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EDUARD BERNSTEIN
The Preconditions of Socialism

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EDUARD BERNSTEIN

*The Preconditions
of Socialism*

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

HENRY TUDOR

*Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics,
University of Durham*



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the accuracy of such information thereafter.

Hence the Ten Hours' Bill was not only a great practical success;
it was the victory of a principle.

Karl Marx, Inaugural Address of the International

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Editor's note

Eduard Bernstein's famous polemic, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, was first published in 1899. It was reprinted several times in subsequent years and then, in 1921, Bernstein produced a revised and enlarged second edition. However, it was the first edition of 1899 that was at the centre of the controversy known as the Revisionist Debate, and that is the one that I have translated. There is already an English translation done by Edith C. Harvey and published in 1909 with the title *Evolutionary Socialism*. It reappeared in 1961 as a Schocken paperback, and two years later it was reprinted with an introduction by the late Sidney Hook.

Harvey's translation was not intended as a scholarly work and she did not feel it necessary to supply the usual apparatus. Nor, for that matter, did she translate the whole book. Chapter 2 was omitted, as were large sections of the remaining four chapters. Indeed, something between a quarter and a third of the book was left out. Furthermore, in the parts of the book which Harvey did translate, many inaccuracies and other defects crept in. Nevertheless, her translation has served as a good first draft, and if the present translation is an improvement, then it is largely because I have been able to build on her labours.

The Introduction inevitably covers much the same ground as my Introduction to *Marxism and Social Democracy; The Revisionist Debate 1896–1898* (ed. H. and J. M. Tudor, Cambridge, 1988) and my short piece on Bernstein in Robert Benewick (ed.), *Dictionary of Twentieth Century Political Thinkers* (London, 1992). I have, however, taken this opportunity to bring in some new material and to develop the analysis a bit further.

Editor's note

Material I have inserted in the text is enclosed in square brackets. Footnotes in the original are indicated by lower-case italic letters; my own notes are indicated by arabic numbers: both will be found at the foot of each page. I am very grateful to Raymond Guess and to my wife, Jo Tudor, for their helpful comments on various parts of this text. They have saved me from committing many errors. I am sure that at least as many remain, and for these I am, of course, entirely responsible.

Abbreviations

Adler <i>BW</i>	Victor Adler, <i>Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky, sowie Briefe von und an I. Auer, E. Bernstein, A. Braun, H. Dietz, E. Ebert, W. Liebknecht, H. Muller und P. Singer</i> , collected and with commentary by F. Adler, Vienna, 1954
<i>Capital</i> I	Karl Marx, <i>Capital: A Critique of Political Economy</i> , vol. I, trans. Ben Fowkes, Harmondsworth, 1976
<i>Capital</i> III	Karl Marx, <i>Capital: A Critique of Political Economy</i> , vol. III, trans. David Fernbach, Harmondsworth, 1981
<i>LVZ</i>	<i>Leipziger Volkszeitung</i>
MECW	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Collected Works</i> , 50 vols. (incomplete), London, 1975–
MESC	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Selected Correspondence</i> , Moscow, n.d.
MESW	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Selected Works</i> , 2 vols., Moscow, 1958
MEW	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>Werke</i> , 39 vols., Berlin, 1972–8
<i>NZ</i>	<i>Die Neue Zeit</i>
<i>Protokoll</i>	<i>Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitagés der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands</i> , Berlin, 1890–1913
RLGW	Rosa Luxemburg, <i>Gesammelte Werke</i> , 5 vols., Berlin, 1974–80

List of abbreviations

Tudor and Tudor *Marxism and Social Democracy: The Revisionist Debate 1896–1898*, ed. and trans. by H. Tudor and J. M. Tudor, with an introduction by H. Tudor, Cambridge, 1988

Introduction

When, in the spring of 1899, Bernstein's *Preconditions of Socialism* appeared, it caused a sensation. In effect, the book was a restatement and elaboration of the reformist standpoint Bernstein had been developing in a series of articles published during the previous two years. The controversy which these articles provoked had culminated in the rejection of Bernstein's position at the Stuttgart Conference of the German Social Democratic Party in October 1898. However, many felt that the issue had not yet been laid to rest. Karl Kautsky in particular was profoundly dissatisfied and he therefore urged that Bernstein produce 'a systematic, comprehensive, and carefully reasoned exposition of his basic conceptions, insofar as they transcend the framework of principles hitherto accepted in our party'.¹ Bernstein agreed, and the result was *The Preconditions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy*. Hastily written and flawed as it was, it was to become the classic statement of democratic, non-revolutionary socialism.

