

state. These are the so-called "officiating angels and arch-angels": the cherubim, the seraphim, the angels of the third and various other degrees. The very word "chin" (degree) reminds us of "chinovnik" (office-holder, bureaucrat), and both words are from the same root. These degrees ("chins") are represented in the ikons by having them dressed more richly the higher the rank, and by having a larger halo about their heads—that is, they had more decorations and "orders," exactly as on the sinful earth beneath. In the autocratic state, the chinovnik demands "obligatory palm-grease," otherwise there is nothing doing; similarly, the saint requires his candle, otherwise his wrath is incurred, and he will refuse to transmit any prayer to his highest superior, God. In the autocratic state there are special chinovniks who, for a consideration, will undertake the special function of petitioners. And, similarly, there are special saints who pray and "intercede in the behalf," particularly, of women. For instance, the mother of God, who is an "advocate" par excellence. And she does not do her work for nothing, to her must be built greater temples than to others; rice must be bought for her ikons, and the latter must be studded with more precious stones, etc., etc.

THE BELIEF IN GOD IS A BELIEF IN SLAVERY

In short, the belief in God is *an expression of the vile conditions on earth*, is the belief in *slavery*, which is present, as it were, not only on earth, but in the whole universe besides. It is of course clear that there is no truth in these things. And it is also clear that these fairy-tales are a hindrance in the path of human progress. Humanity will not advance until it has become accustomed to seek for a phenomenon its *natural* explanation.

But when, instead of explanations, faith is put in God or in the saints, or in the devils and woodsprites, there is no likelihood that any useful purpose will be attained. Let us take a few examples. There are some religious people who believe that when the thunder rolls, Elijah is riding in his chariot. They, therefore, whenever they hear the roll of thunder, take off their hats and cross themselves. And as a matter of fact, the very same *electrical energy*, which is responsible for the thunder, is very well known to science, and it is with its aid that we propel our tramways, which give us the power to carry anything we like. And while the old Elijah was of no use as a means of transportation, our modern electrical Elijah is indeed a charioteer of the first order. We should have no more been enabled ever to behold any tramways, than to see our own ears. In other words, depending on religion alone, we should have continued to wallow in *barbarism*. Another example. The war breaks out, men are de-

stroyed by the millions, oceans of blood are shed. An explanation is sought for this. Those who do not believe in God see the how, the why and the wherefore; they recognize that the war is the work of the Czars and Presidents, of the greater bourgeoisie and the landholders; they see that the war is waged in the interests of base and covetous aims. And therefore they say to the workers of all countries: "Take arms against your oppressors, cast down capital from its seat of power!" But with the religious man the case is entirely different. He reasons thus (and gasps like a little old man as he reasons): The Lord has punished us for our sins. "Oh, Holy Father, Lord of Heaven, rightly hast Thou chastised us sinful men!" And if he is very religious and orthodox in the bargain, he will set about emphatically eating one kind of food instead of another (which he calls fasting), and beating his head on the stone flags (which is known as "prostration"), and performing a host of other follies. Similar follies are practised by the religious Hebrew, the Mohammedan Tartar, the Chinese Buddhist, in a word, by all those who believe in God. From all of which it is evident that really religious people are not fit for any kind of fighting. Religion therefore not only causes the people to remain in a state of *barbarism*, but fits them also for the condition of *slavery*. The religious man is more readily inclined to accept everything without a murmur (since everything, of course, comes from God), and to submit to the powers that be, and to suffer in patience ("for everything will be requited a hundredfold up yonder"). It is therefore not surprising that the powers in control under capitalism should consider religion an extremely useful instrument for the deceiving of the people.

THE CHURCH WAS AN ORGANIZATION OF THE BOURGEOIS STATE

We have seen that the bourgeoisie is maintained not only by bayonets, but by the process of confusing *the minds* of its slaves. We have likewise seen, on the other hand, that the bourgeoisie poisons the consciousness of its subjects in an *organized* and *planful* manner. This purpose is served by a special organization, and this organization is the *Church*, the religious organization of the *State*. In almost all the capitalistic countries the Church is a state institution of the very same type as the police; the priest is a state official in the same sense as the hangman, the gendarme, the stool-pigeon. He receives a *state subsidy* for the venom which he circulates among the people. In fact, just there lies the great danger of the situation. If it were not for this unnatural, intrenched and powerful organization which is kept in countenance by the brigand state of the bourgeoisie, we should not stand for a single priest for a single moment. They would pass alive into immediate