

# **Karl Marx: His Life and Work**

*Rühle, Otto*  
1928

Published in German in 1928, in English in 1929. In contrast to other biographies, such as that of Nicolaievsky and Maenchen-Helfen, Rühle is more critical of Marx and more sympathetic to Bakunin, etc. The work is also marked by Rühle's interest in psychology. From <https://www.marxists.org/archive/ruhle/1928/marx/index.htm> and <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.58873>.

## **Chapter 01: Preliminaries**

### **The Historical Setting**

At intervals of a century, the European revolution in Holland, England, and France blew up the gates and opened a way for capitalist development.

The feudal system, based on a feudalist economy and on serfdom, stabilized by patriarchal despotism, hereditary dependence, and enslavement of the conscience, collapsed before the onslaught of the new economic power.

Money conquered land. The postulates of freedom triumphed over the traditions of slavery. Day dawned over western Europe.

The rising bourgeois class entered into possession of new fields. Starting from Holland, it created a colonial power whose gigantic proportions were rivalled only by the vastness of the wealth which colonial enterprise brought back to the mother country. Starting from England, which it transformed into the factory of the world, the bourgeoisie made that country supreme over all the markets of the world and all the sources of raw materials. Setting out from France, the bourgeoisie pressed the greatest of all military powers into its service, the better to safeguard the social successes of its emancipation. In its craving for activity, it shrank from no difficulties. Boldly it wrestled with the most difficult problems, and its soaring ambition winged it towards the most distant goals. In a frenzy of achievement, the bourgeois class fulfilled its destiny.

First of all came the fulfilment of its economic destiny. By way of manufactures and the mercantile system, the relations of production developed into the system of large-scale industry. The political revolution was followed by a technical revolution. The traditional methods of work were transformed. The secrets of nature were disclosed, her forces were brought under control, and the natural laws of production were made serviceable to man. In 1764, Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny; in 1769, Arkwright invented the warp-loom; and in 1779 came Crompton's invention of the mule. In 1781, Watt improved the old steam-pump in a way which made it applicable as a source of power for machinery. In 1787, Cartwright revolutionized the textile industry by the invention of the power-loom. There was also a revolution in the

spinning trade. Cotton made its way into Europe. "Cotton! Cotton!" was the new watchword of capitalism. Factories grew out of the earth like mushrooms. Armies of men, women, and children disappeared into the factories. One mechanical invention followed on the heels of another. In 1802, the first steamboat made its way up the Firth of Clyde; in 1807, the first passenger steamer navigated the Hudson; in 1819, the ocean was first crossed by a steamship. From 1804 onwards, came the application of Watt's steam-engine to locomotive purposes, until in 1825 the first railway was opened for traffic. Capitalism conquered space and time. In 1835, the electric telegraph began to come into use. Within a few decades, the frontiers of the world had been marvellously expanded. The fables of antiquity had been realized. The productivity of human labour had been increased to an incredible extent. The bourgeoisie was triumphant. "It has executed works more marvellous than the building of Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has carried out expeditions surpassing by far the tribal migrations and the crusades. ... The subjugation of the forces of nature, the invention of machinery, the application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steamships, railways, electric telegraphs, the clearing of whole continents for cultivation, the making of navigable waterways, huge populations springing up as if by magic out of the earth—what earlier generations had the remotest inkling that such productive powers slumbered within the womb of associated labour?"

The bourgeoisie fulfilled its political destiny likewise. In France, it withstood the Bourbon reaction after the fall of the Napoleonic empire, and seized power in the July revolution of 1830. In England, during a century and a half, it was able to take advantage of all compromises and partial solutions, until at length, in 1832, with the passing of the Reform Bill, it became supreme. It dictated laws to the governments. Armies marched under its orders. To swell its profits, alliances were entered into and treaties signed, wars were waged and ended, proclamations were issued, and diplomatic notes were exchanged. In the end it had become supreme. Its political position was everywhere secure.

Finally, it had given new tints and new outlines to that ideology which frames the picture of the world within the minds of men. "It has drowned pious zeal, chivalrous enthusiasm, and humdrum sentimentalism, in the chill waters of selfish calculation. It has degraded personal dignity to the level of exchange value; and in place of countless dearly-bought chartered freedoms, it has set up one solitary unscrupulous freedom—freedom of trade. ... The bourgeoisie has robbed of their haloes all occupations hitherto regarded with awe and veneration. Doctor, lawyer, priest, poet, and scientist have become its wage labourers. The bourgeoisie has torn the veil of sentiment from the family relationship, which has become an affair of money and nothing more." Thus the bourgeoisie had given the world a new visage, had furnished human life with a multitude of new aspects.

From the lofty altitude to which it had successfully fought its way, it looked down with pride and self-satisfaction upon the path up which it had victoriously climbed with such overwhelming speed.

