

## Communism and Religion

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### I.

The fierce struggle which Bolshevism has waged and is still waging against religion in Russia is particularly well adapted to throw light on the essence of the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks are conducting this struggle in the name of Marxism, just as all the rest of their policy is put thru. They invoke in this connection the Marxian dictum which stands engraved as a motto on the facade of the Moscow community center: that religion is the opium of the people. At the time when the youthful Marx wrote that, in his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" (1843), his own struggle had points of similarity with the later struggle of Bolshevism in Russia. He stood, that is, as the most advanced among the Young Hegelians, foremost in the struggle for civil liberty against feudal absolutism in Prussia. The bourgeoisie was still without political power but was coming up; public life was harassed by arbitrary action of the police, intellectual life by the censorship, and the best minds were living abroad. Narrow-minded princes were using religion as justification of their right to suppress all liberty. Therefore, according to Marx's expression at the time, the criticism of earth had to begin with the criticism of heaven.

The rise of bourgeois society was always accompanied by a struggle against the Church, against certain forms of religion or against religion in general. This was quite in the nature of things, since under feudalism Church and Society formed a strictly interrelated unity. The Church fulfilled political and social function [sic] which in later centuries were taken over more and more by the State and its organs: law-giving, instruction, administration, safe-guarding of communication, promotion of technics. In particular, everything intellectual in the guidance of society was its task, in the smallest village as well as thruout the body politic; the Church ruled like a super-monarchy over the whole of Christendom, and was the most formidable exploiting power. It was natural that during the rise of the bourgeoisie any resistance to this exploitation should assume the form of heresy (Albigenses, Hussites). And in the following centuries when this resistance assumed the proportions of a seizure of power by the bourgeoisie, it came about under the banner of a renewal of religion, as the Reformation among the Protestants, the Calvinites and Puritans.

In the class struggles of the 16th and 17th centuries the religions were what political parties were in the 19th, the living organizations of that struggle; later they fossilized into

churches with dead dogmas.

When the way was being paved for the revolution in France in the 18th century, the movement was directed not merely against the nobility and monarchy, but also against the Church. Obedience to the Church was bound up with obedience to the Prince; religion was the most important means of holding the masses in subjection. A powerful opposition, socially, to the ruling power determined therefore, spiritually, a break away from the Church. The principal form of this latter opposition was that of a hazy personal religious sentiment, apart from all clerical doctrine, as in the case of Rousseau, the materialistic views were even at this time to be met with in a number of thinkers. Thru the discoveries of natural science, particularly of the law of gravitation by Newton, it had become established that nature is subject to a fixed order of natural laws precluding any arbitrary interference. This provided the rising bourgeoisie with weapons of free critical thought in its struggle against the Church. There was also the fact that the peasants and bourgeoisie looked with envy upon the great neglected landed property of the Church, a domain which they themselves had liked to possess in order to cultivate and improve it. And in the French Revolution of 1789 they did, as a matter of fact, rob the Church of those possessions. In view of the enormous state deficit, that was the only way in which state bankruptcy could be avoided: the seizure and sale of the holdings of the Church, so that they could be put to further use for agricultural and industrial purposes. Since that time, the Church has been the sworn foe of revolution. And consequently the revolutionary bourgeoisie was obliged to attack the Church more sharply than it would otherwise have been inclined to do, by way of the struggle against religion. The fact that in France, even down to the present day, rationalism and has thought are so widespread among the middle classes is in good part owing to that historical conflict.

In the 19th century, the bourgeoisie was obliged to continue this struggle, not only in France but in other countries in which it was coming up, in order to gain the complete mastery. And in this connection the struggle against the prevailing religion had to be carried on for a double reason:

In the first place, the traditional forms of religion had their origin in an outmoded and backward mode of production, to which they were well adapted, – a world of handicraft and small peasantry, from which society was now lifting itself. This religion rested upon outward forms of devotion and was a narrow, stupid superstition of petty bourgeois and peasants, among whom the pastor or priest was the one and only literate intellectual. In the developed bourgeoisie itself, a different religion was growing up, one which conformed to the needs of a commodity-producing society: the personal faith of an independent bourgeois thrown upon his own resources. In him, the traditional doctrines were losing their force. To this may be added the rapid development of natural science, which, as the basis of the rapid development of technics and of the flowering of capitalism, received at the hands of the bourgeoisie a special care. This science taught the extension of the universe, the laws of nature, the millions of years of the history of life on earth, the evolution of the animal kingdom to man; in all fields of knowledge it contradicted the bible stories as primitive ignorance. And here we have the advent of the keenest among the new views, namely, bourgeois materialism, which is often also given the name of natural-science materialism. It taught that the entire world, inclusive of life and the development of humanity, is governed only thru natural laws, that these natural laws are capable of explaining all riddles of life and fate, and that a higher mysterious power is not needed to that end, and does not exist. Because these thinkers of the bourgeoisie believed that the capitalist development would bring about general well-being and remove all misery, all poverty and all stupidity, they saw all problems as solved or soluble, and no longer had need of any higher power.

