Yet another innovative patrol

The last Filo, entitled "Batrachomyomachia", made reference to the French magazine "Socialisme ou Barbarie" and to its small group. This small school (apparently similar to a coterie, where everyone is allowed to, and is asked to give his apport, his contribution\(^1\), a constant and "free discussion" - in other words, one will never come to an end) is essentially characterized by the new expression: "bourgeois bureaucracy", something that is considered to be the modern form of capitalism. This small school calls itself "Marxist", but nevertheless explains the need for a new theory of "class society", a society in which the proletariat would be exploited and ruled by the bureaucracy, a society that had been "not foreseen" by Marx and that would be located between "private capitalism" and socialism.

Not only do we intend to show that this is not an improvement of theory, but we have also made it clear that such a point of view negates Marxism in all its components: economy, history of class struggles, materialist theory of society.

We have also shown that such a "challenge" to Marxism does not really go beyond the objections already raised, but rather follows in the footsteps of already known anti-Marxist positions and defends pre-Marxist views that are now held by all those who, for class reasons or out of inability, do not reach the conclusions of Marxism.

Finally, we made the difference between this and the revolutionary position clear by using the image of the "Batrachomyomachia" and the "Iliad": In the first parody, also attributed to Homer, a great war between the realm of mice and that of frogs is told, in which the whole "theory of practice" amounts to the banality: As a mouse, I have to occupy my place in the battle among those who are mice, against the frogs - or vice versa; the "Iliad" reports on the epic battle between forces that stand for two historical forms of life separated by thousands of kilometres and thousands of years, such as the Asian and the Mediterranean ones.

For Greeks and Trojans it also applies, of course, what we read again to those who rashly boast about being orthodox, namely that "one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness", which it has of itself. Our comparison is therefore entirely appropriate, even if we do not believe with the blind poet\(^2\) that the warriors' consciousness was limited to explaining the Trojan War with the horns that Paris had put on the Menelaus.

Therefore Batrachomyomachia, because the fight whose protagonists are not real but artificial armies, and whose ends do not even reach the level of a crusade for a cuckold, a struggle in which the battle order is not explained "from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production", but is sought in the hollow "analysis" of a statistic of social conditions that is static, rigid, metaphysical and not related to the great transition from capitalism to socialism, refers to a bare income table and an investigation into "unlawful appropriations", conducted by private detectives who have not digested a syllable of Marxism, which they want to improve.

As little weight as this small group carries, the recurring efforts to bring Marxism up to date are noteworthy, so that further clarifications are certainly in order.

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\(^1\) apport, contribution (French): Contribution, share.

\(^2\) Today it is doubted both that Homer was blind and that he wrote the "Batrachomyomachia".
Yesterday

Two opposing visions

If we attach great importance to the experiences of the struggles of the past, which were reflected in the "differences of opinion" of different currents and led to the "splits" in the movement, with regard to the formation of the revolutionary party, it is because, under different conditions and in different places, the same "attacks" on the corpus of revolutionary doctrine were repeatedly undertaken in different forms and the disputes always ended in the same way. It is precisely because we proceed historically and not scholastic that we draw the balance of these struggles on the basis of lessons we have learned, which make it possible to base ourselves on the respective outcome of the fighting cycles. The proof of the correct understanding of the original Marxism - which emerged at that time in which its outlines could and had to be laid - is thus clearly provided by the facts of experience itself.

The first of the two ways of seeing modern society is undoubtedly under the influence of that view which once overthrew and destroyed all traditional prejudices. However, since it only copies its forms, it actually only brings it to a parody of this struggle and ultimately merely serves as a breeding ground for the counterrevolutionary forces. It seems to take a step beyond the usual sociology of the bourgeois Enlightenment, which came into being, barely after the doctrine of the old system of classes had been destroyed, at least theoretically (in French états, but not in the sense of État, state, by which we refer to the political power organism of a country). The theory of the liberal and democratic bourgeois destroyed that "mode of production" which, almost like the castes of old societies, was based on strictly demarcated estates, whereby the reproductive conditions almost excluded their mixing. The bourgeois proclaimed that there would no longer be any nobility or common people, but only citizens, all of them, regardless of their origin, equal before the law. The view we are dealing with here now at least amounts rudimentarily to a criticism of this society of equals and denies that all its members belong to the same type. Taking into account the economic factor, it divides society into two departments. Hardly going beyond the millennia-old difference between rich and poor, it "steals" only the word class, which still appears as a column in a table - when in Marx this word has more force than the energy released by nuclear fission - and divides this generally homogeneous society into workers and entrepreneurs, whereby it is halfway understood that the interests of the former stand in contrast to those of the latter.