### **Conditions in Germany**

Down to the year 1800, the bourgeois class of Germany had taken scarcely any part in this triumphal march of capitalism.

Three hundred years earlier, capitalism had been ready and willing to effect a complete transformation in the economic life of Germany. The freight brought across the Mediterranean in Italian merchant ships was carried over the passes of the Alps

in German caravans. The revolutionizing influences of the new capitalist developments had begun to make themselves felt in the blood and the brains of the Germans, whipping the peasants into revolt, involving the burghers in a conflict with the papacy and the Church, inciting the towns to rebellion. Then came the inroad of the Turks, and the discovery of the sea route to India. The overland roads were blocked, and for Italy and Germany the sources of capitalist life had been cut off. Capitalism, now restricted to the coasts of the Atlantic, flourished successively in Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, England, and France, transforming them all, completing its destructive and creative work. At length, after three hundred years, it resumed the same task in Germany, aided this time by British machinery and American cotton. Thereupon began a revolutionizing of production, a transformation of social conditions, a reshaping of the picture of the world in the minds of men.

On the lower Rhine, on the Ruhr, the Wupper, and the Sieg, in Thuringia, Saxony, Silesia, Wurtemberg, and Baden, a vigorous manufacturing industry sprang to life. The Continental System of Napoleon, which cut off the British from access to the German markets, served as a forcing-house for the growth of this industry. In Saxony, the number of spindles in the cotton mills increased within six years from 13,000 to 210,000. In the Rhine Province, mining, smelting, machine-making, and metallurgy advanced with giant strides. An import and export trade, considerable in view of German conditions, and extending to all parts of the world, thereupon developed. As if determined to make up for lost time, capitalism in Germany strode forward in seven-league boots. New branches of industry made their appearance. Towns grew apace. Intercourse with the great centres of the world market became ever livelier. Capital accumulated in vast masses. Everywhere was an upward movement, progress, success, the growth of power.

But the bourgeoisie is nothing without the proletariat. The bourgeoisie creates the proletariat by the very process of its own development. It must create the proletariat, because the proletariat creates surplus value, upon whose existence the existence of the bourgeoisie is grounded. The bourgeoisie cannot dispense with the proletariat unless it is willing to dispense with its own existence. The mutual dependence of these two classes is an inexorable necessity.

In Germany, as in England and France, the proletariat was recruited out of the masses of impoverished and landless peasants and of handicraftsmen and petty burghers whose means of livelihood had been cut off by the new developments. Those of the first generation were still comfortably provided for on the soil. Those of the second generation devoted part of their labour power to home industry. Those of the third generation thronged through the gates of the factories and became a wage proletariat. Forcibly assembled in the process of production, organized in militarist fashion, they were shamelessly exploited under the supervision of the manager, the stimulus of the master, and the whip of the foreman. Thenceforward their existence was nowhere the expression of any sort of human interest; it had an exclusively capitalist significance, that of one who produced commodities, created surplus value, served the purposes of the master class. The proletarian had himself become a commodity, having to sell himself day by day. He was a beast of burden; something even less than this, an instrument, a wheel in the machinery of exploitation, a dead thing. Impotent, in a spirit of dull resignation, he must accept his lot, under pain of starvation should he refuse. Hopeless, despairing, he submitted to an inevitable destiny. Casual outbreaks of disorder and tumult, like that of the Solingen cutlers in 1826, or that of the Crefeld silk weavers in 1828, had as their only result that the terrors of the criminal law were superadded to the pangs of hunger.

Where large-scale industry had not yet established itself, home industry was dominant. Especially was this so in Silesia, where manorial privileges favoured the industrial enslavement of the impoverished peasants; and in the Erzgebirge, where the sterility of the soil drove the hungry smallholders and cottars into the arms of the sweater. In the towns, however, the craft guilds, working cumbrously and with a narrow horizon, obstinately rejecting technical innovations, continued to supply their local customers after the traditional manner. Here, as in the countryside (where seventy-five per cent of the population was still engaged in rural dwarf industries), the social and intellectual atmosphere remained the oppressive one of the Middle Ages.

### **Utopian Socialists**

Capitalist development, especially in England and France, was acclaimed with jubilant admiration in the camp of bourgeois society.

A few persons only, men of critical intelligence, were sceptical of the glamour; a few only looked beneath the surface, tried to discover what lay under the fair seeming. These investigators noted the sinister contrast between the success, the wealth, the upward progress of the few, and the exploitation, the impoverishment, and the subjugation of millions. It seemed to them that the gain in material progress was dearly bought at the cost of its accompaniment of barbarism. Their conscience was outraged. Their reason told them that a development characterized by such glaring contrasts must necessarily lead to a social catastrophe. Their sense of responsibility impelled them to raise a warning voice; to call upon their fellows to bethink themselves; to urge better counsels; to enrol recruits on behalf of a more harmonious social order, one which should bring happiness to all sections of society.