The bourgeoisie could not be content, however, with its own abandonment of the old religion, but was obliged also to attack and combat it. For the bourgeoisie wanted to win the power in society out of the hands of princes, nobility and landed proprietors. The power of all these reactionary classes, who wished to maintain what was old and outworn, rested upon the submissiveness of the unenlightened masses, the peasants and petty bourgeois; and this submissiveness was anchored in their religion. Because religion was the foundation and the Church the ally of the traditional power, therefore the bourgeoisie was obliged to conduct the spiritual struggle against religion and church. It had to break this mass away from its spiritual leaders, and convert it into its own following. And this was done by spreading enlightenment and education among this mass and filling it with new ideas. Innumerable are the literary works of a popular scientific cast which came into being around the middle of the 19th century, for the purpose of "enlightening the people", that is, in order to win the masses for the bourgeoisie, to inoculate them with the political and religious views of the bourgeoisie and so to take the foundation out from under the old ruling elements. And where the struggle became hard and furious, the most radical views were disseminated and materialism attained an added significance.

The reason why this struggle soon came to nothing and was discontinued when the bourgeoisie was master of the state power, and frequently even before that time, will be seen farther on.

## II.

In Russia the struggle had to be waged against the same powers against which the bourgeois revolutions were directed in western Europe: the princely absolutism which by means of a horrible police regime held down all stirrings of a libertarian development, and against big landed property which held the peasants in thrall. The struggle had to be waged in the midst of a population which in intellectual respects resembled most the peasant masses of medieval Europe, long before the bourgeois revolution. The Russian muzhiks were, in fact, much more ignorant and backward than these latter. In Russia also the Church was a foundation-pillar of the princely power, and even without reserve a subordinate organ of Czarism. There also religion, in harmony with the primitively barbarous economy, was a barbarous blind belief in the miraculous power of saintly bones and of candles, and the simple souls were charmed and intoxicated by means of sumptuous light and glittering gold vestments.

The means by which the Bolshevik Party was able to win the political power and demolish Czarism and the bourgeoisie was this: it championed the economic interests of the peasants, their striving to get possession of the land, against the landed proprietors, set this up as the goal of the revolution and thus won the peasants for its program. But next it had to take care that the peasants should not, subsequently, after they had attained their goal, turn against the Party, take up with a bourgeois policy of their own and to that end make use of their old spiritual power, the Church, as a rallying point. For this reason the reactionary power by which the peasants had hitherto been dominated had to be destroyed, so that the peasants should become supporters of Bolshevism spiritually as well as materially. That was possible only by way of a struggle against the Church, in the most radical form by way of an intensive propaganda against religion in general.

This struggle, which was waged directly thru the "League of the Godless" but with the support of the State, was scarcely distinguishable in character and content from the one which was waged earlier in western Europe by the bourgeois materialists and free thinkers. It had nothing whatever to do with Marxism. And the philosophical polemics of Lenin dating from the time prior to the Revolution (in the complete edition of his works,

collected under the title "Materialism and Empiriocriticism") are quite on the level of bourgeois materialism; which, of course, is quite natural since his struggle in Russia was directed against the same sort of opponents. The propaganda in Russia was distinguished from that of western Europe only in the circumstance that it was waged with still more primitive arguments and cruder instruments, because it was directed against a still more barbarous superstition. The procedure has, of course, been described before: the muzhik's understanding of the arguments based on natural science is rather limited; but he sees and hears these godless ones direct the fiercest sort of attacks against God, give utterance to the most terrible blasphemies, – and no flash of lightning from heaven strikes the evil-doers. That proves to him that God doesn't exist, or at any rate doesn't care about what people do here below. And so he draws his conclusions: he lets the priest go hungry, converts the cross into kindling wood and the church into a stable, hangs pictures of Marx and Lenin in his room and perhaps burns candles to them. The younger generation, however, takes up with the youth groups which educate themselves in national economy and natural science, and it takes over Materialism as a recognized and matter-of-course doctrine. In Russia a new generation is growing up, and has been growing up a sufficient number of years to form a new stratum of adults to whom religion is only an historical phenomenon, a superstition of elderly people belonging to the past. The Russian Church has gone under with Czarism.

