

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

LENIN

COLLECTED WORKS

2



THE RUSSIAN EDITION WAS PRINTED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH A DECISION
OF THE NINTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)
AND THE SECOND CONGRESS OF SOVIETS
OF THE U.S.S.R.

Printed in cooperation with Progress
Publishers. www.progresspublishers.org

ИНСТИТУТ МАРКСИЗМА—ЛЕНИНИЗМА при ЦК КПСС

В. И. Л Е Н И Н

СО Ч И Н Е Н И Я

И з д а н и е ч е т в е р т о е

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ
МОСКВА

V. I. L E N I N

COLLECTED WORKS

VOLUME

2

1895 - 1897

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
EDITED BY GEORGE HANNA

First printing 1960
Second printing 1963
Third printing 1972
This paperback edition
first published by
Novumbooks 2026

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

C O N T E N T S

Preface	13
-------------------	----

1895

FREDERICK ENGELS	15
EXPLANATION OF THE LAW ON FINES IMPOSED ON FACTORY WORKERS	29
I What Are Fines?	33
II How Were Fines Imposed Formerly and What Gave Rise to the New Legislation on Fines?	35
III On What Grounds May the Factory Owner Impose Fines? . . .	40
IV How Big May Fines Be?	47
V What Is the Procedure for Imposing Fines?	50
VI What, According to the Law, Should the Fines Be Spent On?	55
VII Do the Fine Laws Apply to All Workers?	66
VIII Conclusion	69

GYMNASIUM FARMS AND CORRECTIVE GYMNASIA (<i>Russkoye Bogatstvo</i>)	73
--	----

TO THE WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF THE THORNTON FACTORY	81
--	----

WHAT ARE OUR MINISTERS THINKING ABOUT?	87
--	----

DRAFT AND EXPLANATION OF A PROGRAMME FOR THE SOCIAL- DEMOCRATIC PARTY	93
--	----

Draft Programme	95
Explanation of the Programme	98

1896

TO THE TSARIST GOVERNMENT	122
-------------------------------------	-----

1897

A CHARACTERISATION OF ECONOMIC ROMANTICISM (<i>Sismondi and Our Native Sismondists</i>)	129
<i>Chapter I</i> The Economic Theories of Romanticism	134
I Does the Home Market Shrink Because of the Ruination of the Small Producers?	135
II Sismondi's Views on National Revenue and Capital . .	140
III Sismondi's Conclusions from the Fallacious Theory of Two Parts of the Annual Product in Capitalist Soci- ety.	146
IV Wherein Lies the Errors of Adam Smith's and Sismon- di's Theories of National Revenue?	150
V Accumulation in Capitalist Society	154
VI The Foreign Market as the "Way out of the Difficul- ty of Realizing Surplus-Value	161
VII Crisis	166
VIII Capitalist Rent and Capitalist Overpopulation. . . .	174
IX Machines in Capitalist Society	184
X Protection	192
XI Sismondi's Place in the History of Political Economy	199
Postscript	207
<i>Chapter II</i> The Character of the Romanticists' Criticism of Capitalism.	208
I The Sentimental Criticism of Capitalism	209
II The Petty-Bourgeois Character of Romanticism . . .	220
III The Problem of the Growth of the Industrial Population at the Expense of the Agricultural Population . . .	225
IV Practical Proposals of Romanticism	232
V The Reactionary Character of Romanticism	239
VI Corn Tariffs in England as Appraised by Romanti- cism and by Scientific Theory	252
THE NEW FACTORY LAW	267
I Why Was the New Factory Law Passed?	271
II What Should Be Considered Working Time?	274
III To What Extent Does the New Law Reduce Working Hours?	276
IV What Does the Law Consider "Night-Time" for the Workers?	278

V How Does the Ministry of Finance Try to Prove That to Restrict Overtime Would be "Unfair" to the Worker?	281
VI What Power Does the New Law Grant the Ministers?	286
VII How Our "Christian" Government Curtails the Workers' Holidays	290
VIII How Is the Observance of the New Law Guaranteed?	295
IX Will the New Law Improve the Workers' Condition?	298
X What Is the Significance of the New Law?	302
<i>Appendix</i>	304
I	304
II	305
III	307
IV	307
V	310
VI	311
VII	314
ABOUT A CERTAIN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE	316
THE TASKS OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS	323
To the Workers and Socialists of St. Petersburg from the League of Struggle	348
THE HANDICRAFT CENSUS OF 1894-95 IN PERM GUBERNIA AND GENERAL PROBLEMS OF "HANDICRAFT" INDUSTRY	355
<i>Article One</i>	357
I General Data	358
II The "Handicraftsmen" and Wage-Labour	369
III "Communal-Labour Continuity".	381
<i>Article Two</i>	387
IV The Agriculture of "Handicraftsmen"	387
V Large and Small Establishments.—The Incomes of the Handicraftsmen	403
<i>Article Three</i>	422
VI What Is a Buyer-Up?	422
VII "Gratifying Features" of Handicraft Industry	439
VIII The Narodnik Programme of Industrial Policy	445

GEMS OF NARODNIK PROJECT-MONGERING (S. N. Yuzhakov, <i>Educational Problems. Journalistic Essays.—Secondary-School Reform.—Systems and Aims of Higher Education.—Gymnasium Text-books.—The Problem of Universal Education.—Women and Education. St. Petersburg, 1897, pp. VIII + 283. Price 1 ruble 50 kopeks.</i>)		459
I		461
II		462
III		469
IV		472
V		476
VI		480
VII		486
THE HERITAGE WE RENOUNCE		491
I	One Representative of the "Heritage"	494
II	Narodism's Addition to the "Heritage"	506
III	Has the "Heritage" Gained from Association with Narodism?	513
IV	The "Enlighteners," the Narodniks, and the "Disciples"	525
V	Mr. Mikhailovsky on the "Disciples'" Renunciation of the Heritage	527
<i>Notes</i>		535
<i>The Life and Work of V. I. Lenin. Outstanding Dates</i>		567



ILLUSTRATIONS

V. I. Lenin, 1897	16-17
The title-page of the <i>Rabotnik</i> miscellany in which Lenin's obituary, <i>Frederick Engels</i> , was first published. 1896.	17
The title-page of Lenin's pamphlet <i>Explanation of the Law on Fines Imposed on Factory Workers</i> . 1895	31
The cover of <i>Novoye Slovo</i> in which Lenin's <i>Characterisation of Economic Romanticism</i> and <i>About a Certain Newspaper Article</i> were first printed. 1897	131
Cover of Lenin's pamphlet <i>The New Factory Law</i> . 1899	269
Cover of the second edition of Lenin's <i>Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats</i> . 1902	325
Cover of <i>Economic Studies and Essays</i> by V. Ilyin (V. I. Lenin)	353
The house in Shushenskoye village in which Lenin lived in exile	466-468

PREFACE

Volume two contains Lenin's works of the 1895-97 period.

The first group of works in the volume, namely, *Fredrick Engels, Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party, The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*, and *The Heritage We Renounce*—is devoted to an elaboration of the tasks of the Russian Marxists as far as their programme, tactics and organisation are concerned.

A considerable part of the present volume is made up of Lenin's economic writings directed against the Narodniks: *A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism, The Handicraft Census of 1894-95 in Perm Gubernia and General Problems of "Handicraft" Industry, Gems of Narodnik Project-Mongering*, etc.

The third group contains agitational works by Lenin—the pamphlets *Explanation of the Law on Fines Imposed on Factory Workers*, and *The New Factory Law*, the leaflets *To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory* and *To the Tsarist Government*, and the article *What Are Our Ministers Thinking About?*

In 1897 and 1898, when preparing the legally published editions of *A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism*, Lenin was compelled, because of the censorship, to replace the words "Marxist theory" by "modern theory"; to replace "Marx" by "a well-known German economist," and "this socialism" by "this doctrine," etc. For the 1908 edition, Lenin either corrected a considerable number of these expressions in the text or explained them in footnotes. In the

second and third Russian editions of the *Collected Works* these corrections of Lenin's were given as footnotes. In the present edition they have been included in the text itself.