The background

Bernstein was born in Berlin on 6 January 1850. His father was a locomotive driver and the family was Jewish though not religious. When he left school he took employment as a banker's clerk. In 1872, the year after the establishment of the German Reich and the suppression of the Paris Commune, he joined the 'Eisenach' wing of

¹ Karl Kautsky, 'Tactics and Principles', 13.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, p. 312.

the German socialist movement and soon became prominent as an activist. In 1875 he attended the Gotha Conference at which the Eisenachers united with the Lassalleans to form what was to become the German Social Democratic Party.² It was not long before the party reaped the benefit of its newly found unity. In the Reichstag elections of 1877 it gained 493,000 votes. However, two assassination attempts on the Kaiser in the following year provided Bismarck with a pretext for introducing a law banning all socialist organisations, assemblies, and publications. As it happened, there had been no Social Democratic involvement in either assassination attempt, but the popular reaction against 'enemies of the Reich' induced a compliant Reichstag to pass Bismarck's 'Socialist Law'.

For nearly all practical purposes, the party was outlawed and, throughout Germany, it was actively suppressed. However, it was still possible for Social Democrats to stand as individuals for election to the Reichstag, and this they did. Indeed, despite the severe persecution to which it was subjected, the party actually increased its electoral support, gaining 550,000 votes in 1884 and 763,000 in 1887. Party conferences could still be held outside Germany, and party papers – such as, the official party organ, *Der Sozialdemokrat*, and Karl Kautsky's political and literary review, *Die Neue Zeit* – could still be published abroad and smuggled across the frontier. In short, the party survived and, in certain respects, it even flourished.

Shortly before the 'Socialist Law' came into effect, Bernstein himself fled to Switzerland to take up a post as secretary to Karl Höchberg, a wealthy supporter of Social Democracy. A warrant subsequently issued for his arrest ruled out any possibility of his returning to Germany, and he was to remain in exile for more than twenty years.

It was shortly after his arrival in Switzerland that he began to think of himself as a Marxist.³ In 1880, he accompanied Bebel to London in order to clear up a misunderstanding over his involvement in an article published by Höchberg and denounced by Marx and Engels

² See Bernstein's account in his *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre* (Berlin, 1978), pp. 41ff; Roger Morgan, *The German Social Democrats and the First International 1864–1872* (Cambridge, 1965), gives an excellent account of the German socialist movement prior to the Gotha Conference.

³ Bernstein, *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, p. 72; Bernstein to Bebel, 20.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, p. 324.

as being 'chock-full of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas'.⁴ The trip was a success. Engels in particular was impressed by Bernstein's zeal and the soundness of his ideas.

Back in Zurich, Bernstein became increasingly active in working for *Der Sozialdemokrat*, and in the following year he succeeded Georg von Vollmar as the paper's editor, a post he was to hold for the next ten years. It was during these years that Bernstein established his reputation as a leading party theoretician and a Marxist of impeccable orthodoxy. In this he was helped by the close personal and professional relationship he established with Engels. This relationship owed much to the fact that he shared Engels's strategic vision and accepted most of the particular policies which, in Engels's view, that vision entailed.

Engels, being convinced that the transition from capitalism to socialism could never be achieved by peaceful parliamentary means, argued that the main task of the party was to prepare for the inevitable revolution. However, to do this the party had first of all to survive, and that meant avoiding any action that might provoke the state into further acts of repression. It also meant using all available means to build up the strength of the party and increase its popular support. In the Reichstag, Social Democratic deputies should, therefore, adopt a position of intransigence within a framework of strict legality. Engels agreed that there was no harm in supporting measures that might improve the lot of the working man. But any measures that might strengthen the government against the people should be resisted.⁵ These included the programme of welfare legislation which Bismarck initiated in the 1880s and also such apparently innocuous measures as state subsidies for the construction of steamships.⁶

For Engels, the danger was that a concentration on peaceful parliamentary activity might cause Social Democrats to forget their revolutionary objective. He therefore saw it as an important part of Bernstein's task as editor of the official party organ to halt the spread of 'philistine sentiment' within the party. Bernstein was glad to oblige.