It is true that the "classical" ideologists of the bourgeoisie and its revolution first tried to deny this demarcation line drawn within the bourgeoisie and the national community, but it is also true that very soon and on all sides this fact - and the problem³ - was acknowledged, which became the object of a thousand proposals for solutions. It will hardly be necessary to recall again how similar these proposals were on the part of the reformists, the Christian socialists, the Mazzini supporters, etc., and finally also the fascists.

Those who are satisfied with acknowledging the existence of classes in modern industrial society and their struggle to defend their interests are therefore not yet leaving the bourgeois camp. Marx assured that he had not discovered either the classes or the class struggle.

Our point of view, which distinguishes itself clearly from the first one, also sees the opposition of direct and local interests and the antagonism of the classes, but as an expression of a fact that is much more essential and much deeper, that encompasses a large part of today's world and that has a development cycle that lasts for decades, even centuries: The struggle between a new, precisely determinable mode of production made possible by the development of the productive forces, namely the socialist one,

³ The so-called "social question".
and on the other hand the capitalist mode of production, which is protected by the existing conditions of production and property, by the state.

The aim that the class must achieve already exists "before" the class, before it has a consciousness and a will - at least when consciousness and will are erroneously awarded to each individual or to all class members. The aim exists because production today disposes of such technical and scientific means that it will only be able to flourish in completely different conditions from the existing ones, which is why the latter must be destroyed. The class action, which does not have to include the whole class, not even its majority, is therefore indispensable. But knowledge, consciousness or culture and education are not indispensable; and it is not only illusion, but downright betrayal to want to "track down" these things in the class as it exists today: They come after the fight, even after the victory.

Proletarians against bourgeois is a formula to describe contemporary society in a Marxist way, not a Marxist formula of revolution; the right one is: communism against capitalism. "But it is men who fight against each other!" Who disputed that? In the infinite historical context, the form that perishes and the form that emerges determine the ranks into which their bearers and followers are integrated; they fight each other, but they know to very different degrees the course of the transition from one form of society to another. One can only speak of communists against capitalists (whereby with capitalists we do not mean capital owners, but the followers and defenders of the capitalist system) because one has taken sides politically and organisationally, not because a course in the philosophy of history has been attended.

The Resurrected Lassalle

The extremely strange theory, according to which in a class society on the one hand there are wage workers, on the other hand a bureaucracy, and the only distribution of income is that the surplus value squeezed out of the workers is transformed into the salaries of state officials, has not only gone astray with regard to the series of modes of production, but is even still beneath the "economistic" view, which is limited to pointing out the immediate interests of the workers in society. Worker is in fact the one who has only his money wage as his income, bourgeois the one whose income consists in the appropriation of a certain amount of labour products, whether in the form of profit, interest or rent. Even at the mere level of appearance, these two groups are characterized by completely disparate conditions in relation to the elements of production: On the one hand land, factories, produced commodities, cash etc., on the other hand labour power. But even this sterile and sober formula fails when bureaucracy is to be defined with its help. Thus the civil servant, with his monthly or annual salary, is paid poorly or reasonably. The commissioner responsible for electrification in the USSR goes to jail, just like the worker at Dynamo, if he takes a ball bearing with him or goes shopping in the store without paying. So, what kind of class society are we talking about here?

The common ground of this circle of people, which is limited to being employed at a salary of such-and-such many rubles (which means that in the popular "income pyramid", the bravura of all anti-Marxist polemics, arbitrary horizontal cuts were made), cannot lead to a common interest with regard to state leadership and the exercise of power - unless a corporative society, a new lectern aristocracy, emerges. Does the foreman, who is paid monthly, not count as a proletarian simply because he has not physically laid hands on the factory products? Or the little accountant who earns less than the technician? We have already proven that the level of pay is not a criterion for determining class.