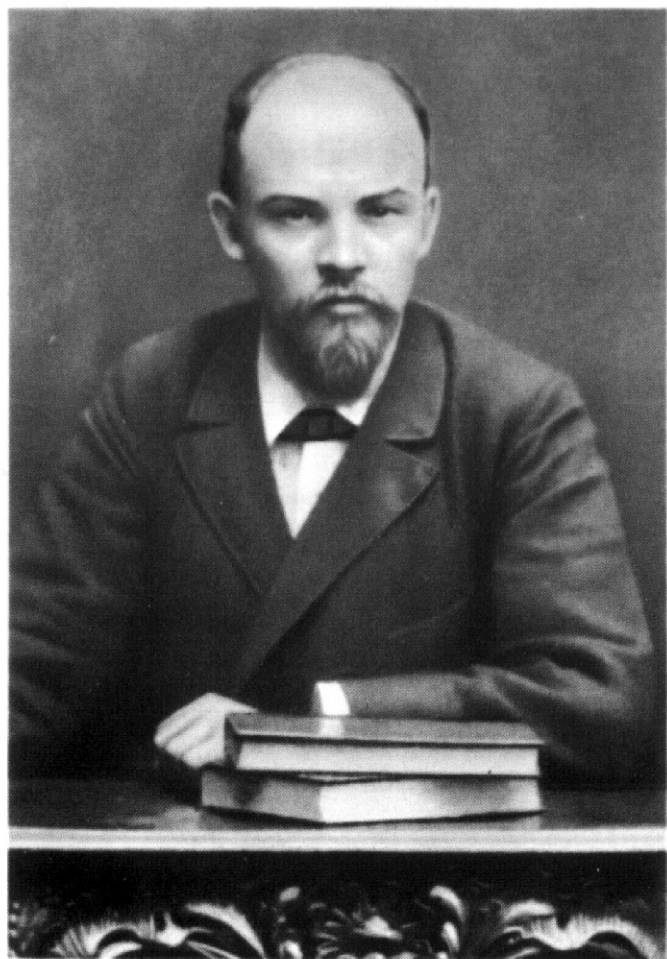
In the previous editions of V. I. Lenin's *Collected Works* the text of *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats* was taken from a copy of Lenin's manuscript. The copy contains slips of the pen and other mistakes by the copier. In the present edition the text of the pamphlet published in 1902, which was read and corrected by Lenin, has been used.

FREDERICK ENGELS

Written in autumn 1895

First published in 1896
in the miscellany *Rabotnik*,¹
No. 1-2

Published according
to the text in *Rabotnik*



V. I. LENIN
1897

ПРОЛѢТАРИИ ВСѢХЪ СТРАНЪ, СОЕДИНЯЙТЕСЬ!

РАБОТНИКЪ

№ № 1 и 2.

НЕПЕРІОДИЧЕСКІЙ СБОРНИКЪ

Съ портретомъ Фридриха Энгельса.

Изданіе „Союза Русскихъ Соціалдемократовъ“.

ЖЕНЕВА
Типографія „Союза Русскихъ Соціалдемократовъ“.
1896

The title-page of the *Rabotnik* miscellany in which
Lenin's obituary, *Frederick Engels*, was first published
1896

What a torch of reason ceased to burn,
What a heart has ceased to beat!²

On August 5 (new style), 1895, Frederick Engels died in London. After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the finest scholar and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole civilised world. From the time that fate brought Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the two friends devoted their life's work to a common cause. And so to understand what Frederick Engels has done for the proletariat, one must have a clear idea of the significance of Marx's teaching and work for the development of the contemporary working-class movement. Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class and its demands are a necessary outcome of the present economic system, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organises the proletariat. They showed that it is not the well-meaning efforts of able-minded individuals, but the class struggle of the organised proletariat that will deliver humanity from the evils which now oppress it. In their scientific works, Marx and Engels were the first to explain that socialism is not the invention of dreamers, but the final aim and necessary result of the development of the productive forces in modern society. All recorded history hitherto has been a history of class struggle, of the succession of the rule and victory of certain social classes over others. And this will continue until the foundations of class struggle and of class domination—private property and anarchic social production—disappear. The interests of the proletariat demand the destruction of these foundations, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organised workers must be directed against them. And every class struggle is a political struggle. These views of Marx and Engels have now been adopted by all proletarians who are fighting for their emancipation.

But when in the forties the two friends took part in the socialist literature and the social movements of their time, they were absolutely novel. There were then many people, talented and without talent, honest and dishonest, who, absorbed in the struggle for political freedom, in the struggle against the despotism of kings, police and priests, failed to observe the antagonism between the interests of the bourgeoisie and those of the proletariat. These people would not entertain the idea of the workers acting as an independent social force. On the other hand, there were many dreamers, some of them geniuses, who thought that it was only necessary to convince the rulers and the governing classes of the injustice of the contemporary social order, and it would then be easy to establish peace and general well-being on earth. They dreamt of a socialism without struggle. Lastly, nearly all the socialists of that time and the friends of the working class generally regarded the proletariat only as an *ulcer*, and observed with horror how it grew with the growth of industry. They all, therefore, sought for a means to stop the development of industry and of the proletariat, to stop the "wheel of history." Marx and Engels did not share the general fear of the development of the proletariat; on the contrary, they placed all their hopes on its continued growth. The more proletarians there are, the greater is their strength as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible does socialism become. The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself and be conscious of itself, and they substituted science for dreams.

That is why the name and life of Engels should be known to every worker. That is why in this collection of articles, the aim of which, as of all our publications, is to awaken class-consciousness in the Russian workers, we must give a sketch of the life and work of Frederick Engels, one of the two great teachers of the modern proletariat.

Engels was born in 1820 in Barmen, in the Rhine Province of the kingdom of Prussia. His father was a manufacturer. In 1838 Engels, without having completed his high-school studies, was forced by family circumstances to enter a commercial house in Bremen as a clerk. Commercial affairs did

not prevent Engels from pursuing his scientific and political education. He had come to hate autocracy and the tyranny of bureaucrats while still at high school. The study of philosophy led him further. At that time Hegel's teaching dominated German philosophy, and Engels became his follower. Although Hegel himself was an admirer of the autocratic Prussian state, in whose service he was as a professor at Berlin University, Hegel's *teachings* were revolutionary. Hegel's faith in human reason and its rights, and the fundamental thesis of Hegelian philosophy that the universe is undergoing a constant process of change and development, led some of the disciples of the Berlin philosopher—those who refused to accept the existing situation—to the idea that the struggle against this situation, the struggle against existing wrong and prevalent evil, is also rooted in the universal law of eternal development. If all things develop, if institutions of one kind give place to others, why should the autocracy of the Prussian king or of the Russian tsar, the enrichment of an insignificant minority at the expense of the vast majority, or the domination of the bourgeoisie over the people, continue for ever? Hegel's philosophy spoke of the development of the mind and of ideas; it was *idealistic*. From the development of the mind it deduced the development of nature, of man, and of human, social relations. While retaining Hegel's idea of the eternal process of development,* Marx and Engels rejected the preconceived idealist view; turning to life, they saw that it is not the development of mind that explains the development of nature but that, on the contrary, the explanation of mind must be derived from nature, from matter.... Unlike Hegel and the other Hegelians, Marx and Engels were materialists. Regarding the world and humanity materialistically, they perceived that just as material causes underlie all natural phenomena, so the development of human society is conditioned by the development of material forces, the productive forces. On the development of the productive forces depend the relations into which

* Marx and Engels frequently pointed out that in their intellectual development they were much indebted to the great German philosophers, particularly to Hegel. "Without German philosophy," Engels says, "scientific socialism would never have come into being."³

men enter with one another in the production of the things required for the satisfaction of human needs. And in these relations lies the explanation of all the phenomena of social life, human aspirations, ideas and laws. The development of the productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that this same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority. It abolishes property, the basis of the modern social order, it itself strives towards the very aim which the socialists have set themselves. All the socialists have to do is to realise which social force, owing to its position in modern society, is interested in bringing socialism about, and to impart to this force the consciousness of its interests and of its historical task. This force is the proletariat. Engels got to know the proletariat in England, in the centre of English industry, Manchester, where he settled in 1842, entering the service of a commercial firm of which his father was a shareholder. Here Engels not only sat in the factory office but wandered about the slums in which the workers were cooped up, and saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had been revealed before him about the condition of the British working class and carefully studied all the official documents he could lay his hands on. The fruit of these studies and observations was the book which appeared in 1845: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. We have already mentioned what was the chief service rendered by Engels in writing *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. Even before Engels, many people had described the sufferings of the proletariat and had pointed to the necessity of helping it. Engels was the *first* to say that the proletariat is *not only* a suffering class; that it is, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat that drives it irresistibly forward and compels it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *will help itself*. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to realise that their only salvation lies in socialism. On the other hand, socialism will become a force only when it becomes the aim of the *political* struggle

of the working *class*. Such are the main ideas of Engels' book on the condition of the working class in England, ideas which have now been adopted by all thinking and fighting proletarians, but which at that time were entirely new. These ideas were set out in a book written in absorbing style and filled with most authentic and shocking pictures of the misery of the English proletariat. The book was a terrible indictment of capitalism and the bourgeoisie and created a profound impression. Engels' book began to be quoted everywhere as presenting the best picture of the condition of the modern proletariat. And, in fact, neither before 1845 nor after has there appeared so striking and truthful a picture of the misery of the working class.