⁴ MESC, pp. 388 ff; MEW, vol. XXXIV, pp. 394ff.

⁵ Engels to Bebel, 24.11.1879, MEW, vol. XXIV, p. 424.

⁶ The party opposed the 'steamship subventions' because they formed part of Germany's policy of colonial expansion. At the same time, the subventions gave employment to dockyard workers and were, for that reason, supported by many Social Democrats. For Bernstein's account of the controversy see *Sozialdemokratische Lehrjahre*, pp. 155ff.

In one leading article after another, he spelled out the case for intransigence.⁷

In 1887, the German government persuaded the Swiss authorities to close down *Der Sozialdemokrat*. Bernstein moved to London where he resumed publication from premises in Kentish Town. His relationship with Engels soon blossomed into friendship. He also made contact with various English socialist organisations, notably the Fabian Society and Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation. It is clear that he was impressed by the liberal political climate that prevailed in England at the time.⁸ Indeed, in later years, his opponents routinely claimed that his 'Revisionism' was due to his having come to see the world 'through English spectacles'. It is, of course, impossible to determine how far the charge was justified. For what it is worth, Bernstein himself denied it.⁹

In 1890 Bismarck fell from power. One of the factors that contributed to his downfall was the remarkable success the Social Democrats scored in the Reichstag elections of that year. They gained nearly one and a half million votes. Bismarck proposed to respond with further repressive measures, but the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, favoured a policy of reconciliation. Bismarck accordingly resigned. Shortly afterwards, the 'Socialist Law' was allowed to lapse, and it was once again possible for Social Democracy to operate openly as a political organisation in Germany. However, the warrant which had been issued for Bernstein's arrest remained in force, and Bernstein therefore stayed in England until 1901 when it was finally withdrawn.

The electoral success of the party opened up new prospects and caused many Social Democrats to reconsider their strategy. This caused a certain amount of turmoil within the party. On the left, a group of intellectuals, known as the Youngsters, mounted a campaign in which they warned against opportunism, deplored the party's obsession with parliamentary success, and insisted that socialism could be achieved only by revolutionary means. They had reason to be concerned. The fall of Bismarck and the conciliatory attitude of the Kaiser had led many Social Democrats to think that socialism

⁷ For instance, the three articles by Bernstein from the *Sozialdemokrat* in Tudor and Tudor, chapter 1.

⁸ This is particularly evident in Bernstein's *My Years of Exile: Reminiscences of a Socialist* (London, 1921).

⁹ Bernstein to Bebel, 20.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, pp. 325-6.

might, after all, be achieved by legislation and peaceful reform.

At the Erfurt Conference, held in the autumn of 1891, the leadership of the party managed to stave off the assaults from both left and right. The new party programme which the conference eventually accepted had been drafted mainly by Kautsky and Bernstein. It is therefore not surprising that the theoretical assumptions on which it was based and the general political strategy it prescribed were basically those of Engels. Engels himself did have one or two criticisms, but in the main he was profoundly satisfied with the result.¹⁰

Der Sozialdemokrat had ceased publication soon after the 'Socialist Law' lapsed. However, Bernstein's distinguished record as editor, together with his restlessly active mind and his ready pen, brought him more than enough work as a journalist and author. His literary output during the 1890s was prodigious. At the same time, his views underwent a fundamental change. The change was slow, piecemeal, and difficult to detect. Engels, for one, noticed nothing.¹¹ Neither did Kautsky. Indeed, Bernstein himself did not realise that he had shifted his ground until early in 1897. On his own account, the light dawned while he was giving a lecture to the Fabian Society on 'What Marx Really Taught'. As he later put it in a letter to Bebel:

as I was reading the lecture, the thought shot through my head that I was doing Marx an injustice, that it was not Marx I was presenting . . . I told myself secretly that this could not go on. It is idle to attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. The vital thing is to be clear as to where Marx is still right and where he is not.¹²

By this time, Bernstein had concluded that the main point on which Marx was 'not right' was his theory that the capitalist economy, riven by its own inner contradictions, would inevitably founder, thus providing the occasion for the revolutionary proletariat to seize political power and establish a socialist order of society. The difficulty was that, in the mid 1890s, the inner contradictions of capitalism were not much in evidence. Certainly, the terminal crisis so confidently predicted by Marx and Engels had not occurred and, so far as

¹⁰ Engels, 'Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen Programmentwurfs 1891', MEW, vol. XXII, pp. 227–38.