Here one is not only standing below Marxism and within a crude "socialitarian" view, like the modern bourgeois, but even falls back into a pre-bourgeois society, with a family clan that has established itself as a royal household in the haze of power.
Couldn't history take such a tournure⁴? In our opinion, and for all the reasons why we are Marxists, at least not. But if someone sees such a possibility and proves it by means of the Russian or another type of society, if it would be granted for a moment, Marx and all our classical writings would be done for once and for all.

Has the bold and stately Lassalle, who was a weak theorist - even when copying - but a strong agitator, risen again, after he engaged in a duel with a "Wallachian pseudo-prince" and his fight was tragically ended by a gunshot on August 30, 1864? Marx, who seemed filled with resentment and anger against him, was sad that his polemics with him abruptly broke off. The level-headed Engels tries to cheer him up: "Such a thing could only happen to Lassalle, with his strange and altogether unique mixture of frivolity and sentimentality, Jewishness and chivalresquerie."

Not long before, on January 28, 1863, Marx had sent Engels his opinion on a work sent to him by Lassalle: "Speech on the workers' estate". Marx on this: "As you know, the thing's no more nor less than a badly done vulgarisation of the Manifesto and of other things we have advocated so often that they have already become commonplace to a certain extent. (For instance, the fellow calls the working class an 'estate')."

These words ring in our ears in Italy: "Ordine nuovo", "Stato operaio".

In another letter of 12 June 1863 we read the criticism of another Lassallean writing: "Quite touching, how he imparts to the court 'his' discoveries, the fruit of the most profound 'learning and truth' and of terrible 'night vigils', namely that, in the Middle Ages 'landed property' prevailed, in later times 'capital', and at present the 'principle of the workers' estate', 'labour', or the 'moral principle of labour'; and, on the same day as he was imparting this discovery to the louts, Senior Councillor to the Government Engel (knowing nothing about him) was imparting it to a more distinguished audience at the Academy of Singing. He and Engel exchanged 'epistolary' congratulations upon their 'simultaneous' scientific findings.

The 'workers' estate' and the 'moral principle' are indeed achievements on the part of Izzy and the Senior Councillor to the Government."

The "discovery" of the bureaucratic class, which the so suspicious Marx could not have guessed (!), leads us back to this pattern: Since there are no more bourgeois in Russia, the Russian workers form an estate that is exploited and oppressed by the opposing estate of functionaries. And the "moral principle" is violated because the lavish salaries of the bureaucracy come about through the fact that factory wages are "cut back". That's it. And after this new type of society has been discovered, the new laws of revolution must of course also be discovered.

Since we, with Marx, see the workers as a class, we seek the aims and precise historical terms of the new society emerging from the workers revolution and find them because we have reached a stage of society on which we are able to recognize the material determinations of the ultra-modern productive forces. But a "revolution of estates" is something completely different: Nobody knows its method and its aim; it is an "inner affair of the estate", which will discover and define it according to its "autonomy of consciousness and will". An autonomy that is merely the polished little sister of the constitutional democracy of the bourgeois and Lassalle's "moral principle", but, as we are allowed to experience, was discovered with a raised nose in the 1950s!

Nothing but ruins

It is clear that it would not be necessary to deal with this bungle if it did not simultaneously claim to be the latest development and the modern expression, indeed even that representation of Marxism,

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⁴ tournure (French): turn, turning.
which must be the starting point for the resumption against the degeneration in which the movement
would find itself worldwide, as a result of the rule of the Moscow state and party bureaucracy, which
would also extend beyond the national borders. Worse still, such things - with concepts and theses
creating further confusion - are claimed by people pretending to be in the continuity of the Left
Opposition that took up the fight against the first symptoms of Stalinist opportunism thirty years ago.

It must therefore be made quite clear that if these strange positions (which are brought in step by step
according to Lassalle's method, i.e. Marx's writings are copied page by page, or rather paraphrased in
a clumsy manner, and only to then pretend to have made an additional "discovery" that improves and
completes the whole thing) were conceded for a moment, this would directly lead to the erasure of all
chapters of Marxism.

