

tation of Marxism, acceptable only to the bourgeoisie, and founded in theory on a complete ignoring of the important circumstances and reflections expressed in the "summatizing" passage from Engels that is above quoted in full.

First. At the very beginning of this passage Engels says that in seizing state power, the proletariat, "will, by this very act, destroy the state as a state." What this means, it is "improper" to surmise. As a rule it is entirely ignored, or regarded as some outgrowth of Engels' "Hegelian foible." As a matter of fact, this passage is a reflection in abbreviated form of the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, which will receive fuller attention in the proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks of the annihilation, by the proletarian revolution, of the bourgeois state, while the words concerning the dying out refer to the remains of the proletarian state after the social revolution. The bourgeois state will not "die out," according to Engels, but will be "annihilated" by the proletariat in revolution. After the revolution, the proletarian or semi-proletarian state will die out.

Second. The state is "a special power (organ) for suppression." This magnificent and most profound definition of Engels he here puts in all its clearness. But it follows from it that the "special power for the suppression" of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of toilers by small groups of magnates, must be supplanted by "a special power for the suppression" of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (Dictatorship of the Proletariat). That is the essence of the "annihilation of the state as a state." That is the essence of the "act" of taking under control the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that such a substitution for one (the bourgeois) "special power for suppression," of another (the proletarian) "special power," cannot in any way take the form of a "dying out."

Third. In speaking of the "dying out" and—even more emphatically and distinctly—of the "going to sleep," Engels

clearly and definitely refers to the period after "the taking control of the means of production in the name of all society," i. e., after the social revolution. We all know that the political form of the "state" at this time will be the fullest possible democracy. But not one of the opportunists, in their shameless distortions of Marxism, ever recalls the fact that Engels must consequently mean, in this passage, the "going to sleep" and the "dying out" of *democracy*. At first glance this seems very peculiar. But the thing is "incomprehensible" only to one who does not know that democracy is *also* a state, and that, consequently, democracy also will pass away, when the state passes away. Only revolution can "destroy" the bourgeois state. But the state altogether, i. e., the fullest form of democracy, can only "die out."

Fourth. Having stated his famous proposition: "the state will die out," Engels explains concretely that this proposition is aimed simultaneously against both the opportunists and the anarchists. Yet the place of honor in the attack intended by the proposition as to the "dying out of the state" is held by the opportunists.

It is a safe bet that out of ten thousand men who may have read or heard of the "dying out" of the state, 9990 absolutely do not know or understand that Engels *did not* draw the inferences from this proposition *only* against the anarchists. And of the remaining ten, nine do not know what is meant by "free popular government" and why the attack on this watchword should include an attack on the opportunists. Thus is history written! Thus operates the imperceptible distortion of a great revolutionary teaching under the prevailing philistinism. The inference has been repeated thousands of times insofar as it refers to anarchists, it has been vulgarized, stupefied and dinned into our heads, until it has attained the fixity of a tradition. But the inference as to the opportunists has been glossed over and "forgotten"!

"Free popular government" was the platform demand and the current battle-cry of the German Social-Democrats of the