Programme of the world revolution

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OF THE
WORLD REVOLUTION

BY

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

The author of the "Programme of the World Revolution" is Comrade Bucharin, who is one of the ablest exponents of Socialism in the international revolutionary movement. With the exception of a very small pamphlet, nothing of importance has yet been published in English from Bucharin's brilliant pen. While Lenin is the dialectical champion of the revolutionary theories of Communism in Russia, Bucharin may be looked upon as the most popular expounder of those views. This function of popularising the aims and objects of Socialism is ably performed by Bucharin, due to his wonderful gift of being able to interpret the most difficult social theories in a manner which is as brilliant as it is clear and elementary. We doubt if the case for Socialism, and its revolutionary tactics, has ever been presented in such simple language as that used by Bucharin in the present work.

"The Programme of the World Revolution" has been printed and circulated in many languages. Millions of copies of this famous work have been distributed among the workers throughout Europe. And as the S.L. Press is the only printing establishment in Britain which is devoted to the publication of Socialist literature, we have very great pleasure in recommending Bucharin's volume to the wage-workers of this country. While the capitalist-imperialists of the world are seeking to smash Soviet Russia by adopting savage tactics which range from corruption, through violence, on to murder—our Russian comrades, as part of their offensive, content themselves with assailing Capitalism by the publication of literature!

S.L. PRESS.
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CHAPTER I.


In all countries, except in Russia, Capital is predominant. Whatever State one takes, whether semi-despotic Prussia, or Republican France, or so-called democratic America, everywhere power is wholly concentrated in the hands of big capital. A small group of people, landowners, manufacturers and the richest bankers, hold millions and hundreds of millions of town workers and rural poor in slavery and bondage, compelling them to toil, sweating them and throwing them on the street as soon as they become useless and worn out and incapable of being a source of further profit to Lord Capital.

This terrible power of the bankers and manufacturers over millions of toilers is given to them by wealth. Why does a poor man who is thrown on the streets have to starve to death? Because he possesses nothing but a pair of hands which he can sell to the capitalist should the capitalist want them. How is it that a rich banker or business man can do nothing, and yet lead an easy life free of care, getting a solid income, and raking in profits daily, hourly, and even by the minute? Because he possesses not only a pair of hands, but also those means of production without which work is impossible nowadays: factories, land, machines, railroads, mines, ships and steamers, and all kinds of apparatus and instruments. All over the world, except in present-day Russia, this wealth accumulated by man belongs only to capitalists and landowners who have also become capi-
talists. And it is no wonder that in such a state of affairs a group of men, having in their hands all that is indispensable, the most necessary things, dominate the rest who possess nothing. Let us take the instance of a poor man from the country coming to town to seek work. Who does he go to? To the proprietor, the man who owns a factory or works. And this same proprietor becomes the complete master of the man's life. If his, the master's loyal servants, directors and bookkeepers, have calculated that it is possible to squeeze more profits out of fresh workers than out of the old ones, then he "gives a job." If not, he tells him to "pass along." At the factory the capitalist is monarch of all he surveys. He is obeyed by all, and his directions are implicitly carried out. The factory is extended or reduced at his will. At his command, through foremen and managers, workmen are employed or dismissed. He decides how long they are to work and what pay they are to get. And all this happens because the factory is his factory, the works, his works; they belong to him, are his private property. It is this right of private property over the means of production that is the cause of the terrible power which is in the hands of capital.

The same thing holds good with regard to land. Take the freest and the most democratic country—the United States. Thousands of workers cultivate land that does not belong to them, land owned by landowning capitalists. Here everything is organised on the plan of a large factory: there are tens and hundreds of electric ploughs, reaping machines, reaping and sheaf-binding machines, at which hired slaves toil from dawn till night. And just as at the factory, they work not for themselves, but for a master. That is because land itself as well as the seeds and machines, in a word, everything, except the working hands, is the private property of the capitalist master. He is autocrat here. He commands and conducts the business in such a way as to convert the very sweat and blood into shining yellow metal. The workmen, grumbling sometimes, obey, and go on making money for the master because he possesses everything, whilst the worker, the poor agricultural labourer, possesses nothing.