It does not seem important, merely an aside, when it is stated: The capitalist era in which captains of
industry and workers fought against each other is over, for today "managers", the heads and directors
of production, and dependent manual and mental workers, face each other. Whether such a scheme
is drawn up by those who apologize for a society directed by "technicians", a "think tank" instead of
ignorant plutocrats, or, even more treacherously, by people who are forerunners of a revolutionary
change of direction by the working class - or ex-class - so that it is no longer the bourgeoisie but this
new monstrous "leadership apparatus" that is being fought against - in any case here one is completely
off track. A force of movement leading to another mode of production, which exists as a doctrine, as
an organization, as a closed international struggle, as a cycle comprising many generations, thus is
reduced to an accidental and regional rebellion of the "exploited" (a silly word, by the way, to justify
the "moral principle"), to a revolt which, literally instead of defending against the factory owners, is
now directed towards defending the "executors" against the "leaders", this new figure who was
supposed to give the evil spirit the latest painting.

We believe that we have examined the economic side of the question in the previous "Filo". If one
looks at contemporary Russian society from the point of view of the transition from one mode of
production to another - examining the social conditions, the relationships of the people who work
within this mode of production and consumption - everything becomes very clear, and there is not the
slightest contradiction with the basic schema of historical revolutions, nor with Marxist methodology
and terminology. Since in Russia we find ourselves in the midst of the palingenesis that replaces the
feudal and Asian form of production and small-scale commodity production with the capitalist one,
and witness the process in which the spheres of consumption, which have remained in self-sufficiency,
are absorbed at an extremely rapid rate by the internal and global market, in which mass work is called
onto the agenda, in which technology needs ten times less time to generalize than 19th century
capitalism (because the technological and scientifically available potential of the new productive forms
is a lot higher than back then), since we are witnessing, in short, how the fragmented means of
production become capital, the existing bureaucratic organisms are of course inevitably agents of the
capitalist mode of production - which is always and everywhere one and the same.

We have worked this out, and it is not an opinion but simply a statement, in detail and especially in
"Dialogue with Stalin". It is important to note: If instead of dealing with a capitalist one, we are dealing
with a new power, a supposedly new class, such as bureaucracy, without a new economic form
appearing, then the theory according to which the "periods of transformation" occur after a new
development of productive forces has begun would also have to be abandoned and instead a new
theory would need to be established that makes the onset of the epochs of social revolution
dependent on the desire of a social group that is seeking to replace the preceding society out of an
"autonomous" drive. And indeed, this is the pre-Marxist and anti-Marxist idea of historical
development.
We have here the denial of Marxist historical dialectics, followed by the usual economic qui pro quo, which was passed from Proudhon via Lassalle, via Dühring and Sorel to Gramsci: Socialism would be the conquest of business profits for the workers. Socialism, as we keep hammering in, is the conquest of the entire product by the workers associated not in factories but in world society, i.e. not only the conquest of surplus value - that value which, as it is banally said, the factory owner pockets, but which is in fact a social withdrawal positively brought in by capitalism. Conquest, let us say it again, of the total value, after which value will be destroyed, just as after the conquest of all power, power will be destroyed.

Only if the community conquers the entire product will it be possible to use the increased productive force and reduce working time to a minimum, whereby this working time will hardly be higher than that given to society - what we call surplus labour today and which also remains without the factory owner, but today must take the detour: from worker to company, and from company to society. Without this result, it would be pure bragging to speak of proletarian consciousness.

Moreover: the income pyramid is not a pyramid at all, but a gable that is very pointed at the top because there are only few top salaries. Even if, which is absurd, the bureaucrats would make up one-fifth and the workers four-fifths, the "volume of the top" would be very small. Even if their average volume were twice the wage of the four-fifths (which would mean a maximum of 15 or 20 times higher than this total wage), the "squeezed out" surplus labour (since these very employees are only there to twiddle their thumbs) would only amount to ten or fifteen percent of the total product. The standard of living, once the bureaucracy would be eliminated, would hardly rise noticeably, or in other words, working hours would be reduced by just one hour. Is it really that hard to understand? The revolution is certainly not made for "Senior's 'Last Hour'", but for the whole day, which means: the whole life, something that the fools call "freedom". The proletariat, which would make the revolution merely to cut off the gable top, would in any case be one with the lowest "consciousness" imaginable.