This is not to say that religion generally, in Russia, has disappeared or is surely disappearing. First because we have in fact the occurrence, in limited measure, of what was posited above: where the peasants come into conflict with the government, their revolt assumes the form of a churchly resistance. When their allegiance to the old small-peasant mode of economy comes into conflict with the semi-violent introduction of modern agriculture and large-scale operation in the kolhozes, the peasants seek strength by coming together in the Church, in the old religion, the symbol of what is old and which likewise is being suppressed by the state. The economic struggle is waged in the ideal form of a religious conflict; and the western-european press prints stories about horrible religious persecutions in Russia without a suspicion that these so-called persecutions signify mainly an economic-political conflict regarding the building up of Russian agriculture. As a focus of all economic reaction, religion remains in existence.

Besides, as is well known, on the Volga the peasant villages of the Germans maintain their evangelical faith, remaining unphased by the atheistical propaganda. Religion is here a much more deeply rooted personal conviction, brought along from the petty-bourgeois commodity production of western countries, and therefore practically immune to the primitive arguments of the "godless". These peasants become involved in conflicts with the bases of the state-socialist economic system. And so it is quite natural that the prevailing system comes into conflict also with these German peasants; and because the opposed social ideas express themselves in the form of opposed religious ideas, – Atheism on the one hand, and Protestantism on the other – here also the struggle assumes the form of a religious persecution.

Religion is not simply a superstition invented by priests and rulers and which can be combatted by atheistical propaganda. Nor is it a mere outcropping of ignorance which can be destroyed thru indoctrination with natural science. It arises from the incapacity of human beings to control their own destiny. It is an expression of the feeling that unknown and overpowerful forces, of either natural or social origin, are masters over life and destiny. Whether and in what form religion will continue to exist in Russia depends therefore on the country's further economic development. The atheism of the youthful Russia is in harmony with this first period of the rise of state capitalism: the Russians see before them an unrestricted and boundless development toward well-being and superfluity; they see the problems of life as solved and no higher power is needful. But Russia is already

becoming involved in world policy, which at the present time is issuing in the derailment of capitalism toward world war, decline, revolution; the dangers which menace the rest of the capitalist world cannot be evaded by Russia, she is not the master of her destiny. Recent press reports are significant in this respect; they state that the Russian government, after the treaties with the west-European governments, has now negotiated with the Roman Catholic Church regarding permission of Catholic propaganda. If by the side of the prevailing state capitalism there should still remain or arise in Russia, private property and commodity production in considerable measure, the acquired Materialism, as against the spiritual effects of this material reality, would become a mere outward form.

### III.

Just as the Communist Party carried over the bolshevist methods into the political class struggle of western Europe and America, so it has also copied here the Russian method of combatting religion. And so in this question also we are presented with an instructive example of the great opposition between Bolshevism and Communism, as an outcome of the opposition between the primitive Russian society of czarist times and the developed capitalism of the West.

Communism, the emancipation of the working class, signifies the end of religion. With the vanishing of earthly misery, there vanishes also the heavenly reflex of this misery. When humanity directs the labor process with conscious design and its own existence is thereby assured, when man is the master of his destiny and is not mastered by any enigmatic superior forces, he then sees the whole world before him with open clarity, and no phantasmagoria of an anguished mind can any longer cloud his insight. But even when this goal is not yet attained, the realization that it **will** be attained has a liberating effect upon the mind. Historical Materialism, the Marxian doctrine, teaches us to understand the social forces. The workers see that there are no mysterious supernatural powers which bring them poverty, misery, war, destruction, but that all these things are outcomes of capitalism; things which they, thru their struggle, can conquer and set aside. Therefore these forces, altho still very powerful, are no longer mysterious; and hence religion vanishes among the working masses who, thru Socialism or Communism, have acquired a basis of Marxist insight. This does not come about thru the force of atheistical arguments against religion, by which the workers are convinced and won over. Rather, by reason of the new social insight, the feeling of timid uncertainty is dissipated and vanishes from their consciousness, so that their minds become accessible to arguments which in reality they scarcely need any more, and their religion goes by the board.

