* on J. Dietzgen's part. It is sufficient for us to know that our author is here a *materialist*, one who is convinced that thought is "engaged"* *in portraying truth*, i.e., *being*.

So the "first paragraph" of J. Dietzgen's "natur-monist" dialectics "proclaims" what had been proclaimed much earlier by Marx's materialist dialectics: "The ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into terms of thought." Where is the difference? There is none. How then did J. Dietzgen "supplement" Marx? In no way! True, the "first paragraph" of dialectics is set out in the book of J. Dietzgen—*whose main works were published much later than the main works of Marx and Engels*—much more wordily than in Marx and Engels. But although more lengthy, J. Dietzgen's exposition is so very haphazard, in places so ineffectual and so frequently befogged by the imperfect lucidity of the author's philosophical thinking, that sometimes it not only does not explain the meaning of the "first paragraph" but rather obscures it. What then is the matter? Why then did he undertake to "supplement" Karl Marx with Joseph Dietzgen? It is precisely because—and only because—Dietzgen's philosophical thinking is not distinguished by complete lucidity. This seems to be paradoxical, but, unfortunately, it is true.

In the passage we have just quoted, there is one strange proposition: Being "produces" thought, which however is part of being. If the words "being produces thought" mean the same as Marx's "the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into terms of thought", then the words "thought is ... a part of ... being" compel us to doubt whether J. Dietzgen's philosophy is identical to Marx's. And it is just this possible doubt which attracts to J. Dietzgen people who are influenced by contemporary idealism and wish at any cost to place an *idealist* head on historical *materialism*.

In his exposition, J. Dietzgen is partly loyal to materialism, and then he reiterates that metaphysical logic "has overlooked the fact that knowledge which is produced with its own rules, is not the truth, not the real world, but only an ideal, i.e., more or less apt picture of it" (p. 44).

* Again, an unfortunate expression, but we do not intend to waste time on expressions.

Here, the *ideal* world is only the *reflection* of the material world. But sometimes J. Dietzgen gets himself entangled in his own addition: "thinking is part of being", i.e., the ideal world is part of the material world. Then he writes in all seriousness: "Is not the air, or the scent an ethereal body?" (p. 22). And on page 122 we read: "being or the universe, spirit and matter, embraces all forces, including heaven and hell" (sic!) "in a single circle, a monistic whole". It is such a great muddle, so ambiguous, that here, indeed, J. Dietzgen's philosophy does begin to resemble the very "original" philosophy of Mr. Bogdanov. It is known that anything distinguished by muddled thinking is at home in this philosophy. Here, Mr. P. Dauge, *in his own way*, is right but he is mistaken when he takes this for *dialectical materialism*.*

Space does not permit us to follow up all the regrettable logical consequences of the muddle that has crept into J. Dietzgen's understanding of the "first paragraph" of materialist dialectics; his completely erroneous views of the criterion of truth, and so on. We shall restrict ourselves, therefore, to the remark that, in spite of his son's opinion, J. Dietzgen was *unable to solve the problem of the relation of the subject to the object*, and that it was this that brought about his logical downfall. We shall add that J. Dietzgen's error arose, apparently, from a highly praiseworthy endeavour to pull the theoretical ground from under the feet of speculative philosophy, which placed spirit—in one or other of its conceptions—*outside* and *above* the world. In opposition to this philosophy, J. Dietzgen put the proposition that "being is everything; it is the essential content of everything, outside it there is nothing and can be nothing, because it is the cosmos, i.e., the infinite" (p. 26). It goes without saying that as an argument against speculative philosophy, this has absolutely no value, since to repudiate the existence of extra-universal spirit by a simple recital of the proposition that the world contains in itself *all being*, is to base oneself on a *tautology*, fully identical with that which Eugene Dühring once placed as the cornerstone of *his* philosophy and which Engels ridiculed so scathingly in the first part of *Anti-Dühring*: "All-embracing being is one."** But J. Dietzgen thought

* At best—any resemblance with Mr. Bogdanov could, of course, only be at the worst possible—this confusion of thought includes an obscure allusion to Spinozism. But even with the aid of the most clear Spinozism, one cannot "*excel*" materialism. The materialists La Mettrie, Diderot, Feuerbach, Marx and Engels were Spinozists who had merely ceased to identify God with Nature (see *A Critique of Our Critics*, pp. 154-66⁶³). Feuerbach has already explained Spinoza's relation to materialism.