It was not until he came to England that Engels became a socialist. In Manchester he established contacts with people active in the English labour movement at the time and began to write for English socialist publications. In 1844, while on his way back to Germany, he became acquainted in Paris with Marx, with whom he had already started to correspond. In Paris, under the influence of the French socialists and French life, Marx had also become a socialist. Here the friends jointly wrote a book entitled *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Critique*. This book, which appeared a year before *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, and the greater part of which was written by Marx, contains the foundations of revolutionary materialist socialism, the main ideas of which we have expounded above. "The holy family" is a facetious nickname for the Bauer brothers, the philosophers, and their followers. These gentlemen preached a criticism which stood above all reality, above parties and politics, which rejected all practical activity, and which only "critically" contemplated the surrounding world and the events going on within it. These gentlemen, the Bauers, looked down on the proletariat as an uncritical mass. Marx and Engels vigorously opposed this absurd and harmful tendency. In the name of a real, human person—the worker, trampled down by the ruling classes and the state—they demanded, not contemplation, but a struggle for a better order of society. They, of course, regarded the proletariat as the force that is capable of waging this struggle and that is interested in it. Even before

the appearance of *The Holy Family*, Engels had published in Marx's and Ruge's *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*⁴ his "Critical Essays on Political Economy,"⁵ in which he examined the principal phenomena of the contemporary economic order from a socialist standpoint, regarding them as necessary consequences of the rule of private property. Contact with Engels was undoubtedly a factor in Marx's decision to study political economy, the science in which his works have produced a veritable revolution.

From 1845 to 1847 Engels lived in Brussels and Paris, combining scientific work with practical activities among the German workers in Brussels and Paris. Here Marx and Engels established contact with the secret German Communist League,⁶ which commissioned them to expound the main principles of the socialism they had worked out. Thus arose the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels, published in 1848. This little booklet is worth whole volumes: to this day its spirit inspires and guides the entire organised and fighting proletariat of the civilised world.

The revolution of 1848, which broke out first in France and then spread to other West-European countries, brought Marx and Engels back to their native country. Here, in Rhenish Prussia, they took charge of the democratic *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*⁷ published in Cologne. The two friends were the heart and soul of all revolutionary-democratic aspirations in Rhenish Prussia. They fought to the last ditch in defence of freedom and of the interests of the people against the forces of reaction. The latter, as we know, gained the upper hand. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed. Marx, who during his exile had lost his Prussian citizenship, was deported; Engels took part in the armed popular uprising, fought for liberty in three battles, and after the defeat of the rebels fled, via Switzerland, to London.

Marx also settled in London. Engels soon became a clerk again, and then a shareholder, in the Manchester commercial firm in which he had worked in the forties. Until 1870 he lived in Manchester, while Marx lived in London, but this did not prevent their maintaining a most lively interchange of ideas: they corresponded almost daily. In this correspond-

ence the two friends exchanged views and discoveries and continued to collaborate in working out scientific socialism. In 1870 Engels moved to London, and their joint intellectual life, of the most strenuous nature, continued until 1883, when Marx died. Its fruit was, on Marx's side, *Capital*, the greatest work on political economy of our age, and on Engels' side, a number of works both large and small. Marx worked on the analysis of the complex phenomena of capitalist economy. Engels, in simply written works, often of a polemical character, dealt with more general scientific problems and with diverse phenomena of the past and present in the spirit of the materialist conception of history and Marx's economic theory. Of Engels' works we shall mention: the polemical work against Dühring (analysing highly important problems in the domain of philosophy, natural science and the social sciences),* *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (translated into Russian, published in St. Petersburg, 3rd ed., 1895),¹⁰ *Ludwig Feuerbach* (Russian translation and notes by G. Plekhanov, Geneva, 1892),¹¹ an article on the foreign policy of the Russian Government (translated into Russian in the Geneva *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Nos. 1 and 2),¹² splendid articles on the housing question,¹³ and finally, two small but very valuable articles on Russia's economic development (*Frederick Engels on Russia*, translated into Russian by Zasulich, Geneva, 1894).¹⁴ Marx died before he could put the final touches to his vast work on capital. The draft, however, was already finished, and after the death of his friend, Engels undertook the onerous task of preparing and publishing the second and the third volumes of *Capital*. He published Volume II in 1885 and Volume III in 1894 (his death prevented the preparation of Volume IV).¹⁵ These two volumes entailed a vast amount of labour. Adler, the Austrian Social-Democrat, has rightly remarked that by publishing volumes II and III of *Capital* Engels erected a majestic monument to the genius who had been his friend, a monument on which, without intending it, he indelibly carved his own name. Indeed

* This is a wonderfully rich and instructive book.⁸ Unfortunately, only a small portion of it, containing a historical outline of the development of socialism, has been translated into Russian (*The Development of Scientific Socialism*, 2nd ed., Geneva, 1892).⁹

these two volumes of *Capital* are the work of two men: Marx and Engels. Old legends contain various moving instances of friendship. The European proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relationship to each other surpasses the most moving stories of the ancients about human friendship. Engels always—and, on the whole, quite justly—placed himself after Marx. “In Marx’s lifetime,” he wrote to an old friend, “I played second fiddle.”¹⁶ His love for the living Marx, and his reverence for the memory of the dead Marx were boundless. This stern fighter and austere thinker possessed a deeply loving soul.

After the movement of 1848-49, Marx and Engels in exile did not confine themselves to scientific research. In 1864 Marx founded the International Working Men’s Association,¹⁷ and led this society for a whole decade. Engels also took an active part in its affairs. The work of the International Association, which, in accordance with Marx’s idea, united proletarians of all countries, was of tremendous significance in the development of the working-class movement. But even with the closing down of the International Association in the seventies, the unifying role of Marx and Engels did not cease. On the contrary, it may be said that their importance as the spiritual leaders of the working-class movement grew continuously, because the movement itself grew uninterruptedly. After the death of Marx, Engels continued alone as the counsellor and leader of the European socialists. His advice and directions were sought for equally by the German socialists, whose strength, despite government persecution, grew rapidly and steadily, and by representatives of backward countries, such as the Spaniards, Rumanians and Russians, who were obliged to ponder and weigh their first steps. They all drew on the rich store of knowledge and experience of Engels in his old age.

Marx and Engels, who both knew Russian and read Russian books, took a lively interest in the country, followed the Russian revolutionary movement with sympathy and maintained contact with Russian revolutionaries. They both became socialists after being *democrats*, and the democratic feeling of *hatred* for political despotism was exceedingly strong in them. This direct political feeling, combined

the a profound theoretical understanding of the connection between political despotism and economic oppression, and also their rich experience of life, made Marx and Engels uncommonly responsive *politically*. That is why the heroic struggle of the handful of Russian revolutionaries against the mighty tsarist government evoked a most sympathetic echo in the hearts of these tried revolutionaries. On the other hand, the tendency, for the sake of illusory economic advantages, to turn away from the most immediate and important task of the Russian socialists, namely, the winning of political freedom, naturally appeared suspicious to them and was even regarded by them as a direct betrayal of the great cause of the social revolution. "The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself"—Marx and Engels constantly taught.¹⁸ But in order to fight for its economic emancipation, the proletariat must win itself certain *political* rights. Moreover, Marx and Engels clearly saw that a political revolution in Russia would be of tremendous significance to the West-European working-class movement as well. Autocratic Russia had always been a bulwark of European reaction in general. The extraordinarily favourable international position enjoyed by Russia as a result of the war of 1870, which for a long time sowed discord between Germany and France, of course only enhanced the importance of autocratic Russia as a reactionary force. Only a free Russia, a Russia that had no need either to oppress the Poles, Finns, Germans, Armenians or any other small nations, or constantly to set France and Germany at loggerheads, would enable modern Europe, rid of the burden of war, to breathe freely, would weaken all the reactionary elements in Europe and strengthen the European working class. That was why Engels ardently desired the establishment of political freedom in Russia for the sake of the progress of the working-class movement in the West as well. In him the Russian revolutionaries have lost their best friend.