A profound difference exists between the Marxist historical Materialism and the bourgeois Materialism dating from the middle of the last century. The latter thought to be able to explain human society by means of natural laws and was quite unaware of the fact that society has its own laws. Marxism points out these laws of society by which the development of humanity is conditioned. Bourgeois materialism believed that thru knowledge of the natural laws and thru their application in technics, man could master his destiny and thereby also become spiritually free. But this application, the development of Capitalism, gave rise to still greater misery and to unknown powers which were still more formidable. Marxism explains these powers and enlightens the workers regarding the manner in which the workers themselves, with the aid of this science, can conquer them. The opposition of the two kinds of materialism comes forth most clearly in their respective conceptions of religion, the one regarding it as a simple effect of ignorance regarding nature, the other as an effect of social factors. And on this basis we see that the manner in which religion is combatted by Bolshevism is quite on the plane of bourgeois materialism.

If religion were nothing more than a product of ignorance, it would have had to vanish more and more among the educated class, the bourgeoisie, in the last half-century of increasing scientific knowledge and constantly better instruction. But what do we see? That during this time this class, even its intellectual part, has grown more and more religious. Of course it is often said that this is merely owing to the fact that the bourgeoisie has an interest in maintaining religion among the people and therefore supports religion by its own example. No doubt this comes into play among other things, but it is not the main matter. With such superficial views regarding its opponents, the proletariat can only weaken itself. The bourgeoisie is not made up, intellectually, of hypocrites any more than it is composed, economically, of evil-doers and politically of blockheads, – regardless of what the propaganda of party politicians thirsting for power would have us believe. The religious sentiments in this class are for the most part genuine, and we shall endeavor to show that such is quite in the nature of things.

Religion is the fantastic form in which people give expression to their unconscious sentiment of their connection with the universe, so long as they do not know the real connection. Man has always been dependent on the world for his existence and this dependence will continue to exist because man always remains a part of the world and his life is a part of the total process of universal history. But in the periods of history which lie behind us he failed to realize clearly this dependence and to master it. In the early times of primitive cultural conditions, the means of living were offered him by way of natural phenomena independent of his will, (sunshine, rain, fertile soil); but at the same time, powerful forces were capable of destroying him. More recently, by means of technical devices, later supported by natural science, he learned to direct these natural forces, to use them and draw them into his service. His life became richer and more secure. This was followed, however, by the advent of **social** forces, arising out of the forms of production in which, with advancing technology, people worked together in ever greater units: tribes and, later on, cities and nations, leading to states and classes. Struggle of the tribes for land, struggle of the cities and states for trade and profit, struggle of all against all in sharp competition, struggle of the classes for their share of the product and for power, war and crisis in modern times – all these things, as mighty forces, drove people forward and brought them success or decline. The individual felt powerless, and was so in fact; happiness and disaster were not dependent on himself. While he lived in the midst of a world of constantly richer possibilities, brought about by way of collective human effort, but without conscious design and plan, he was visited by catastrophes and threatened with extinction by forces which he did not understand and failed to master, forces which likewise were brought about by way of collective human effort, but also without conscious design and plan. This dependence on a world totality standing high and mighty above him and beyond his understanding expressed itself in a feeling of fear and dejection, occasionally of confidence and calmness, but always of subjection to the sublimated personifications of these forces, hence in religious feelings.

In the modern capitalist class, two tendencies are working counter to each other. On the one hand, its technical power has never revealed itself so mighty as in the present period, the period of the rise and perfection of aerial navigation, the enormous acceleration of international communication, spiritual and material, of the refinement of machine technique and of the more substantial interweaving of labor and science. That which previously had been noted as an astonishing compendium of unconscious growth – man's mastery over nature and the natural forces – was now proudly proclaimed as the program of a consciously directed technico-scientific advance. Thus there arose in the bourgeoisie the consciousness of unlimited possibilities, the feeling of being capable of everything. This was especially true of the masters of production, the world's economic leaders, who saw themselves as the directors of human destiny. The spiritual reflex of this

tendency was not so much materialism, insight into the natural forces of the world, as cynicism, contempt in what others revere.