In Russia, where the accumulation of capital, instead of in 100 years as in the West, had to be achieved in 10 years, this could not be done without long working hours and high surplus value: No transitional economy can escape this, and if it had not only been the transition from feudalism to capitalism, but even the transformation period from capitalism to socialism, efforts would have had to be multiplied. But this could not have been tackled without the proletariat in the West taking into its own hands the super-accumulated capital, at least in Europe, which had already entered the phase of capitalist commodity production persistently resisting death; since 1917 every child knows this.

Let those who believe they can write the last pages of Marxism read the first pages that tower above them. And may they shut the chatty and conceited know-it-alls up and break their pen.

**Today**

**Party and Class**

After economy, history and dialectical materialism have been given their due, we only have to tackle the questions of practical action, understood as organisation and as tactics. Here one no longer agrees, and the groups dissolve, unite, form anew every moment, then, separated, bow to each other, discuss each other and express their opinions in the same sheets and magazines: In the end, Madame Freedom returns, who, having been kicked out of history and society, returns even more audaciously to "class" and "party", which, according to all these gentlemen, have disappeared from the scene. If class has been downgraded to an estate, the party has been downgraded to a heraldic reference book or a
parliamentary mandate. These people take it upon themselves to describe the next millennium and do not realize that they live in that of round tables⁵ and the cours des miracles⁶.

The fact that they go down the historical path inversely is shown by the fact that although they have different opinions about the time when the "party" (which makes them shudder because, as they call it, "leaders" and "managers" are in there) came to an end, there is no disagreement about the thesis that the class needs the party less and less. Essentially, they are people in whom, when you scratch a bit on the surface, only idealism, moralism, individualism and the inviolability of the person come to light, and all they have understood of the Russian issue is that a vicious bunch of power-hungry and glamour-loving people have thrown a stick between the legs of the proletariat by saying that it cannot do without two disgraceful tools, namely a government and a political, moreover centralized party; both would have suffocated "autonomy", this obsession of everyone who has grown up in the crude bourgeois mentality and which continues in the hollow attitude of existential revolt⁷.

Because the right thesis is exactly the opposite: on its long historical road to revolution, the working class needs its party more and more! The first forms in which the workers associated gradually collapse, like the societies for mutual help, the cooperatives; after the revolution also the trade unions and company and state associations (like the Soviets among others that emerge after the revolution, when there is a class dictatorship): In this whole cycle the party will become stronger and stronger and in a certain way it will never disappear, not even after the disappearance of classes, as it will become the organ that explores the natural conditions and organizes the struggle of the human species, also against nature. For these gentlemen, however, the party must perish; only that some of them still find it important to set it up as a kind of "counseling center" in order to fill the gaps that opportunism has torn, others have - bang! - already made up their mind: the concept of the revolutionary party is linked to a past phase of proletarian history.

Maestro Sartre has introduced a certain word into the literature of the Gallic language, let us say it in existentialist French: quelle putainade⁸!

From the "Manifesto" to "What Is To Be Done?"

When some, but very reluctantly, speak of a party to be established (always an act of consciousness and will! In competition with the founders, who founded nothing and dissolved nothing!), then they do not assign a leading function to it, but only one, oh boy, of orientation!

Do you remember the good Engels and the anarchists in 1872? "When I submitted arguments like these to the most rabid anti-authoritarians, the only answer they were able to give me was the following: Yes, that's true, but there it is not the case of authority which we confer on our delegates, but of a commission entrusted! These gentlemen think that when they have changed the names of things they have changed the things themselves. This is how these profound thinkers mock at the

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⁵ The idea of a round table was first introduced into King Arthur's legends by the Anglo-Norman poet Wace (around 1150). Arthur would have invented the round table to avoid disputes over the best seats (The king himself did not sit at the round table.)