Let us always honour the memory of Frederick Engels, a great fighter and teacher of the proletariat!

**EXPLANATION OF THE LAW
ON FINES IMPOSED
ON FACTORY WORKERS¹⁹**

Written in autumn 1895

First published in
pamphlet form,
St. Petersburg, 1895

Published according to
the 1895 edition checked
with the 1897 edition

ОБЪЯСНЕНІЕ
ЗАКОНА
О
ШТРАФАХЪ, ВЗИМАЕМЫХЪ
СЪ
рабочихъ на фабрикахъ и заводахъ.



ХЕРСОНЪ.
Типографія К. Н. Субботина, Екатерины. ул. д. Капнина.
1895.

The title-page of Lenin's pamphlet *Explanation
of the Law on Fines Imposed on Factory Workers.*
1895

I

WHAT ARE FINES?

If we were to ask a worker whether he knows what fines are, the question would very likely astonish him. How can he not know what fines are, when he constantly has to pay them? What is there to ask about?

However, it only seems that there is nothing to ask about. Actually, most workers do not properly understand fines.

It is usually thought that a fine is a payment made to the employer for damage done to him by the worker. That is not true. A fine and compensation for damage are two different things. If a worker does some damage to another worker, the latter may demand compensation for the damage (e.g., for a piece of cloth which has been spoiled), but cannot fine him. Similarly, if one factory owner does damage to another (e.g., fails to deliver goods on time), the latter can demand compensation, but he cannot fine the first factory owner. Compensation for damage is demanded of an equal, whereas a fine can only be imposed on a subordinate. Hence, compensation for damage must be claimed in court, whereas a fine is imposed by the employer out of court. A fine is sometimes imposed when the employer has suffered no damage (e.g., a fine for smoking). A fine is a penalty, and not compensation for damage. If a worker, let us say, is careless while smoking and burns the employer's cloth, the employer not only fines him for smoking, but in addition makes a deduction for the burnt cloth. This example clearly shows the difference between a fine and compensation for damage.

Fines are not imposed to compensate for damage but to establish discipline, i.e., to secure subordination

of the workers to the employer, to force the worker to fulfil the employer's orders, to obey him during working hours. The law on fines in fact says that a fine is a "monetary penalty imposed by the factory management on its own authority with a view to the maintenance of order." And the amount of the fine depends, therefore, not on the amount of the damage, but on the extent of the worker's misdemeanour: the greater the misdemeanour, the greater the disobedience to the employer or departure from the employer's demands, the greater the fine. If anybody goes to work for an employer, it is clear that he loses his freedom; he must obey his employer, and the employer may punish him. The peasant serfs worked for landlords, and the landlords punished them. The workers work for capitalists, and the capitalists punish them. The only difference is that formerly it was a man's back that suffered, whereas now it is his purse.

It will perhaps be objected that joint work by a mass of workers at a mill or factory is impossible without discipline: order is needed on the job, somebody has to see that order is kept and that those who violate it are punished. Hence—we shall be told—fines are imposed not because the workers are not free, but because joint work requires order.

The objection is quite groundless, although at first sight people may be misled by it. It is only put forward by people who wish to conceal from the workers that they are not free agents. Order is certainly necessary wherever work is done jointly. But is it necessary that people who work should be subordinated to the tyranny of the factory owners, i.e., of people who do not work themselves and who are only strong because they have taken hold of all the machines, instruments and materials? Joint work cannot be done unless there is order, unless all submit to it; but work can be done in common without subordinating the workers to the factory owners. Joint work does, indeed, require that there is supervision to ensure the maintenance of order, but it does not at all require that the power to supervise others should always be vested in the one who does not work himself, but lives on the labour of others. Hence it can be seen that fines are imposed not because people work together, but because, under the present capitalist system, all

working folk possess no property: all the machines, instruments, raw materials, land, and bread belong to the rich. The workers have to sell themselves to them so as not to starve. Once, however, they have sold themselves, they are of course obliged to subordinate themselves to them and suffer punishment at their hands.

Every worker desirous of understanding what fines are should be clear on this point. He must know this so as to refute the usual (and very mistaken) argument that fines are necessary since without them joint work is impossible. He must know this, so as to be able to explain to every worker the difference between a fine and compensation for damage, and why fines mean that the workers are not free, that they are subordinated to the capitalists.

II

HOW WERE FINES IMPOSED FORMERLY AND WHAT GAVE RISE TO THE NEW LEGISLATION ON FINES?

The fines laws were introduced recently, only nine years ago. Before 1886 there were no such laws at all. Factory owners were able to impose fines for what they pleased and to any extent they wished. They did so on a monstrous scale and collected enormous sums for themselves out of it. Fines were sometimes imposed simply "at the employer's discretion," without the reason for the fine being given. Fines occasionally amounted to *as much as half the earnings* of the worker, so that the latter gave up to the employer fifty kopeks out of every ruble earned in the shape of fines. There were cases when extra fines, over and above the ordinary ones, were imposed; for example, 10 rubles for leaving the factory. Whenever the employer's affairs were in a bad way, he would have no scruple about reducing wages, despite the existence of a contract. He would compel the foremen to be stricter in fining and in rejecting work done which had just the same effect as reducing the worker's wages.

The workers long tolerated all this oppression, but as more and more big mills and factories, particularly weaving

mills, were built, forcing out the small establishments and hand weavers, the workers' indignation at the tyranny and oppression mounted. Some ten years ago there was a *hitch* in the affairs of the merchants and factory owners, what is called a crisis: goods were left on their hands; the factory owners suffered losses and began to increase fines with still greater energy. The workers, whose earnings were small enough as it was, could not bear the additional oppression, with the result that workers' revolts took place in the Moscow, Vladimir and Yaroslavl gubernias. That was in 1885-86. Their patience exhausted, the workers stopped work and wreaked terrible vengeance on their oppressors, wrecking factory premises and machinery, sometimes setting fire to them, attacking managerial personnel, etc.

One of the most remarkable of these strikes was at the well-known Nikolskoye Mill belonging to Timofei Savvich Morozov (in the township of Nikolskoye, near Orekhovo Station on the Moscow-Nizhni Novgorod Railway). From 1882 onwards Morozov started reducing wages, and by 1884 there had been five reductions. At the same time fines were imposed with increasing severity, amounting in the whole mill to almost a quarter of the earnings (24 kopeks in fines for every ruble earned), and in the case of some workers to a half their earnings. To cover up these disgraceful fines, the mill office in the year preceding the outbreak did the following: workers who had been fined to the extent of half their earnings were discharged, but were given their jobs back again sometimes on the same day, together with new pay-books. In this way books that contained records of outrageous fines were destroyed. Where workers were absent without leave, deductions were made at the rate of 3 days' pay for each day's absence; for smoking, the fine amounted to 3, 4 or 5 rubles each time. Their patience exhausted, the workers struck work on January 7, 1885, and over several days wrecked the factory foodstore, foreman Shorin's home and several other factory buildings. This terrific outbreak of some ten thousand workers (up to 11,000 were affected) greatly frightened the government, and was immediately followed by the appearance on the scene in Orekhovo-Zuyevo of troops, the Governor, a prosecutor from Vladimir, and one from Moscow. During negotiations with the strikers,

the crowd presented the management with "conditions drawn up by the workers themselves." In these the workers demanded that fines imposed from Easter 1884 onwards be refunded, that thenceforward fines should not exceed 5% of earnings, i.e., should not amount to more than 5 kopeks per ruble earned, and that for one day's absence without permission the fine should not exceed one ruble. Further, the workers demanded a return to the wage rates of 1881-82, they demanded that the employer pay for idle days for which he was to blame, that 15 days' clear notice be given before dismissal, and that goods produced be accepted by the management in the presence of witnesses from among the workers, etc.

This huge strike made a very great impression on the government, which saw that when the workers act in unison they constitute a dangerous force, particularly when the mass of the workers, acting in concert, advance their demands directly. The employers also sensed the workers' strength and became more careful. The newspaper *Novoye Vremya*,²⁰ for example, published the following report from Orekhovo-Zuyevo: "The significance of last year's outbreak" (i.e., the outbreak at Morozov's in January 1885) "is that it immediately changed the old order in the factories, both in Orekhovo-Zuyevo and its environs." That is to say, not only the owners of the Morozov mill had to change the abominable system when the workers jointly demanded its abolition, but even the neighbouring mill owners agreed to concessions, out of fear of outbreaks taking place at their factories, too. "The main thing," stated the same newspaper, "is that a more human attitude to the workers has now been established, something that previously distinguished few of the factory managers."