In the midst of this feeling of confidence, however, another sentiment was at work even long before the advent of the present world crisis in which the anarchy of capitalist production has driven its masters to desperate exertions and fearful doubt regarding the future. For the menace of the proletarian Revolution has hung like a sword over the bourgeoisie from the very time of its rise to power. As soon as the working class a half-century ago, began to organize, took up the struggle and proclaimed its socialist goals, it was all up with the self-confidence of the bourgeoisie. And thereupon the bourgeois Materialism melted away, and only feeble remnants of it have been at work since that time in a part of the petty bourgeoisie and of the workers. For it was now revealed that natural science could not liberate humanity and that technics under capitalism could bring no general happiness, no peace, no freedom. The future grew dark and uncertain; the bourgeoisie saw its world full of incomprehensible and menacing forces. And so there arose in the class all sorts of mysticism and superstition.

The bourgeoisie has been shaken in its self-confidence by two catastrophes: first the World War, then the world crisis. And now there hangs over it like a tormenting storm cloud the menace of a still more devastating world war. The bourgeoisie does not have its world in hand. Powerless and without an idea as to what is to be done, it stands confronting the irresistible power of these social forces. And when they have again been unleashed, it sees the rise of the working class, which is still for the time being calmed by means of unemployment relief to exorcise hunger revolts, and still held in check thru the possibility of parliamentary protests or thru hope of a better economic order promised from above. But after all it hears the rumbling in the depths, it sees here and there the flashing up of the new ideas which lend force to a coming revolution, it is thinking more about the revolution than the workers themselves do, and it is making ready to proceed against it with the sharpest means at command. For the bourgeoisie can see in revolution and Communism nothing other than chaos, extinction of all culture and the end of humanity. And yet it feels instinctively that it is powerless to evade this catastrophe. Thus there arises in this class more and more strongly the belief in a superhuman, supernatural power by which the world is governed. And it clings still more strongly to this belief because of the feeble hope that in this way perhaps the workers may be held back from their goal and the strength which lies in their unity may be broken.

#### **IV.**

The rise of the socialist labor movement in the last half-century is the first case in the history of humanity in which irreligion has become a mass phenomenon. These masses had brought religion with them as a tradition out of their earlier petty-bourgeois or peasant mode of production. But, thrown together as workers into capitalist industry, they learned to conduct the class struggle, they learned a few things regarding the development of society to socialism, they recognized that their deplorable situation was owing to natural and understandable causes, and they saw the possibility of putting an end to that situation thru their own strength. In the most important practice of life, their minds had occasion to concern themselves only with realities, with the understanding of real things, and so the traditional fantastic thinking was bound to be dispelled and gradually vanish. This process is still going on.

The connection between society and ideas is not to be conceived mechanically as a formula, prescribing necessarily to each definite class a definite mode of looking at things. Society works upon us continually thru all the influences and forces of our surroundings, hence upon each of us differently in various particulars; and so the doctrines

impressed upon us in youth and the traditions of earlier states of existence are gradually overcome, in one case more rapidly and in another more slowly. Differences may also occur in accordance with occupation: wherever workers are exposed to unforeseen catastrophes – as in the case of miners and fishermen – even tho they may know that inadequate safety measures play a part under capitalism, there remains in their minds a deeply rooted religiosity.

Another factor to be considered is the development of the labor movement itself. In the early days of its rise, when clear indoctrination with principles prevailed, the enlightenment was the most thorough-going. When, later, the great droves of fellow-travelers arrived, – those who came to socialism only by reason of electoral successes and direct interests, not by reason of a profound transformation of their basic views, – the traditional religion which they had brought along out of their petty-bourgeois surroundings remained practically unaffected. When the Social Democracy became a party like any other, in competition with the others, and the churches learned to compete with it by way of social slogans, social measures and labor organizations of their own, the dissemination of materialistic thinking among previously religious workers came to an end. There is also the fact that the theoretical indoctrination as well as the inner assurance regarding the future are weakened as a result of the reformistic degeneration of the movement. The bourgeoisie proves to be more powerful, the goal farther away and duskier than was formerly thought. And the devastating forces of society reveal themselves, in war, in general disorder, in world crisis, mightier and more uncontrollable. All that could be opposed to them was merely a certain vague belief that finally after all the workers would win. But this belief expressed itself more as an ethical love of peace and declarations of the fraternity of the peoples than in strong and militant preparedness for the revolution. It is obvious that in such a labor movement tendencies of a religious coloring come forth more and more strongly and a sort of christian socialism gains in influence. And so we find, together with the political, also an intensified spiritual rapprochement with the bourgeoisie.