But sometimes it so happens that the landowner does not hire labourers, but lets his land on lease. Here in Russia, for instance, the poor peasantry, holding small allotments hardly enough to pasture a hen, were obliged to rent land from the landowners. They cultivated it with their own horses, ploughs
and harrows. But even here they were mercilessly fleeced. The greater the peasant’s need for land, the greater was the rent charged by the landlords, thus holding the poor peasant in real bondage. What enabled him to do that? The fact that the land was his, the landlord’s land; the fact that the land constituted the private property of the landowning class.

Capitalist society is divided into two classes: those who work a great deal and feed scantily, and those who work little or not at all, but eat well and plentifully. That is not at all in accordance with the Scriptures, where it says: “He that does not work, neither shall he eat.” This circumstance, however, does not prevent the priests of all faiths and tongues from lauding the capitalist order; for these priests everywhere (except in the Soviet Republic) are maintained by increment derived from private or church property.

Another question now arises. How is it possible for a group of parasites to retain private ownership over the means of labour, so indispensable to all? How has it come about that private ownership by the idle classes is maintained to the present day? Where does the reason lie?

The reason lies in the perfect organisation of the enemies of the labouring class. To-day there does not exist a single capitalist country where the capitalists act individually. On the contrary, each one of them is infallibly a member of some economic organisation. And it is these economic unions that hold everything in their hands, having tens of thousands of faithful agents to serve them, not out of fear, but as a matter of conscience. The entire economic life of every capitalist country is at the complete disposal of special economic organisations: syndicates, trusts, and unions of many banking concerns. These combines own and direct everything.

The most important industrial and financial combine is the Bourgeois State. This combine holds in its hands the reins of government and power. Here everything is weighed and measured, everything is premeditated and arranged in such a manner as to crush instantly any attempt at rebellion on the part of the working class against the domination of capital. The State has at its disposal, forces (such as spies, police, judges, executioners, and trained soldiers, who have become soulless machines), as well as mental influences which gradually pervert the workers and poorer elements of society, imbuing them with fallacious ideas. For this purpose the bourgeois State utilises
schools and the Church, aided by the capitalist press. It is a
known fact that pig-breeders can breed such stock as are in-
capable of moving owing to the vast accumulation of fat; but
such pigs are extremely suitable for slaughter. They are bred
artificially on special fattening food. The bourgeoisie deals
with the working class in exactly the same way. It is true it
gives them little enough substantial food—not enough to get fat
on. But day by day it offers to the workers a specially-prepared
mental food which fattens their brains and makes them incap-
able of thought. The bourgeoisie wants to turn the working
class into a herd of swine, docile and fit for slaughter, not
capable of thinking and ever subservient. This is the reason
why, with the help of schools and the Church, the bourgeoisie
tries to instil into the minds of children the idea that it is neces-
sary to obey the Authorities, as they hold their power from
heaven (and the Bolsheviks, instead of prayers, have drawn on
themselves the curses of the Church, because they have refused
to grant any State subsidies to these cassocked frauds). This
is also the reason why the bourgeoisie is so anxious to circulate
its lying press far and wide.

The powerful organisation of the bourgeois class enables
them to retain private property. The rich are few in number,
but they are surrounded by a large number of faithful, devoted
and handsomely-paid servants: ministers, directors of works,
directors of banks, and so on; these latter are again surrounded
by a still greater number of retainers who get paid less, but who
are entirely dependent on them, and are educated along the
same lines. They are themselves on the look-out for such posts,
should they be lucky enough to attain them. These again are
followed by minor officials, agents of capital, etc., etc. It is
just as the Russian nursery tale has it: “Grandad holds on to
the turnip, grandma on to grandad, grandchild on to grandma,”
and so on; in short they follow one another in an interminable
chain united by the general organisation of the bourgeois State
and other industrial combines. These organisations cover all
countries with a net out of which the working class struggles in
vain to get free. Every capitalist State is in reality one vast
economic union. The workers toil—the masters enjoy them-
selves. The workers carry out orders—the masters lord it over
them. The workers are deceived—the masters deceive them.
Such is the state of things called capitalistic, which the capi-
talists and their servants—the priests, intellectual classes, men-