** "All-embracing being is one." If tautology, the simple repetition in the predicate of what is already expressed in the subject—if that makes an axiom, then we have here one of the purest water. Herr Dühring tells us in the subject that being embraces everything, and in the predicate he intrepidly

this tautological expression was almost the most important "outcome" of philosophy. With its aid, he attempted to solve all contradictions. Thus on pages 127-28, in the Eighth Letter on Logic, addressed, as all these Letters were, to his son, he says: "The most vivid, and, perhaps, the most instructive illustration of the correct meaning of contradictions, is given by the contrast between truth and untruth. These two poles are ... more widely separated than the North Pole and the South Pole, and yet they are as intimately connected as these two. Generally accepted logic will hardly listen to the demonstration of such a senseless unity as that of truth and untruth. Therefore you will pardon me, if I illustrate this example by other opposites, if you like, by the contrast between day and night. Let us assume that the day lasts twelve hours and the night likewise. Here day and night are opposites; where it is day it cannot be night, and yet day and night constitute one single day of twenty-four hours, in which they both dwell harmoniously. It is exactly the same with truth and untruth. The world is the truth, and error, the appearance and lies, embodied in it, are parts of the true world, just as night is part of day, without violation of logic.

"We may honestly speak of appearance *real* and *true* lies, without any contradiction. Just as unreason contains reason, so also untruth lives constantly and inevitably in truth, because the latter is all-embracing, it is the universe."

But in what way is day here reconciled with night? *Firstly*, it is assumed that a day is equal to *twelve* hours, and then it is postulated that a day stretches out to *twenty-four* hours, that is to say, *there is now no place for night*, the duration of which was formerly twelve hours. When there is no place for *night*, it is clear that *there can be no place either for opposition* between night and day. By means of such naive methods, based on the fact that *one and the same* expression is used in *different* senses, one may indeed with the greatest ease reconcile anything, solve all "riddles", and "abolish" all the oppositions in the world. But ... is that really an answer?

J. Dietzgen had to choose between Hegel's idealist dialectics and Marx's materialist dialectics, and he was strongly inclined towards the latter. But since he had not studied the question adequately, and was even insufficiently acquainted with it, he got himself *mixed up* in his own arguments against speculative philosophy and imagined that he had succeeded in "*reconciling*" the

declares that in that case there is nothing outside it. What colossal, 'system-creating thought'!" (Frederick Engels, *Philosophy. Political Economy. Socialism (Anti-Dühring)*, Translated from the German, Fourth Edition, St. Petersburg, 1907, p. 30).⁶⁴

opposition between idealism and materialism. To say nothing of the fact that this inability to cope with his own philosophical thinking was not a sign of strength but of *weakness* on J. Dietzgen's part. To Dietzgen himself, however, and just because he was unable to contend with his own philosophical thinking, this manifestation of *weakness* seemed, on the contrary, to be a manifestation of his *superiority* over "one-sided" materialism.

And those who are now trying to "supplement" Karl Marx and Frederick Engels with Joseph Dietzgen view this weakness of Dietzgen's in the same way as he did. We well understand what the Germans mean when they talk of *piety* in the relationship of children to parents. So that it does not enter our head to ridicule the undoubtedly exaggerated opinion which Eugene Dietzgen has of his father's philosophy. But Eugene Dietzgen must also, for his part, understand piety in the relationship of pupil to teacher. Therefore he must not complain because we have firmly rejected his attempt to "supplement" Marx. As for the Untermans, Dages, Orlovs, etc., *their* inclination to "supplement" in the way mentioned appears to us the simple product of ignorance, weakness of philosophical thinking, and downright literary carelessness. These people have no other extenuating circumstances while those we have just enumerated hardly attenuate anything.