¹¹ It is true that in the 1890s Engels did occasionally express doubts about some of Bernstein's articles but, as I have observed elsewhere, he objected to their tone and timing rather than to their content. Tudor and Tudor, p. 9.

¹² Bernstein to Bebel, 20.10.1898, Tudor and Tudor, p. 325.

Bernstein could see, it was not going to occur. It might well be that capitalism had a built-in tendency to suffer periodic dislocations. However, the development of a sophisticated credit system, the emergence of trusts and cartels, and improved means of transport and communication, had all enabled capitalism to eliminate, or at least control, the trade crises that had been so marked a feature of the economy in the earlier part of the century. Besides, Bernstein argued, there was no evidence that the means of production were being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, or that cut-throat competition was eliminating large sections of the bourgeoisie, or that the proletariat was being progressively reduced to abject poverty. Indeed, capitalism seemed to be in rude good health and was likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. It was therefore idle for socialists to pin their hopes on an imminent collapse of the bourgeois social and economic order.

On the other hand, Bernstein observed, the advance of democracy in most industrialised countries had enabled working-class parties to enter the political arena, and there was a real prospect that significant progress could be achieved by parliamentary means. Indeed, the 'victory of socialism' might well be accomplished by the steady implementation of socialist principles through legislation and institutional reform. However, Bernstein was careful to insist that by 'socialism' he did not mean the communist ideal entertained by certain elements of the radical left. A modern industrial economy was, he argued, far too complex to be managed effectively by the state or by 'society', whatever that might mean.¹³ The state could regulate private enterprises but it should not own them. And it should not own them because it could not run them – or, at least, nothing like all of them. Loose talk about expropriating the expropriators was therefore dangerous nonsense. A socialist economy would inevitably include a large and thriving private sector.

It was also nonsense, Bernstein argued, to suggest that social care be extended to the point where the individual was completely relieved of any personal responsibility for his own welfare.¹⁴ Socialism, for

¹³ Bernstein, 'The Social and Political Significance of Space and Number' and 'The Theory of Collapse and Colonial Policy', Tudor and Tudor, pp. 83–98 and pp. 159–70.

¹⁴ Bernstein, 'The Social and Political Significance of Space and Number', Tudor and Tudor, pp. 93–4; also present volume, p. 148.

him, entailed extending the individual's control over his own circumstances, and this meant 'the implementation of cooperation across the board'.¹⁵ Socialists should therefore take a constructive view of the possibilities offered by trade unions, cooperative societies, and local government institutions. The objective of cooperative activity in these various organisations should be, not the class interest of the proletariat, but 'the common good'. Bernstein never doubted that there were clashes of class interest in modern industrial societies, but he always insisted that there was also a fundamental common interest, or good, which took precedence over any 'sectional' interests.¹⁶ There was, incidentally, nothing particularly recondite about Bernstein's notion of the common good. It was simply a parcel of goods ranging from freedom of speech down to efficient street lighting. Bernstein was, in short, what Hyndman liked to call a 'gas and water socialist'.

Starting in 1896, the year after Engels died, Bernstein developed these views, partly in a series of articles published in *Die Neue Zeit* under the title 'Problems of Socialism' and partly in an extended polemical exchange with the English socialist, Ernest Belfort Bax. The controversy soon became general. Parvus, Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, and many others joined in; and, at the Stuttgart Conference in October 1898, Bebel came out against Bernstein, and Kautsky broke his silence with a powerful speech denouncing Bernstein's views.¹⁷ It was, as I have already remarked, in response to this that Bernstein wrote *The Preconditions of Socialism*.

I do not intend to go through the book point by point. However, it might be helpful if I said something about the general nature of the political doctrine the book contains. In particular, are we to regard Bernstein's 'Revisionism' as a form of Marxism or as something completely different? Let us begin by looking at Bernstein's own account of the matter.