Even *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*²¹ (this newspaper always supports the employers and blames the workers themselves for everything) understood the impossibility of retaining the old system and had to admit that arbitrary fining is an "evil that leads to disgraceful abuses," that "factory stores are downright robbery," that therefore a law and regulations concerning fines must be introduced.

The tremendous impression created by this strike was further heightened as a result of the trial of several workers. For

violent behaviour during the strike, for attacking a military patrol (some of the workers were arrested during the strike and locked in a building, but they broke down the door and made off), 33 workers were brought to trial. This took place in Vladimir in May 1886. The jury found all the accused not guilty, since the testimony of the witnesses, including the owner of the mill, T. S. Morozov, manager Dianov and many of the weavers, shed light on all the abominable oppression to which the workers had been subjected. This verdict of the court was a direct condemnation not only of Morozov and his managers but of the old factory system as a whole.

The alarm and fury of the supporters of the mill owners was thoroughly aroused. The very same *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, which after the outbreak had admitted the iniquity of the old system, now took a very different line. "The Nikolskoye Mill," it asserted, "is one of the best mills. The workers' relation to the factory is not a feudal or a compulsory one at all; they come voluntarily and leave without hindrance. Fines—but fines are essential in the mills; without them the workers would get out of hand, and you might as well close the mill." All the blame, it asserted, lay with the workers themselves, who were "profligate, drunken and careless." The verdict of the court could only "corrupt the masses of the people."* "But it is dangerous to joke with the masses of the people," ejaculated *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*. "What must the workers think, following the not-guilty verdict of the Vladimir court? The news of this decision spread like lightning through the whole of this manufacturing area. Our correspondent, who left Vladimir immediately after the announcement of the verdict, heard of it at all the stations...."

Thus, the employers tried to scare the government by saying that if one concession were made to the workers, the next day they would demand another.

*The employers and their supporters have always considered that if the workers begin to think about their conditions, begin to work for their rights and join forces in resisting the abominations and oppression of the employers, it is all nothing but "corruption." It is, of course, an advantage to the employers if the workers give no thought to their conditions and have no understanding of their rights.

But the workers' outbreaks were even more frightening, and so the government had to make concessions.

In June 1886 a new fines law appeared, which indicated in what cases the imposition of fines was permissible, specified the maximum fines, and laid it down that the fines must not go into the employer's pocket, but must go to cover the needs of the workers themselves.

Many workers are not aware of this law, while those who are, imagine that the relief gained in the matter of fines is the handiwork of the government, and that thanks for this relief should be accorded to the authorities. We have seen that this is wrong. Despite the iniquity of the old factory system, the authorities did absolutely nothing to bring relief to the workers until the latter began to revolt against it, until the workers in their fury went so far as to start wrecking the factories and machinery, setting fire to goods and materials, and attacking managers and mill owners. *Only then did the government get scared and make concessions.* For the easing of their lot the workers should thank not the authorities but their comrades who worked for and secured the abolition of this disgraceful treatment.

The history of the outbreaks of 1885 shows us what a colossal force is the workers' united protest. All that is required is to ensure that this force is used more consciously, that it is not wasted on wreaking vengeance on some particular factory owner, on wrecking some hated factory, that the whole force of this indignation and this hatred is directed against all factory owners combined, against the entire *class* of them, that it is expended on regular and persistent struggle against them.

Let us now make a detailed examination of our fines legislation. To acquaint ourselves with it, we must examine the following questions: 1) In what cases or on what grounds does the law permit the imposition of fines? 2) What, according to the law, should be the size of the fines? 3) What procedure for imposing fines is laid down in the law? i.e., who, according to the law, may fix the fine? May an appeal be lodged against it? What arrangements must be made to acquaint the worker in advance with the list of fines? How must the fines be recorded? 4) On what must fines be

expended according to the law? Where is the money kept? How is it expended on the workers' needs, and on what needs? Finally, the last question, 5) Does the fines law cover all workers?

When we have examined all these questions, we shall know not only what a fine is, but also all the particular rules and detailed regulations of Russian legislation on fines. And the workers need to know this, so that their reaction to each case of unjust fining may be an informed one, so that they may be able to explain to their comrades why there is injustice of one kind or another—whether because the factory management are violating the law, or because the law itself contains such unjust regulations—and so that they may be able accordingly to choose a suitable form of struggle against oppression.

III

ON WHAT GROUNDS MAY THE FACTORY OWNER IMPOSE FINES?

The law says that the grounds for imposing fines, i.e., the misdemeanours for which the factory owner is entitled to fine workers may be the following: 1) defective work; 2) absenteeism; 3) offences against good order. "No penalties," says the law, "may be imposed on other grounds."* Let us examine more closely each of these three grounds separately.

The first ground is defective work. The law states that "defective work is considered to be the production by the worker, through negligence, of defective articles and damage done by him when working to materials, machinery or other instruments of production." The words "through negligence" should be remembered. They are very important. A fine may be imposed, accordingly, only for negligence. If the article proves to be of low quality not because of the worker's negligence, but because, for example, the em-

*The law that we are speaking of is Rules for Industry, which is included in Part Two, Volume II of the Russian Code of Laws. The law is stated in various articles, which are numbered. Fines are dealt with in articles 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151 and 152.

ployer has supplied poor material, then the employer has no right to impose a fine. It is necessary that the workers should well understand this, and, if a fine is imposed for defective work, where the defect is due not to the worker's fault, or his negligence, they must lodge a protest, because to impose a fine in that case is a direct violation of the law. Let us take another example: the worker is doing his job at a lathe near an electric bulb. A piece of iron flies off, hits the bulb and smashes it. The employer imposes a fine "for damage of materials." Has he the right to do so? No, he has not, because it was not through negligence that the worker smashed the bulb: the worker is not to blame that the bulb was not protected at all against bits of iron, which are always flying off when work is in progress.*

The question now arises, does this law adequately protect the worker? Does it protect him against the employer's arbitrary conduct and the unjust imposition of fines? Of course not, because the employer decides at his discretion whether the article is of good or bad quality; fault-finding is always possible, it is always possible for the employer to increase fines for defective work and through their medium get more work done for the same pay. The law leaves the worker unprotected, and gives the employer a loophole for oppressing him. Clearly the law is partial, has been drawn up to the employers' advantage and is unjust.

How should the worker be protected? The workers have shown that long ago: during the 1885 strike the weavers at Morozov's Nikolskoye Mill advanced, among other demands, the following: "that the good or bad quality of articles be established when they are handed in, in case of disagreement, with witnesses from among the operatives working close at hand, all this to be recorded in the goods receipt book." (This demand was recorded in an exercise-book filled up "by general agreement of the workers" and handed in from the crowd to the prosecutor during the strike. The contents of the exercise-book were read out in court.) This demand is

* There was a case of that sort in St. Petersburg, in the port (New Admiralty), where the Harbourmaster, Verkhovsky, is well known for his oppression of the workers. After a strike he replaced fines for breaking bulbs by deductions for broken bulbs from all the workers in the shop. Obviously, these deductions are just as illegal as the fines.

quite a fair one, because there can be no other way of averting the employer's arbitrary conduct than to bring in witnesses when a dispute arises about quality, the witnesses without fail having to come from the workers' ranks: foremen or clerks would never dare to oppose the employer.