In No. 2 of *Rus*⁶⁵ for the present year (1907) there is a feature by G. V. Kolomiitsev, entitled "Music of Today (Richard Wagner and the Search for New Gods)". We were interested in the following passage:

"Here I should like to dwell on one phenomenon which seems to me very typical of our harassing and impetuous times. I refer to the strongly developed fear of being found 'backward' in questions of musical art, a fear aroused by falsely acquired snatches of the past. In connection with the search for something new at any cost, this fear prompts us to find 'novelty' and 'genius' far too often where at most there is something a good deal less 'significant', and above all, in its essence, anything but 'new'."

Such a fear is also noticeable in our Marxist literature. It explains—in the first instance—very much, including the constant efforts to "supplement" Marx: now with Kant, now with Mach, and now, finally, with J. Dietzgen.

In conclusion, we beg our readers not to think that we attach no importance to the philosophical works of the author of *Letters on Logic*. No, no, and no again! That is not at all our attitude to them. In our view, they merely have no significance *as supplementing Marx*, but in themselves they are sufficiently interesting and in places instructive; although J. Dietzgen's *Letters on Logic* are strikingly, awfully poor in comparison with Hegel's *Science of Logic (Wissenschaft der Logik)*.

J. Dietzgen's too fervent admirers do him the most harm; when they contrast him with giants like Hegel and Marx, they make him appear a lot smaller than he really was.

We advise reading *J. Dietzgen only after the most careful study of Marx's philosophy*. It will then be easier to see how he *approximates* in his teaching to the founders of scientific socialism, and where he has to *yield ground* to them, *lags behind* them. Otherwise, reading J. Dietzgen will give the reader, together with not unimportant and not uninteresting, *but in no way new*, details, much and harmful confusion.

Looking at the matter from another angle, it would be a great deal less awkward to study J. Dietzgen if someone at last took pity on Russian readers and retranslated the most important works of the German worker-philosopher from the barbarian language of Dauge and Orlov into literary Russian. That would be a great boon, indeed!

FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF MARXISM

Marxism is an integral world-outlook. Expressed in a nutshell, it is *contemporary materialism*, at present the highest stage in the development of that *view upon the world* whose foundations were laid down in ancient Greece by Democritus, and in part by the Ionian thinkers who preceded that philosopher. What was known as *hylozoism* was nothing but a naive *materialism*. It is to Karl Marx and his friend Frederick Engels that the main credit for the development of present-day materialism must no doubt go. The historical and economic aspects of this world-outlook, i.e., what is known as *historical materialism* and the closely related sum of views on the *tasks, method, and categories of political economy, and on the economic development of society, especially capitalist society*, are in their fundamentals almost entirely the work of Marx and Engels. That which was introduced into these fields by their *precursors* should be regarded merely as the preparatory work of amassing material, often copious and valuable, but not as yet systematised or illuminated by a single fundamental idea, and therefore not appraised or utilised in its real significance. What Marx and Engels' *followers* in Europe and America have done in these fields is merely a more or less successful elaboration of specific problems, sometimes, it is true, of the utmost importance. That is why the term "Marxism" is often used to signify only these two aspects of the present-day materialist world-outlook not only among the "general public", who have not yet achieved a deep understanding of philosophical theories, but even among people, both in Russia and the entire civilised world, who consider themselves faithful followers of Marx and Engels. In such cases these two aspects are looked upon as something independent of "philosophical materialism", and at times as something almost opposed to it.* And since these two aspects cannot but

* [Note to the German edition of 1910.] My friend Viktor Adler was perfectly right when, in an article he published on the day of Engels' funeral, he observed that socialism, as understood by Marx and Engels, is not only an economic but a universal doctrine (I am quoting from the Italian edition):