⁶ Until the 17th century, the "cours des miracles" (French) ("court of wonders", which Marx in the "German Ideology" calls "vagabond kingdom") was the centre of the Parisian underworld, i.e. a colourful population of beggars, thieves, vagabonds, prostitutes, etc. When the blind and sick returned to their slums from begging, a "miracle" happened: they could see again, were healthy again. Due to the "Haussmannisation" that replaced the street (in the old sense) with the big traffic arteries and boulevards, this quarter disappeared in today's 2nd arrondissement, where today the stock exchange is located.

⁷ Allusion to existentialism, especially Sartre's. As with all bourgeois philosophies, it is always about the individual, the individual existence: it is not given to man, but only his possibility, which he can realize or not. According to the existentialists, man creates his existence: it is his "design".

⁸ Quelle putainade (French): roughly "what a bullshit".
whole world." Before his death, did our Friedrich suspect that in 1953, where we are 80 years richer in historical experience, it would be discovered in Paris that it is not about leadership but about orientation? But if such a "commission" contained an imperative mandate, the new recipe is only silly. Like when an aircraft captain is content to shout to his co-pilot instead of "course 135 degrees"; "The control vane to the south-east!". With something like this, the updaters of history will certainly have proven how urgently their appearance was awaited on all sides.

It is not the first time that we comment the following passage from the "Manifesto": "The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: [...] In the various stages of development [...] they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole." And although this had been declared in 1848, the Manifesto of the Party had to be held against the spectre of communism. In 1848, any party that opposed the existing constitution was revolutionary for this reason alone (whereas today, 100 years later, those parties that have cheerfully established themselves in the constitutional conditions dare to call themselves communist). Moreover, the bourgeois state did not tolerate a party that was not characterized by opinions or ideas, but placed itself on the standpoint of social opposition. If the state had considered communism a pure creed, even the communist party would have been tolerated, but never the workers' party. Since then we have repeatedly stated that communism is not a creed, but that the Communist Party is the historical expression of life of a class's own doctrine and the political organisation of the followers of this doctrine - no matter what class they come from, which, we know only too well, annoys the demagogues who pay court to the workers and praise worker idolatry in order to climb the ladder of success from here - according to the bourgeois attitude: not to lead, but to serve (the motto of the Rotary Club of industrial magnates!). But before anything else, it annoys the counterrevolution.

Even the trade union federation was unconstitutional at its time and it was a revolutionary act of the Communist League or the First International to send money for strike funds to it. Marx always liked to recall that the Jacobin Revolution banned the first workers' trade unions, for fear of the re-establishment of the guild system. In a letter to Engels he writes: "By the way, the Prussian Anti-Combination Law, like all continental laws of this description, takes its origin from the decree of the Constituent Assembly of 14 June 1791, in which the French bourgeois strictly punish anything of the sort, and indeed any kind of workers' associations – condemning violators to, for instance, a year's loss of civil rights – on the pretext that this is a restoration of the guilds" (which had been dissolved with the constitution of 1789) "and a contravention of constitutional liberty and the 'rights of man'."

That all the workers' parties and even trade unions and political circles gather in a single political movement is, as we can see, for obvious historical reasons, the old formula of workers' organization. After 1871, in the phase of modern bourgeois rule, this workerist or worker exalting formula became an increasingly conservative and counterrevolutionary trademark. While the formula of the political workers' party - seen as an organ of revolution and not a machine for election campaigns - prevails in the radical Marxist movement and is persistently defended against the a-political syndicalism of the first decade of the 20th century, it is the Russian party that clearly defines the role of the party. As a result of the unfortunate name given to the German party, here too due to Lassalle's enormous influence, there is almost always talk of the role of "social democracy" in this question; instead, we will always put party. Engels in a letter dated 16.11.1864: "And what a dreadful title: Der Socialdemokrat [the social democrat]? Why do these fellows not simply call it the Proletarier [the Proletarian]?" And Marx on 18.11.1864: "Social-Demokrat is a bad title. But there is no need to throw away the best titles immediately on things that may prove to be failures."
Beatings for Lenin