In apparently complete opposition thereto, we have the anti-religious propaganda of the Communist Party, which, following the russian example, includes in its activities that of combatting religion directly. Such a thing may appear quite radical, especially to those workers who themselves were obliged to overcome the religious traditions and have continually met with religion as a great impediment among their comrades. But in reality it is very superficial, remaining attached to the surface and the outer layers. To be radical is to get at the roots of things. The root of religion is the social essence, in this case the dependence and powerlessness. To attack this root requires – so long as society is not itself transformed – the bringing of such insight into the social development as to give rise to the certainty that liberation can be attained thru human effort. It is only that which can set aside the power of religious thinking. It does not come about thru theoretical discussions directed to demonstrating the falsity of religious dogmas; that is nothing more than an attack upon the outer form, upon the effect, while the cause, the inner essence, is left unclarified. Only a clear understanding of the forces by which society is driven and of how the thinking and acting of human beings are determined by vital needs of an economic nature, – it is only this that makes the belief in supernatural explanations superfluous and senseless. Without this understanding, however, unbelief or atheism is just as much a dogmatic belief and just as lacking in solid foundations as is religion.

The atheism which is being propagated by the C.P. and the vague religiosity of many socialist circles are, one as much as the other, bourgeois modes of thought. Atheism and religion have this in common, that they are unconscious expressions of a sentiment produced in human beings by society. They are accordingly both dogmatic; that is, they regard themselves as absolute truth and combat and persecute each other because they



hold the opposed ideas to be determining as regards the practical struggle. In making use of the name Materialism as the doctrine of reality – the doctrine which investigates, with a view to understanding, only reality, the real forces of the world – we at the same time deny that atheism has any right whatever to bear this name. As a descendant of bourgeois materialism, atheism sees, to be sure, the reality of nature, but not the reality of society, hence only that of the less significant half of the universe. Its value is that of an empty hull, of a negative solution, because it merely asserts that the religious explanation of the world, the one by means of supernatural beings, is out of order. The thing that might give it a positive content, – the real explanation of the world's development, a clear knowledge of the forces and their effects by which our life is governed, – that is lacking. This content can be given only by Marx's historical materialism.

It was said above that the C.P. has propagated atheism and combatted religion, but the statement is in reality too favorable. It is the free thinkers who combat religion with fairly considered arguments. What has been done by the organs of the C.P. was not much more than jeering and offensive outbursts against religion. It is perhaps the clearest indication of the intellectual poverty of the communist parties that, in their intellectual dependence on Bolshevism, they came out in western Europe against religion with the same simple means with which the muzhiks were impressed in Russia. And of course it was not intended as serious combat, – in such matters, that is beyond the capacities of the Russian Bolsheviks, – but was designed merely to harass the bourgeoisie and to impress the workers with a bit of theatrical boldness. It is the old method of external appearance in the place of inner strength, – a method which is at work also in their policy of employing high-sounding words, behind which there is only a reformistic striving for outward successes with a view to power. And as proof by example to show how faintly communist and how completely bourgeois this alleged materialism is, there comes as the last somersault the slogan of tolerance: now that Russia is making its peace with the western powers, the Communist International seeks to get on the good side of the bourgeoisie and, to that end, proclaims religious tolerance, the old bourgeois principle.

To the bourgeoisie, it is a principle. The bourgeoisie has received – as a troublesome legacy from the earlier centuries when class struggles were reflected in religious differences – the various religions and churches, now contracted to rigid articles of faith. In spite of the fact that each must assume, according to his own doctrine, that the other fellow is forever lost, one must respect the other's belief, as otherwise no business could be conducted among the different sects. Business does not admit of any dispute about religious beliefs, and business is the main matter. And so in the capitalist world one must tolerate. Also in the case of political affairs.

The real communism is not tolerant. A communist worker whose deepest desire is to bring his class to a strong unity of action does not tolerate having his comrades remain without understanding of the social development. He knows that so long as clarity is lacking regarding society, the mind is filled with some belief or unbelief. The conversion of a belief to an empty unbelief does not bring his class any strength. He will set about with all his power to provide insight, clarity, understanding of society, insight into the goal and the struggle of the working class, in order that the workers may see with clear eyes the reality or the world by which their destiny is determined. It is then that the supernatural traditions lose their force. In this way the unity of action of all workers as a strictly coherent and conscious class is prepared and secured.

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