¹⁵ Bernstein, 'A Statement', Tudor and Tudor, p. 193.

¹⁶ For instance, in 'The Social and Political Significance of Space and Number', Tudor and Tudor, p. 93; see also his discussion of the 'productivity vs jobs' dilemma, 'The Conflict in the English Engineering Industry', Tudor and Tudor, p. 129ff.

¹⁷ Tudor and Tudor, pp. 287ff.

Bernstein's critique of Marxism

In his letter to the Stuttgart Conference (reproduced in the preface to his *Preconditions*) Bernstein cited Marx and Engels in support of his position, emphasising particularly the views Engels had expressed in his introduction to the 1895 edition of Marx's *The Class Struggles in France*. Here, Bernstein observed, Engels had argued that the time for violent revolution had passed and that Social Democracy would flourish 'far better on legal methods than on illegal methods and overthrow'. Indeed, he went on, 'Engels is so thoroughly convinced that tactics geared to a catastrophe have had their day that he considers a revision to abandon them to be due even in the Latin countries where tradition is much more favourable to them than in Germany.'¹⁸

This was, at best, misleading. Engels had not abandoned his conviction that a violent revolution was inevitable. He had, however, come to the conclusion that a decisive political crisis would occur before capitalism suffered its otherwise inevitable economic collapse; and his main concern was that the party should not be provoked into taking any action which might enable the authorities to carry out a pre-emptive strike.¹⁹

In other words, Engels was thinking in terms of strictly legal and parliamentary activity within the framework of a revolutionary strategy; and he was clear that the strategy had to be a revolutionary one because, for him, it was axiomatic that the bourgeoisie would not sit back and allow the proletariat to legislate capitalism out of existence. His expectation was that, if anything of the kind looked likely, the authorities would try to prevent it by staging a *coup d'état*. It would then fall to Social Democracy to stage a popular uprising in the name of constitutional legality. However, any such uprising would be crushed if the army came out on the side of the government. It was therefore imperative that Social Democracy use the electoral system to increase its popular support, particularly in areas of heavy military recruitment. Hence the importance of universal suffrage.²⁰

It is true that the revolutionary basis of Engels's position was not

¹⁸ Present volume, p. 4.

¹⁹ The main reason for his caution was that recent developments in military technology meant that, as he put it: 'The era of barricades and street fighting has gone for good; if the military fight, resistance becomes madness', Frederick Engels, Paul and Laura Lafargue, *Correspondence* (Moscow, n.d.), vol. III, p. 208.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 98 and 393, and vol. II, pp. 366–7.

made explicit in the 1895 Introduction. At the time, the German government was actively considering legislative measures against the Social Democrats; and Engels accordingly tried 'not to say anything which might be used as a means to assist in the passing of the *Umsturzvorlage* in the Reichstag'.²¹ Indeed, the embattled leaders of the party subjected the text to yet further editing before they published it in the party press.²² However, even the text thus bowdlerised was capable of interpretations other than the one Bernstein proffered in his letter to the Stuttgart Conference. Rosa Luxemburg, for one, was able to detect its revolutionary intent; and she did not have the benefit of personal acquaintance with its author.²³

In fact, Bernstein was well aware that he had put forward a one-sided account of Engels's position. Accordingly, in the first two chapters of *The Preconditions of Socialism*, he tried to provide a more adequate analysis of the relationship between his own standpoint and that of Marx and Engels; and he began by examining what could be meant by calling socialism 'scientific'.

Any science, he argued, consists of a pure and an applied part. Pure science is 'constant' in the sense that it consists of principles which are 'universally valid'. Applied science, however, consists of propositions which are generated by applying the principles of pure science to particular sets of circumstances; and these propositions are valid only so long as the circumstances remain unchanged. Applied science is thus 'variable' in that its claims can be rendered invalid by a change in circumstances.

At this point we would have expected Bernstein to characterise the theory of the inevitable collapse of capitalism as part of Marx's applied science. This would have enabled him to reject the theory as having been superseded by recent economic and social developments while still insisting that the principles of Marx's pure science (the materialist conception of history, the theory of surplus value, etc.) remained intact. He could then have vindicated himself as a good Marxist by arguing that he rejected, not the principles of Marxism, but only the obsolete applications of those principles to particular

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

²² Engels himself felt that the changes made him 'appear as a peaceful worshipper of legality at any price', and this, he declared, created 'a disgraceful impression'. Engels to Kautsky, 1.4.1895, MESC, p. 568; MEW, vol. XXXIX, p. 452.