The second ground for the imposition of fines is absenteeism. What does the law call absenteeism. "Absenteeism," states the law, "as distinct from unpunctuality or unauthorised quitting of work, is failure to appear at work for not less than one half of the working day." The law considers that unpunctuality or unauthorised quitting of work is, as we shall soon see, an "offence against good order," and the fine, therefore, is a smaller one. If the worker is several hours late coming to the factory, but arrives before midday, this will not be absenteeism, but merely an offence against good order; if, however, he only arrives at midday, then it is absenteeism. Similarly, if the worker quits work without permission after midday, i.e., is away for several hours, this will be an offence against good order, but if he leaves for a full half-day it is absenteeism. The law states that if the worker is absent for more than three days consecutively or for more than six days all told in a month, the employer is entitled to discharge him. The question arises, is absence for half or the whole of a day always to be considered absenteeism? No. Only when there are no valid reasons for non-appearance at work. Valid reasons for non-appearance are enumerated in the law. They are as follows: 1) "loss of liberty by the worker." That is to say, if the worker, for example, is arrested (on orders of the police or by sentence of a magistrate), the employer is not entitled when dismissing the worker to fine him for absenteeism, 2) "unexpected loss of property due to a serious accident," 3) "fire," 4) "flood." E.g., if a worker during the spring thaws cannot get across the river, the employer is not entitled to fine him, 5) "sickness which makes it impossible for the worker to leave home" and 6) "death or severe illness of parents, husband, wife or children." In all these six cases the worker is considered to have a valid excuse for non-appearance. But to avoid being fined for absenteeism, the worker has to produce evidence: they will not take his word for it in the office that he had a valid excuse for not appearing at work. A certificate should be secured from the

doctor (in case of sickness, for example) or from the police (in case of fire, etc.). If a certificate cannot be obtained at once, it should be submitted later, and a demand made that no fine be imposed, and if it already has been, that it be cancelled.

Regarding these rules about valid reasons for non-appearance, it should be noted that they are as severe as if they applied to soldiers in barracks, and not to free men. They have been copied from those governing non-appearance in court: if anybody is accused of a crime, he is summoned by the investigator, and, as the accused, he is obliged to appear. Non-appearance is only permitted in precisely the same cases as those in which workers are permitted to absent themselves.* That is to say, the attitude of the law is just as strict to workers as it is to all sorts of swindlers, thieves, etc. Everybody understands why the rules about appearance in court are so strict; it is because the prosecution of crime concerns the whole of society. The failure, however, of a worker to appear at his place of work does not concern the whole of society, but only a single employer, and what is more, one worker can easily be replaced by another to prevent a stoppage of work. Which means that there was no need for the laws to have the strictness of military law. The capitalists, however, do not confine themselves to depriving the worker of all his time, so that he may work in the factory; they also want to deprive him of his will, of all interests and thoughts other than those connected with the factory. The worker is treated as though he were not a free man. That is why such fault-finding, bureaucratic rules, reminiscent of barrack life, are drawn up. For example, we have just seen that the law recognises the "death or severe sickness of parents, husband, wife or children" to be a valid reason for non-appearance. It says that in the law on appearance in court. Exactly the same is said in the law about the worker's appearance at work. That is to say, if, for example, the worker's sister, and not his wife, dies, he must not dare to miss a day's work, must not dare to spend time on funeral arrangements: his time belongs not to

* Except in the one case of "fire," which is not mentioned in the law about the summoning of accused persons.

himself, but to the employer. As to burial, the police may deal with it—no need to bother about that. According to the law on appearance in court, the interests of the family must yield place to the interests of society, for which the prosecution of criminals is necessary. According to the law on appearance at work, the interests of the worker's family must yield place to the interests of the employer, who must have his profits. And after this, the fine gentlemen who draw up, execute and support such laws, dare to accuse the workers of not valuing family life!...

Let us see whether the law on fines for absenteeism is a fair one. If the worker stays away from work for a day or two, that is considered absenteeism, and he is punished accordingly, and if he is away for more than three consecutive days he may be dismissed. Well, and if the employer stops the job (e.g., for lack of orders) or provides work only five days a week, instead of the established six? If the workers really possessed rights equal to those of the employers, then the law should be the same for the employer as for the worker. If the worker stops work, he loses his pay and pays a fine. So then, if the employer arbitrarily stops the job, he should, firstly, have to pay the worker his full wage for the whole period that the factory is at a standstill, and, secondly, he should be liable to be fined. But neither is laid down in the law. This example clearly confirms what we said previously about fines, namely that they signify the enslavement of the workers by the capitalist, they signify that the workers constitute a lower class without rights, condemned throughout their lives to work for the capitalists and to create their wealth, receiving in return a mere pittance that is insufficient to make life even tolerable. There can be no question of the employers paying fines for arbitrarily stopping jobs. But they do not even pay the workers their wages when work is stopped through no fault of theirs. That is a most outrageous injustice. The law only contains the rule that the contract between the employer and the worker ceases "where there is a stoppage of work at the factory for more than 7 days, due to fire, flood, boiler explosion, or similar cause." The workers should strive to get a rule adopted making it obligatory on the factory owners to pay them wages

during stoppages of work. This demand was publicly advanced by the Russian workers on January 11, 1885, during the well-known strike at T. S. Morozov's mill.* The exercise-book of workers' demands contained the following point: "that the deduction for absenteeism shall not exceed one ruble, and the employer shall pay for days idle through his fault, e.g., when machinery is stopped or undergoing repairs, in which connection each idle day to be recorded in the pay-book." The workers' first demand (that the fine for absenteeism shall not exceed one ruble) was implemented, becoming part of the fines law of 1886. The second demand (that the employer pay for days idle through his fault) was not implemented and the workers still have to fight for its adoption. To ensure that the struggle for this demand is a success, all workers should clearly understand the injustice of the law, should clearly understand what must be demanded. In each separate case when some factory is at a standstill and the workers get no wages, they should raise the question of the injustice of it, they should insist that so long as the contract with the employer has not been annulled, the latter is obliged to pay for each day, they should report the matter to the inspector, whose explanation will confirm to the workers the point that in fact the law does not deal with this matter and will give rise to discussion of the law by the workers. They should appeal to the courts when the possibility exists, requesting the exaction of payment of wages from the employer, and, finally, advance general demands for payment for idle days.

The third ground for the imposition of a fine is "offences against good order." According to the law, such offences include the following 8 cases: 1) "unpunctuality or unauthorised quitting of work" (we have already indicated the dif-

* It should be noted that at that time (1884-85) cases of factory stoppages through no fault of the workers were quite frequent, as there was a commercial and industrial crisis: the mill owners could not dispose of their stocks, and they tried to cut down production. For example, in December 1884 the big Voznesenskoye Mill (Moscow Gubernia, near Talitsa Station on the Moscow-Yaroslavl Railway) cut down the working week to 4 days. The workers, who were on piece rates, met this with a strike that ended at the beginning of January 1885 in a concession from the owner.

ference between this and absenteeism); 2) "failure to observe on the factory premises the established rules regarding fire precautions, in those cases where the factory management, by virtue of Note 1 to Article 105, do not consider it necessary to annul the contract of hire concluded with the workers." This means that where the worker violates the rules regarding fire precautions, the law gives the employer the choice of either fining the worker or of dismissing him ("to annul the contract of hire," as the law says); 3) "failure to observe cleanliness and tidiness on the factory premises"; 4) "breaking of silence while work is in progress by noisiness, shouting, bawling, quarrelling, or fighting"; 5) "disobedience." It should be noted of this point that the employer has the right to fine the worker for "disobedience" only when the latter has not fulfilled a legitimate request, i.e., one based on the contract. If some arbitrary demand is made, not based on the contract between the worker and the employer, then no fine may be imposed for "disobedience." Suppose the worker is doing a job at piece rates. The foreman tells him to drop the job and do another one. The worker refuses. In that case, to fine the worker for disobedience would be wrong since he contracted to do one particular job and, since he is on piece rates, for him to transfer to another would mean working for nothing; 6) "appearance at work drunk"; 7) "organisation of unauthorised games for money (cards, pitch and toss, etc.)" and 8) "failure to observe factory regulations." These regulations are drawn up by the owner of each factory or mill and are confirmed by the factory inspector. Extracts from them are printed in the pay-books. The workers should read these regulations and know them, so as to check whether fines imposed on them for violation of factory regulations are legitimate or not. These regulations must be distinguished from the law, which is the same for all mills and factories; internal regulations differ for each factory. The law is endorsed or annulled on the authority of the tsar; factory regulations, by the factory inspector. Hence, if these regulations prove to be oppressive to the workers their annulment may be secured by appeal to the inspector (should he refuse to take action, an appeal may be lodged with the Factory Board). To show the need for

distinguishing between the law and factory regulations, let us take an example. Suppose a worker is fined for failure to put in an appearance on a holiday or to work overtime at the demand of the foreman. Is such a fine proper or not? To answer this question we have to know the factory regulations. If they say nothing about the worker's being obliged, on demand, to work overtime, then the fine is unlawful. If, however, the regulations state that the worker is obliged, on demand of the management, to appear on holidays or to work overtime, then the fine will be a legitimate one. To secure the annulment of this obligation, the workers must not direct their complaint against the fines, but demand that the factory regulations be amended. All the workers must be unanimous in this, and then, if they act together, they will be able to get the above regulations cancelled.

