

Notwithstanding the severity with which Marx and Engels condemned the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, they never supported the French agitation for revenge, after the annexation had become an accomplished fact. Always and ever, they were guided by the principle: "We must collaborate in securing the freedom of the proletariat of western Europe, and everything else is secondary." Thus, too, they answered the complaints of the oppressed people of Alsace-Lorraine: "If on the eve of Revolution that is visibly approaching, they provoke war between France and Germany by reviving the excitement of the people, so that the Revolution is thereby postponed, I cry: 'Halt! You can afford to be as patient as the European proletariat; if it frees itself, you are freed automatically at the same time; until then you have no right to interfere with the struggling proletariat, so as to divert its efforts into false channels.'" Thus spoke Engels in 1882.

And he was never able to rid himself of a feeling of uneasiness that the French sentiment for Revenge would be the starting point of a new European war. Subsequently he wrote an article in the *Neue Zeit* on this subject, and as the present party leadership has made innumerable references to the statements therein contained for the benefit of the German workers, it will be necessary to spend a little extra time on the matter here.

In the article in question, Engels outlines briefly the history of the German party. He shows the irresistible growth of the German Social Democracy, and predicted victory in about ten years. While revolutionary policy and tactics can never, and will never, be waived, the progress for the time being within legal limits is excellent. If any blood is spilt, and that is entirely up to the Bourgeoisie, then the force of such a counter-revolution might delay the triumph of Socialism a few years, but it would be all the more complete in the end.

However, all this is true, Engels continues, only if Germany can pursue its economic and political development peacefully. A war would alter everything. And war might break out from one day to the next. France and Russia on one side, Germany

and Austria and perhaps Italy on the other. The Socialists of all these countries, pressed into service against their will, would have to fight each other. So Engels asks: In a case like this what would the German Social Democracy do, and what would become of it?

He states, in so many words, what would become of it as follows:

This much is certain: Neither the Czar nor the French Bourgeois republicans, nor the German government itself would let such a grand opportunity pass to smother the only party that is their common enemy. We have seen how Thiers and Bismarck joined hands over the ruins of the Paris Commune; we would also live to see how the Czar, Constans and Caprivi or their respective successors would fall into each other's arms over the corpse of Socialism.

Engels then continues: Over against such a prospect, what is the duty of the German Socialists? Shall they remain passive in the face of developments which threaten them with annihilation, shall they, by a policy of non-resistance, give up their position as pioneers of the international proletariat? To which Engels replies, and we cite verbatim, in view of the circumstance that the present leadership has so often and endlessly referred to this passage, although they always distort it, for good reasons:

By no means. In the interest of the European revolution they are in duty bound to maintain their ground, not to capitulate neither to the enemy within nor without. And this they can do only by fighting Russia to the last inch and all her allies, whoever they may be. Should the French Republic become the servant of his Majesty the Czar and Autocrat of all the Russias, the German Socialists would fight France, regretfully but inevitably. French republicanism may possibly stand for bourgeois political liberty over against imperial Germany. But alongside the republic of Constans, Rouvier and Clemenceau, and particularly a republic which is the servant of the Czar, German Socialism unquestionably is the carrier of the proletarian Revolution.