A certain Chacal, if we remember the name correctly, lets loose a tremendous thunderstorm about the "mistakes made by Lenin" in "What Is To Be Done?". But the meaning of Lenin's famous writing goes far beyond the particular questions of the Russian movement at the time, when the party was head over heels in the task of winning first the anti-Tsarist and then the anti-bourgeois struggle. This text rests on the pillars of Marxism and if it is false, it applies to the whole Marxist structure. Referring a hundred times to our basic texts, Lenin asserts his theses. Elsewhere we recalled the unification conference of 1901, at which Lenin took little part in the programmatic debate; he only took the floor when an amendment was proposed, according to which "the discontent, solidarity, number and class consciousness of the proletariat" grew in equal measure. "This change", the teacher says, "would blur the meaning. It would give the impression that the development of class consciousness is something spontaneous. [...] Apart from the influence of social democracy, there is no conscious activity of the workers." It is said that Lenin recanted this. Where and how? He himself underlines the word "consciousness". And indeed, the activity, the action belongs to the workers, the consciousness belongs only to their party; the action, the practice, is immediate and spontaneous, while the consciousness, delayed, reflects the practice, and can be anticipated only in the party. And only when there is both, action and consciousness, does the class cease to be a naked statistical snapshot, but becomes the acting force of the "period of transformation" and buries a world hostile to it through a struggle whose goal - not of individuals, whether leaders or followers, generals or soldiers, but of the impersonal collectivity of the party spanning distant countries and generations - is known and wanted. So we are not dealing with a capability guarded in the individual skull - this can only be found in the texts, because we do not have a better means of measuring the soldiers and especially the generals strictly against it. However, it is hopelessly banal to speak of an immanent contrast between "leaders" and "executors", the latest silliness from beyond the Alps.

The right wing of the Russian party wanted to recruit the party members from the qualified worker layer or from the factories controlled by the party; the trade unions were called professional associations by the Russians. For polemical purposes, Lenin expresses the famous sentence that the party is above all an organization of "professional revolutionaries". The question is not whether they are workers, in which sector they are employed, whether in carpentry, plumbing or elsewhere. They can be factory workers as well as students or even sons of noblemen; their answer to the question: "What is your profession" will be: "Revolutionary". Only Stalinist nonsense could give the above statement the meaning of revolutionary by profession, the meaning of one salaried by the party. With the stupid formula: "Should the functionaries be found among the workers or elsewhere?" we would not have made any progress, because it is about something completely different.

Our thesis can also be formulated differently: The doctrine and consciousness of the revolutionary aim cannot be fathomed by an opinion poll among "real" workers. It coincides with the sentence expressed in the "Manifesto", according to which in revolutionary situations "a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class". Or as Marx said a thousand times, for example in the Conspectus of Bakunin's "Statism and Anarchy", namely that "the proletariat still acts, during the period of struggle for the overthrow of the old society, on the basis of that old society, and hence also still moves within political forms which more or less belong to it".

Therefore, the organic and enduring theses from "What Is To Be Done?" are not personal opinions of Marx and Lenin or even us. We have already shown that one could discuss and disagree with Lenin,

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9 It is probably "Chatel" pseudonym for S. Diesbach.
10 See: "Russia e rivoluzione nella teoria marxista", Parte seconda, 39 Masse e partito, p. 177-78; Milano, 1990. In reality it was the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903.
11 "What Is To Be Done?", Chapter IV: c) Organisation of Workers and Organisation of Revolutionaries
this giant, but as far as this cardinal point was concerned, it could not be changed without standing on
the other side of the barricade.

So let us smash the spontaneity and autonomy of class consciousness with the great words of Lenin.

**Throwing Consciousness Overboard**

"We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It
would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working
class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the
conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the
government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of
the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the
propertied classes, by intellectuals." Youthfully rugged, but still useful today to make fools take to their
heels.

Lenin cites Karl Kautsky: "Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic
development and the class struggle create, not only the conditions for socialist production, but also,
and directly, the consciousness of its necessity. [...] But this is absolutely untrue. [...] Socialism and the
class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other. [...] Thus, socialist consciousness is
something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arose
within it spontaneously". The long quotation given is clear and unambiguous; a Gramscian, for
example, would, of course, be left perplexed, for it takes thorough training in dialectics to understand
that the fantasy of an "independent spontaneous consciousness" is completely counterrevolutionary.

"But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least
resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois
ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at
its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination." See the Marx quote above.

"Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, only from
outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers.
The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of all
classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between all classes.
For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the
workers cannot be merely the answer [...] : 'To go among the workers.' To bring political knowledge to
the workers the Social Democrats must go among all classes of the population; they must dispatch
units of their army in all directions." Bitter pills, but how healing against the worst kind of philistinism,
the "seducers of the proletariat"!

Nothing more is needed to illustrate the historical chain of successive Marxist positions. It is not
allowed to "choose" where one wants to participate and where not, as the dilettante de boulevard\(^\text{12}\) do. They should direct their steps elsewhere and do us the favour of not caring for us, with our deeply
rooted and inextricable "errors", while they walk on their paths of absolute truth, which we gladly
bestow upon them with other original fetishes (the only ones at whose level they are).

That Lenin follows in Marx's footsteps can be seen, apart from many passages in which he bases
himself on him and Engels, still from another Marx letter, on the occasion of the foundation of the First
International in London.

\(^\text{12}\) Allusion to the "boulevard theatre" or "boulevard play", that bourgeois form of entertainment such as the
crude comedy, the burlesque, the anecdote; the dilettante de boulevard is the modern hedonist or even
existentialist.
February 25th, 1865: "A further factor is this: the workers seem to want to take things to the point of excluding any literary man, etc., which is absurd, as they need them in the press, but it is pardonable in view of the repeated treachery of the literary men. Conversely, the latter are suspicious of any workers’ movement, which displays hostility towards them."

September 26th, 1866: "By way of demonstration against the French monsieurs - who wanted to exclude everyone except 'travailleurs manuels', in the first instance from membership of the International Association, or at least from eligibility for election as delegate to the congress - the English yesterday proposed me as President of the Central Council. I declared that under no circumstances could I accept such a thing, and proposed Odger in my turn, who was then in fact re-elected, although some people voted for me despite my declaration. Dupont, incidentally, has given me the key to the Tolain and Fribourg operation. They want to stand as workers’ candidates for the Corps législatif in 1869, on the 'principle' that only workers can represent the workers. That is why it was exceedingly important for these gentlemen to get this principle proclaimed through the Congress."

Whatever you say, Marx was already able to "guess" everything in 1866. And besides: For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. Do you really believe that your drivel from 1953 are new and never heard before stories?

Safe and Straight Line

The contributions of the Italian left (since 1920) on the subject of "party and class" already contain an exhaustive answer to the "consciousnessists" and "workerists". After it had been established that they could see nothing special in it when there is talk of "post-capitalism", they now want to try again by allowing themselves to be illuminated by a kind of Gallup-type opinion poll of factory workers who have a "feel" for the deduction of surplus value! Nevertheless, according to them, this almighty consciousness reaches its limits when it comes to the demand for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, but not when it comes to the actualisation of socialist society. If we sum up all these sentences formed in "free discussion", we can only conclude: Since the bourgeoisie in Russia, as they say, has been overthrown, the Russian proletariat will no longer be able to become conscious of anything and the project of the anti-bureaucratic revolution will not know from where it, from Paris, is supposed to puiser13 its characteristics.

Our theorem is correct. It is not only the consciousness of the future course, the will to achieve the set aim and to act "in the given historical epoch" on its own initiative that is found in the party alone; insurrection, government, dictatorship and economic plan are therefore tasks of the party - where it is certainly not in keeping with the means we so often point out against the degeneration of the party to water down its role and its strict contours - but the thesis completely reads: The class is class when it has its party.

One more sentence by Marx, who, regretting Lassalle's illusion about a socialist intervention of the government of Bismarck against the bourgeoisie, writes to von Schweitzer on February 13, 1865: "The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing".

Or yet another sentence, for the heroism that comes at the wrong time of those who would stand powerless at the right time. This time Engels has the floor, in June 1866, when the prospects of a defeat of Prussia seemed to fade away: "If this opportunity passes without being used, and if the people allow that to happen, we can then calmly pack up our revolutionary paraphernalia and devote ourselves to pure theory."

Source: "Gracidamento della prassi": Il programma comunista, No. 11, June 1953.

13 puiser (French): here: get from, draw, borrow.