²³ Rosa Luxemburg, *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Dick Howard (New York and London, 1971), p. 120; RLGW, vol. I, 1, p. 432.

cases. This, however, he did not do. Indeed, he went out of his way to reject this strategy and to insist that Marx's general theory of capitalist development belonged squarely 'in the domain of pure science'.²⁴ So to reject this theory was to reject a fundamental principle of scientific socialism.

Bernstein, however, saw this apparently drastic conclusion as being subject to one important qualification. For him, the activity of the pure scientist was necessarily open-ended. As he put it: 'Even the principles of pure science are subject to changes which, however, occur mostly in the form of limitations. With the advancement of knowledge, propositions previously regarded as having absolute validity are recognised as conditional and are supplemented by new cognitive principles which, while limiting their validity, simultaneously extend the domain of pure science.'²⁵ In other words, the principles of pure science could be modified without being rejected. Thus Marx's claim that the contradictions of capitalism lead inexorably to its downfall is true of capitalism today no less than it was when Marx first formulated it. However, we now know that it is true only as a 'tendency', for subsequent scientific investigation, much of it conducted by Marx and Engels themselves, has revealed other tendencies which counteract, but do not eliminate, the contradictions of capitalism. Similarly, Marx and Engels had often made the materialist conception of history look like a form of economic determinism. But, particularly in their later work, they recognised that political and ideological factors could influence economic developments and that economic factors were the determining force only 'in the last instance'. And so forth.

Bernstein's general point was that scientific truths are not to be regarded as doctrines cast in bronze. Science is an activity of investigation in which certain criteria are acknowledged, namely, 'empirical experience and logic',²⁶ and which is therefore a critical and continuing activity. So to treat even the purely theoretical parts of Marx's doctrine as being authoritative is to be not scientific but doctrinaire. Marx and Engels themselves had revised their theory, thus demonstrating its scientific character; and the scientific socialist should, Bernstein suggested, follow their example. In Bernstein's view, therefore, 'the further development and elaboration of Marxist doctrine

²⁴ Present volume, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

must begin with criticism of it'.²⁷ It was only by virtue of such criticism and development that scientific socialism could vindicate its character as being genuinely scientific. In this sense, Bernstein argued, we can say that 'it is Marx who in the end carries the point against Marx'.²⁸

The difficulty was that Marx himself had, in fact, *not* 'carried the point against Marx'. Neither he nor Engels had seen what was, on Bernstein's analysis, the plain implication of the various modifications they had introduced into their original theory. To the very end they had continued to insist that capitalism was doomed to collapse and that socialism could be achieved only by revolution. Why was this?

According to Bernstein, the answer was simple. It was because they were never able to free their thinking from the straitjacket of Hegelian dialectics. Time and again the results of their painstaking scientific research were annulled by an a priori deduction dictated by the Hegelian logic of contradiction. It was this, Bernstein argued, that accounted for the Blanquist element in Marxist thinking.²⁹ Class conflict and revolution were, quite simply, built into the intellectual presuppositions of Marx and Engels. Had they been able to transcend these presuppositions they would, Bernstein hinted, have come to much the same conclusions as he himself had done.

However, while Bernstein was right to draw attention to the place of dialectics in Marx's thinking, there was something odd about his depiction of it as an extraneous element incompatible with any genuinely scientific approach. For Marx and Engels, it was precisely its dialectical character which made their theory scientific rather than ideological. Reality itself was inherently dialectical, and any thinking which did not reflect this fact could not be called scientific. But Bernstein was clearly operating with a different notion of science. His paradigm was the natural sciences, not (as it was for Marx and Engels) history; and his view of science was distinctly positivist in character. However, as he himself was well aware, this raised the question of the relationship between scientific theory and political practice. In particular, it raised the question whether the objectives or goals of a political movement, such as socialism, could be scientifically established. And this brings us to the core of the difference between Bernstein and his Marxist opponents.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 37–8.