IV

HOW BIG MAY FINES BE?

We now know all the cases in which the law permits the fining of workers. Let us see what the law says about the size of the fines. The law does not fix one level for all factories. It only sets a maximum. This maximum is indicated separately for each of the three cases where fines may be imposed (defective work, absenteeism and offences against good order). For absenteeism the maximum fines are the following: under time rates, not more than six days' earnings (reckoning fines for the whole month), that is to say, in the course of one month fines for absenteeism cannot be imposed to the amount of more than six days' earnings.* If, however, payment is by the piece, then the maximum fine for absenteeism is 1 ruble per day and not more than a total of 3 rubles per month. Moreover, where the worker does not put in an appearance, he forfeits his pay for all the time missed. Further, the maximum fine for offences against good order is one ruble for each separate violation.

* The maximum fine for one day's absenteeism under time rates is not indicated. All that is said is: "corresponding to the worker's wages." The exact size of the fines, as we shall soon see, is displayed in each factory in a table of penalties.

Finally, as regards fines for defective work, no maximum is indicated in the law at all. One more maximum is indicated, a general one embracing all fines: for non-appearance, offences against good order, and defective work combined. All these penalties combined "shall not exceed *one-third* of the earnings to which the worker is actually entitled on pay-day." In other words, if, say, 15 rubles are due to the worker fines may not, according to the law, amount to more than 5 rubles—for all violations, absenteeism and defects combined. If more than that amount in fines has accumulated, the employer must reduce them accordingly. In that case, however, the law gives the owner another right, namely, that of cancelling the contract where the fines total more than one-third of the worker's earnings.*

These regulations concerning maximum fines are, it must be said, too severe on the worker, and protect the employer at his expense. Firstly, the law permits too high a level of fines, amounting to as much as one-third of earnings. This is a disgracefully high level. Let us compare this maximum with well-known cases of particularly big fines. The factory inspector of Vladimir Gubernia, Mr. Mikulin (who has written a book about the new law of 1886), speaks of the high level of factory fines before the law was adopted. Fines were heaviest in the weaving industry, and the heaviest fines at a weaving mill amounted to 10%, i.e., *one-tenth of the workers' earnings*. The factory inspector of Vladimir Gubernia, Mr. Peskov, in his report** cites the following examples of particularly heavy fines. The heaviest of them was one of 5 rubles 31 kopeks, out of earnings totalling 32 rubles 31 kopeks. This equals 16.4% (16 kopeks per ruble), i.e., just *less than a sixth of the earnings*. That fine was called a heavy one, and not by the worker, but by the inspector. Yet our law permits fines to be *twice* as heavy, to amount to *one-third of earnings*, or 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ kopeks per

* The worker who considers this cancellation of the contract to be wrong, may appeal to the courts, but the period during which such an appeal may be lodged is a very short one—one month (counting, of course, from the day of dismissal).

** The first report for 1885. Only the first reports of factory inspectors were printed, the government having immediately stopped further printing. The state of affairs in the factories must have been wonderful, if they were afraid of a description of it being published.

ruble! Evidently, no more or less decent factory has imposed such fines as are permitted by our laws. Let us take the data on fines at T. S. Morozov's Nikolskoye Mill before the strike of January 7, 1885. The fines at this mill were heavier, according to witnesses, than at the surrounding mills. They were so outrageous that 11,000 workers completely lost their patience. We shall very likely not err if we take this mill as an example of one where fines were outrageous. But how heavy were the fines there? Foreman weaver Shorin testified in court, as we have already stated, that fines amounted to anything up to half the earnings, and, generally speaking, ran from 30% to 50%, from 30 to 50 kopeks per ruble. But in the first place, this testimony was not confirmed by precise data; and, secondly, it relates either to specific cases or to one workshop. When the strikers were tried, some data on fines were read out in court. The earnings (monthly) and fines of 17 workers were cited: the earnings totalled 179 rubles 6 kopeks, while the fines totalled 29 rubles 65 kopeks. This means 16 kopeks in fines per ruble earned. The biggest fine of all these 17 cases was 3 rubles 85 kopeks out of 12 rubles 40 kopeks earnings. This equals $31\frac{1}{2}$ kopeks per ruble, and is at any rate less than what is permitted by our law. It is better, however, to take the data for the whole factory. Fines imposed in the year 1884 were heavier than in previous years and amounted to $23\frac{1}{4}$ kopeks per ruble (this was the highest figure: the fines constituting from $20\frac{3}{4}$ to $23\frac{1}{4}$ per cent of earnings). So then, at a factory which became notorious for its abominably high fines, these were at any rate lower than those permitted by Russian law!... There's no gainsaying that the workers are well protected by such a law! The strikers at Morozov's demanded that "fines should not exceed 5% of earnings; furthermore, the worker must be warned about bad work and be called in not more than twice a month." The fines permitted by our legislation can only be compared with the interest drawn by usurers. It is hardly likely that any employer will dare to pile up fines to that extent; the law allows it, but the workers will not permit it.*

* One cannot but note in this regard that Mr. Mikhailovsky, formerly Chief Factory Inspector of the St. Petersburg area, considers it quite proper to call this law "a truly philanthropic reform,

What distinguishes our laws on the size of fines is not only their abominable oppressiveness but also their gross injustice. If the fine is too big (more than one-third), the employer may cancel the contract; the worker, however, is not given a similar right, i.e., the right to leave the factory if fines are imposed on him to such an amount that they exceed a third of his earnings. It is clear that the law is only concerned about the factory owner, as though fines are due only to the fault of the workers. Actually, however, everybody knows that the factory owners frequently impose fines without the workers being to blame at all, e.g., in order to speed up the workers. The law only protects the factory owner against the bad worker, but does not protect the worker against the all too oppressive employer. In the latter case, therefore, the workers have nobody to turn to for protection. They must take thought for themselves and for the struggle against the employers.

V

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR IMPOSING FINES?

We have already stated that by law fines are imposed "on the authority" of factory managements "themselves." Regarding appeals against their instructions the law says that "there is no appeal against fines imposed on the workers by factory managers. If, however, on visiting a factory, officials of the Factory Inspectorate discover from the statements of workers that fines have been imposed on them in contravention to the requirements of the law, the manager shall be prosecuted." This provision, as you see, is very unclear and contradictory.

which does supreme honour to the Russian Imperial Government's concern for the working classes." (This view is expressed in the book on Russian manufacturing industry published by the Russian Government for the Chicago World Fair of 1893.) Such is the concern of the Russian Government!!! Before the law was adopted, when there was no law at all, there were avaricious employers who robbed the workers of 23 kopeks per ruble. Yet the law in its concern for the workers says: do not retain more than $33\frac{1}{3}$ (thirty-three and a third) kopeks per ruble! But thirty-three kopeks without the third can be retained now by law. "A truly philanthropic reform" indeed!

On the one hand, the worker is told that there can be no appeal against a fine imposed. Yet on the other hand he is told that the workers may "make statements" to the inspector about fines imposed "in contravention to the law." Anybody who has not had occasion to acquaint himself with Russian laws may ask what is the difference between "to make a statement about unlawful action" and "to appeal against unlawful action"? There is none, but the purpose of this pettifogging provision of the law is very clear: the law is meant to curtail the worker's right to appeal against unfair and unlawful fining by factory owners. Now if a worker should complain to an inspector about a fine unlawfully imposed, the inspector could reply that "the law does not permit appeals against fining." Are there many workers acquainted with this tricky law who could reply in turn: "I am not appealing, I am merely making a statement"? Inspectors are appointed for the express purpose of ensuring the observance of the laws regulating the relations between workers and employers. It is the duty of inspectors to accept all statements concerning the non-observance of the law. The inspector, according to regulations (see Instructions to Factory Inspectorate Officials,²² endorsed by the Minister of Finance), must have reception days, not less than one a week, on which to give oral explanations to persons requiring them; furthermore, an announcement of these days must be displayed in each factory. Thus, if the workers know the law and are determined not to permit any departures from it, then the trickery of the law now referred to will be in vain, and the workers will be able to secure the observance of the law. Are they entitled to the return of fines paid, if these were wrongly imposed? The common-sense answer should, of course, be "yes." The employer must surely not be allowed to fine the worker wrongly and to refuse to return money wrongly exacted. It turns out, however, that when the law was discussed in the Council of State,²³ it was *deliberately* decided to be silent on this point. The members of the Council of State found that to afford the workers the right to demand the return of wrongly exacted money "will lower in the workers' eyes the importance with which it is intended to endow the factory manager, with a view to maintaining order among

the workers.” That is how statesmen judge the workers! If a factory owner has wrongly penalised a worker, the latter should not be given the right to demand the return of his money. But why deprive the worker of his money? Because complaints “will lower the importance of the managers”! That is to say, “the importance of the managers” and “the maintenance of order in the factories” are only based on the workers not knowing their rights and “not daring” to complain against those in charge, even if they violate the law! So the statesmen are positively afraid lest the workers take it into their heads to see to the proper imposition of fines! The workers should thank the members of the Council of State for their forthrightness in showing them what the workers may expect of the government. The workers must show that they consider themselves human beings just as much as the factory owners do, and that they have no intention of allowing themselves to be treated as dumb cattle. Therefore the workers must make it their duty not to let a single case of wrongful fining pass without appeal, and unfailingly present a demand for the return of their money—either to the inspector, or, in case of his refusal, to the courts. Even if the workers achieve nothing, either from the inspectors, or from the courts, their efforts will still not be in vain, but will open the eyes of the workers, and will show them how our laws treat the workers’ rights.

