

transform the once all-powerful fortress represented by the capitalist state apparatus into a beleaguered prison, the strategically confining and immobilising walls of which the now mighty army of the revolutionary proletariat succeeds in encircling and suffocating, finally to bring them crashing down, to crush beneath them for ever the power of Social Capital! When that day dawns, it will be above all to the work of Jan Appel and his co-theoreticians of the transition to Communism that the triumphant workers of the world will look for guidance in fulfilling their mission as the architects and builders of Communism.

## APPENDIX I

### THE BASIC THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORK "FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNIST PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION"

Supplement to  
"Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and  
Distribution" published by Neue Arbeiterverlag,  
Berlin, 1931

#### The Workers' Councils as Organisational Foundation of Communist Production

In our work "Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution", the establishment of a Communist society is viewed from a quite different aspect from that which has previously been customary in the working class movement. To a certain degree it was the course of development taken by the Russian Revolution which was the causal premise placing firmly on the agenda the necessity to carry through a closer examination of the problems of Communist economic life. It is only necessary to read the Russian "Factory Decrees" to recognise that the workers there have no influence whatever upon the course of economic life, which inevitably leads to the conclusion that the right of disposal over the productive apparatus lies in the hands of subjectively motivated administrators and managers, and that the workers under Russian state communism have remained *wage workers*. In addition, one would have to be blind not to see that the profit motive is the foundation of Russian production, just as everywhere else in the capitalist world; that production is *not* organised to ensure the satisfaction of the needs of the producers.

A further reason compelling us to make a closer examination of this matter lies in the new situation which has arisen in respect of agrarian production.



In our work: "Perspectives of Development in Agriculture" we have shown that agrarian production is now completely socialised - that the peasant economy has now been transformed completely into "industrial production", but that the agrarian question nevertheless remains the great barrier which would render impossible any attempt to implement those forms of "socialism" or "communism" which reflect the conventionally prevalent conception of those societies. Agricultural production is organically unamenable to integration into the "communist economy", - i.e., into the state administration. From this we draw the conclusion that the entire conception of this form of "communism" must be false.

The third and perhaps the weightiest reason making it necessary to carry out an examination of the problems of Communist production lay in the fact that the working class *during the period of the revolution* needed other forms of organisation than those which were prevalent in the working class movement during the period of peaceful "improvement of working conditions". The organisational structure of the revolutionary workers' movement then finds its definitive form in the *Factory Organisations and Workers' Councils*.

However, there exists a close association between the organisational structure of a movement and the various idea-systems through which that movement expresses itself in terms of consciously motivated social practice. This interconnection is so profound that it is possible to define the various organisational structures as functional instruments serving the idea-systems through which the working class movement is defined in conscious terms. The organisational structures adopted by the various tendencies within the proletarian movement then develop along parallel courses alongside the differing idea-systems through which the particular modes of construction of the Communist society then prevalent are conceptually expressed. If at the same time we also perceive the emergence of structural changes in the practice of class struggle, this may be taken as a sure indication that important changes

in the sphere of the various idea-systems have taken place which, even at that very moment, are seeking in this way to find their appropriate organisational expression.<sup>2</sup>

In revolutionary periods important changes in the realm of ideas take place which develop with an otherwise unknown rapidity. The motivation underlying the workers' struggles is completely transformed and becomes fully radicalised. One of the most important lessons to be learned from the revolutionary period 1917-23 is that the idea-concepts which then underwent transformation acquired a totally different organisational expression from those adopted by the old workers' movement. The most violent struggle then comes to be enjoined against that old movement, extending even to bloody conflicts, and all for the reason that these older organisations have opposed themselves to the new aims adopted by the now radicalised workers and their new movements, which in their turn reflect the newly-formed systems of ideas. The Factory Organisations and Workers Councils are the organisational weapons by means of which the workers carry through the revolution.

The importance that was ascribed to the concept of Workers' Councils at the beginning of the revolutionary period is revealed in, for instance, a survey prepared by D. J. Struik on the occasion of the Resolution on the Workers' Councils adopted at that time by the Communist Party of Holland.

We read there:

"Nothing reveals more clearly the progress we have achieved in our understanding of the laws of the social revolution than does our Declaration concerning the Council system. A mere two years ago, this declaration would have been quite impossible; and if we return to just three years ago, even the clearest minds then at work in the International would have had virtually nothing to say about the significance



of the Councils in the form in which we now see them."

(D.J. Struik : Extract from a review published in "De Nieuwe Tijd", ("New Times"), Year 1919, p. 466)

It will be a difficult task to find opinions expressive of this kind of spirit anywhere in the pre-war literature .. Up to the time of the February revolution of 1917 statements were everywhere restricted to a simple declaration of the changes which were considered necessary in the political and economic forms through which the revolution was expected to express itself. Any more exact indication than this was, so far as we know, not attempted, at least not on this side of the Weichsel.<sup>3</sup> In the whole of her pamphlet on the mass strike Rosa Luxemburg writes only once in passing concerning the Council of Workers' Delegates of 1905. In his book on the First Russian Revolution Trotsky writes at length concerning the history, the significance and the power of this first Workers' Council, but he does not concern himself in any similar depth with an examination of the Council System as such. And even in the Marxist publications which appeared during the first half of the World War, in for instance "Der Vorbote" ("The Harbinger"), "Der Lichtstrahl" ("Ray of Light"), etc.,<sup>4</sup> any reference whatever to the Petrograd Soviet of 1905 is wholly absent.

The fact that, a short while after the outbreak of the February Revolution of 1917, the Soviet concept began to acquire such a firm foothold and widespread acceptance is exclusively the outcome of the revolutionary praxis underlying the revolution itself .. If ever the well-known dictum of Mehring: "Die Intuition der handelnden Massen genialer sein kann denn das grösste Genie" ("The intuition of the masses in action can have more of genius in it than the work of the greatest individual genius") has received confirmation, then it has been in this case.

The highest and most positive quality that the revolutionary period of 1917-23 has given us consists in the fact that it has enabled us to see the forms

which the proletarian revolution must assume in order to complete itself, whilst at the same time it has brought to light the world view which is the expression of the new forms of class struggle in the sphere of ideas. The seizure of control over the social apparatus of production is carried out by the Factory Organisations and, most definitively, by the organs brought into being through their combination, the Workers' Councils. For this reason, any examination of the problems associated with Communist production and distribution must proceed on the foundation of these new organs of proletarian power and the idea-world which has arisen on that foundation:

"Die Arbeiterräte werden einmal das Wesen  
Der ganzen Menschheit auf Erden.  
So als in Blumen in einer grossen Garbe  
Das höchste Sonnenlicht zusammen gelesen.  
Sie sind das Höchste des Allgemein-Seins,  
Sie sind das Verwerfen des Allein-Seins,  
Darin jeder Mann, Frau und zartes Kind  
Allein sein einzig Ziel, die Menschheit find't.

Die Arbeiterräte sind darum wie das Licht.  
Sie sind der Friede, die Ruhe und das Heil,  
Sie sind die Wahrheit, und die Quelle der Wahrheit.

Sie sind die Festigkeit im grossen Ganzen  
Der Menschheit, die Knotenpunkte der Arbeit,  
Sie sind das Glück der Menschheit - sie sind das  
Licht.

(Herman Gorter: from the poem "De Arbeidersraad"  
["The Workers' Council"])\*

The Marxist Definition of the Fundamental Social  
Preconditions determining the Domination of the  
Working Class

In addition to the role of the factory organisations, we have as the second point of commencement for the fundamental principles of the

