

selves. Of course, it is true that long extracts make a presentation somewhat heavy, and will in no way contribute to its popularity. But it is impossible to dispense with them. All, or at least all the important, passages from the works of Marx and Engels with regard to the state must absolutely be quoted in the fullest possible form, so that the reader may form an independent idea of the whole system of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the development of these ideas, and also, so that the distortion of them at the hand of the now dominant "Kautskianism" may be proved by means of documents and made evident to every eye.

Let us begin with the most widely known work of Friedrich Engels: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, of which the sixth edition appeared at Stuttgart in 1894. We are obliged to translate the quotations from the German original, as the Russian translations, although they are very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete, or executed in an extremely unsatisfactory manner.

"The state,"—says Engels, drawing the final conclusions of his historical analysis,—“does not represent in any way a power that is imposed upon society from without. Nor is the state the ‘realization of the moral idea,’ ‘the form and reality of reason,’ as Hegel affirms. The state is a product of society at a certain stage of its development, the state is the recognition of the fact that society has become lost in a maze of unsolvable self-contradictions, has been split by irreconcilable oppositions, which it is powerless to escape from. And in order that these oppositions, these classes with contradictory economic interests, should not consume each other and the state in fruitless conflict, for this purpose there was needed a power, standing, apparently, over society, a power which should moderate their collisions, and maintain it within the bounds of ‘order.’ And this power arising out of society, but placing itself over society, and estranging itself more and more from it, is the state.” Sixth German edition, pp. 177-178.

Here we have with absolute clearness the fundamental Marxist thought on the state, its historic role and its significance. The state is a product and an expression of the *irreconcilability* of class contradictions. The state comes into being wherever, whenever, and insofar as the class contradictions, as an objective fact, can *no longer* be reconciled. And,

conversely, the existence of the state is a proof of the fact that the class contradictions are irreconcilable.

And it is at this most important and fundamental stage of the discussion that the distortion of Marxism sets in, proceeding along two principal directions.

On the one hand, the bourgeois and particularly the petit bourgeois ideologists, under the pressure of indisputable historical facts, recognize that the state exists only where there are class contradictions and class struggle, and “correct” Marx in such manner as to make the state appear as the organ of the *reconciliation* of classes. But Marx said that the state could never arise or maintain itself if any reconciliation of classes were still possible. But the petit bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists would have it appear—and often with condescending use of Marx as an authority!—that it is precisely the state that reconciles the classes. But according to Marx the state is the organ of class *rule*, the organ of the *oppression* of one class by another, the creation of “order”, which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression, by moderating the clashes between the classes. But in the opinion of the petit bourgeois politicians, order is precisely the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to regulate the clashes means to conciliate and not to deprive the oppressed classes of certain ways and means in the struggle for the overthrow of the oppressors.

For example, the S. R.s (Social-Revolutionaries) and Mensheviki in the 1917 Revolution, when the question of the function and significance of the state arose in all its magnitude, as a practical question requiring immediate action and furthermore, action on a mass scale,—all accepted, suddenly and completely, the petit bourgeois theory of the “conciliation” of the classes by the “state”. Countless resolutions and articles by the politicians of these two parties are permeated absolutely with this philistine, petit bourgeois doctrine of “conciliation”. The fact that the state is the organ of the rule of a certain class, which *cannot* be reconciled with its oppo-