So then, we now know that fines are imposed on the managers’ “own authority.” But at each factory the fines may be of different amounts (since the law merely indicates the maximum above which fines may not be imposed) and there may be different factory regulations. That is why the law requires that all violations liable to fines, and the measure of the fine for each violation be indicated in advance in the *table of penalties*. This table is drawn up by each factory owner separately, and is endorsed by the factory inspector. It must be displayed, according to law, in each workshop.

To render possible a check on whether fines are being imposed properly, and in what number, it is necessary that all the fines without exception be properly recorded. The law requires that fines must be recorded in the worker’s pay-book “not later than three days following the date of

imposition.” This record must indicate, first, the grounds for the imposition of the fine (i.e., for what the fine has been imposed—for defective work and for exactly what work, for absenteeism, or for violating regulations, and exactly which), and, secondly, the amount of the penalty. The registration of fines in the pay-book is necessary to enable the workers to check whether fines are properly imposed and to enter an appeal in good time in case of any illegal action. Further, the fines must all be recorded in a special book with numbered pages which has to be kept in each factory to make it possible for all fines to be checked by the Inspectorate.

In this regard it may not be superfluous to say a couple of words about appeals against factory owners and inspectors, since the bulk of the workers do not know how to appeal and to whom. According to the law, appeals against any violations of the law at a factory should be addressed to the factory inspector. He is obliged to accept verbal and written complaints. Should the factory inspector fail to meet the request, a statement may be addressed to a senior inspector, who is also obliged to have reception days for hearing statements. In addition, the senior inspector’s office must be open *daily* for persons who need to make inquiries or to receive explanations or to make statements (see Instructions to Factory Inspectorate Officials, p. 18). Appeals against the inspector’s decision may be addressed to the Gubernia Factory Affairs Board.* The time limit for these appeals, as provided by law, is one month counting from the day the inspector announces his decision. Further, appeals against decisions of the Factory Board may be made to the Minister of Finance, the time limit being the same.

As you see, the law contains the names of many people to whom appeals may be addressed. And the right to appeal belongs alike to the factory owner and the worker. The only trouble is that this protection is merely a paper one. The

* Who constitute the Factory Board? The Governor, the Prosecutor, the Chief of the Police Administration, the Factory Inspector and *two factory owners*. If we were to add the prison governor and the officer commanding the Cossacks, we would have all the officials who give effect to “the concern of the Russian Imperial Government for the working classes.”

factory owner is fully able to present his appeals—he has time to spare, funds to get a lawyer's services, etc., and that is why the factory owners really present appeals against the inspectors, go all the way to the minister and have already secured preferential treatment of various kinds. As far as the worker is concerned, however, this right to present appeals is merely a paper one. First of all, he has no time to make the round of the inspectors and offices. He works and is fined for "absenteeism." He lacks the money to obtain a lawyer's services. He does not know the laws, and therefore cannot stand up for his rights. The authorities, on the other hand, not only do nothing to acquaint the workers with the laws, but on the contrary try to hide them from the workers. To anybody who refuses to believe this we shall cite the following regulation from the Instructions to Factory Inspectorate Officials (these instructions were endorsed by the minister and explain the rights and duties of factory inspectors): "All explanations to the owner of an industrial establishment, or to the manager of same, relating to cases of violation of the law and to obligatory regulations published in pursuance of it are made by the factory inspector, but only in the absence of the worker."* There you have it. If the factory owner violates the law, the inspector must not dare speak to him of it *in the presence of the workers*—the minister forbids it! Otherwise the workers may perhaps really get to know the law and start demanding that it be put into effect! Small wonder that *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* wrote that that would be nothing but "corruption"!

Every worker knows that appeals, especially against the inspector, are almost completely beyond his reach. Of course, we do not wish to say that the workers should not appeal: on the contrary, whenever any possibility at all exists, they should certainly lodge appeals, because only in that way will the workers get to know their rights and learn to understand in whose interests the factory laws are written. All we wish to say is that appeals cannot secure any serious and general improvement in the workers' conditions. To achieve that

* Note to Article 26 of the Instructions.

only one way exists, namely, that the workers unite to uphold their rights, to combat oppression by the employers, and to win more decent earnings and shorter working hours.

VI

WHAT, ACCORDING TO LAW, SHOULD THE FINES BE SPENT ON?

Let us now turn to the last question concerning fines. How are the fines spent? We have already said that before 1886 the money went into the pockets of the factory owners. But this system resulted in such a mass of abuses, and exasperated the workers to such a degree that the employers themselves began to appreciate the need for abolishing it. At some factories the practice arose spontaneously of using the fines to pay benefits to the workers. For example, at that same Morozov mill the established practice even before the 1885 strike was that fines for smoking and for bringing vodka on the premises should go towards benefits for the crippled and fines for defective work, to the employer.

The new law of 1886 laid down the general rule that fines must not go into the employer's pocket. It states that "penalties imposed on the workers go in each factory to form a special fund in the charge of the factory management. This fund may be used, by permission of the inspector, only for the needs of the workers themselves, according to regulations published by the Minister of Finance in agreement with the Minister of Internal Affairs." So then, fines, according to law, must only go to meet the needs of the workers themselves. The fines are the workers' own money, deductions from their earnings.

The regulations for the expenditure of the fines fund mentioned in the law were only issued in 1890 (December 4), i.e., a total of 3½ years after the promulgation of the law. The regulations state that the fines are expended, *in the main*, on the following needs of the workers: "a) on grants to workers who have become totally incapacitated or who have temporarily lost the ability to work because of illness." At the present time workers who have been injured are usu-

ally without any means of subsistence. In order to take the factory owner to court they usually live at the expense of the lawyers who are in charge of their case and who, in return for the sops they give to the workers, get the bulk of the compensation awards. And if the worker is only likely to get a small compensation through the court, he will not even find a lawyer. In such cases use should always be made of the fines money; if the worker gets a grant from the fines fund he will manage somehow for a time and will be able to secure the services of a lawyer to conduct his case against the employer, without his poverty driving him out of the clutches of the employer into those of the lawyer. Workers who lose their jobs through sickness should also secure grants from their fines fund.*

In interpretation of this first point of the regulations, the St. Petersburg Factory Board decided that grants should be made on the basis of a doctor's certificate, to the extent of not more than half the previous earnings. Let us note in parenthesis that the St. Petersburg Factory Board adopted this decision at its session of April 26, 1895. The interpretation was accordingly given 4½ years after the issue of the regulations, while the regulations were made 3½ years after issue of the law. Consequently, *eight years in all were required merely for the law to be adequately interpreted!!* How many years will now be required for the law to become generally known, and to be actually applied?

Secondly, disbursements from the fines fund are made "b) for grants to working women in the last period of pregnancy and who have ceased work 2 weeks before confinement." According to the interpretation of the St. Petersburg Factory Board, disbursements must only be made during a period of 4 weeks (two before and two after confinement) and to the extent of half the previous earnings.

Thirdly, grants are made "c) where property is lost or damaged due to fire or other misfortune." According to the interpretation of the St. Petersburg Board, a police certificate is presented as evidence in such cases and the size of the

* It stands to reason that the fact of securing a grant from the fines fund does not deprive the worker of the right to demand compensation from the employer in case, for example, of injury.