In especial, it was the Frenchmen Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier and the Englishman Robert Owen who, in the name of reason, justice, humanity, and socialism, appealed to the forum of their day.

They appealed in the name of reason. Had not this been the watchword of all the bourgeois revolutions? Had not Rousseau's theory of the social contract, on which had been moulded the political ideals of the French revolution, found its most classical embodiment in the demand for a reasonable State? The bourgeoisie had established such a State. What face did it present? It was a State characterized by the crudest class contrasts, one in which superfluity issued out of hunger, exaltation out of debasement, splendour out of the darkness of vice and shame. This was the very State against which the voices of the critics and reformers declaimed. What sort of reason was to organize the State of the future?

They appealed in the name of justice. Had not this been the watchword of the bourgeoisie likewise? Well, the old feudal order had been abolished, the storms of the revolution had swept privilege away; bourgeois freedoms such as feudalism had scarcely dreamed of had been established, and all citizens were equal before the law. Had not the demand for justice thereby been satisfied? The bourgeois State claimed to be a just one. Upon what good ground could it be reformed, or replaced by another State?

They appealed in the name of humanity. What had hitherto been nothing more than an emotional gesture, a propagandist declamation, was now to be fulfilled. In time to come, not only the owners of property, but also the dispossessed, were to have a good time. The aim must be to improve the position of all the members of society. But this aim was not to be achieved by revolutionary means, since the terrors of the revolution were still fresh in men's memories. It was to be achieved by means of labour and education, of culture and morality; by means of a new Christianity, a

remodelling of life with the aid of phalansteries, a new form of marriage, a transformation of the State, a new system of property.

They appealed in the name of socialism. In this demand, the three great social reformers were at one. But in those days socialism was an economic theory which demanded the regulation of economic life from the standpoint of industry—that is to say from the standpoint of the bourgeois, not of the proletarian class. Nevertheless, however much at odds they may have been in their conceptions of reason and justice and liberty and truth, however chaotic and confused may have been their imaginary pictures of the social order they hoped to establish—in this respect they were fully agreed, that a reconstruction of society must be achieved upon the foundation of communal ownership, communal labour, and communal life. That is why these reformers, these critics of bourgeois society, are entitled to the name of socialists.

But their socialism was a compost of dreams and wishes, a product of speculations and artifices, an outcome of imagination and will, a work of humanity and philanthropy, a creation of a kindly heart and a tender conscience. Their socialism was to be established from above, in accordance with a ready-made plan. It was thought out in all its details. The proletariat, which would play no part in its making, was to accept it in all gratitude as a gift from wise and good donors. This socialism was utopian.

Who can fail to admire the genius of Saint-Simon, the genius that flashes fitfully through the heavy-laden and cloudy atmosphere of his historical, philosophical, and social theorizing? Who can fail to be powerfully impressed by the overwhelming force of the criticism with which Charles Fourier belabours the much-detested capitalism? Who can fail to be deeply moved at sight of the unselfishness, the indefatigable self-sacrifice, with which Robert Owen voices his ideas against a world of adversaries?

Yet how illusory, how romantic, is the hope that the world will be reborn in accordance with the prescriptions of an isolated thinker's brain! How childish is the fancy that factory-owners, bankers, and stockjobbers will, on their own initiative, and impelled by the power of a moral transformation, devote themselves to freeing mankind from the yoke of capitalism! How grotesque it seems to us nowadays that none of these earlier socialists should ever have happened upon the idea that a new and higher social order will be the outcome of a historical process whose instrument must be the proletariat, and which must spontaneously come to pass in a definite phase of social evolution.

This idea was far beyond the scope of the utopists. The preliminaries which could have made it intelligible to them were still lacking. Bourgeois theoreticians were still incapable of thinking in terms of historical evolution, and the proletariat in those days was still weak and politically insignificant. At that time, therefore, such an idea would have seemed an absurdity.

Yet the notion had to be conceived, for it reveals the only possible solution of the problem. It is the business of science to formulate in the abstract that which practical development needs, and embodies in the concrete. The notion, therefore, was conceived.

The titanic lifework of Karl Marx is concentrated upon the universalization of this thought.

### **Karl Marx**

Karl Marx was not of proletarian origin, nor did he come from the ranks of the utopian socialists.

His career was not remarkable in respect of birth, class affiliations, environment, or education. It only began to become remarkable when his path as an individual led him into the great arena of the social movement.

Marx was born at Treves on May 5, 1818. For many generations, all his male forebears, both on the father's side and on the mother's, had been rabbis. Fanatical believers in heredity may infer from this that he had an inborn predilection for sophistry and logic-chopping. Without going so far, we may take note that his ancestors were men who must have systematically and successfully devoted themselves to intellectual pursuits, to the cultivation of keenness of the understanding. The descendant, when he became an intellectual, was walking in the footsteps of his forefathers.

His father, however, was not a rabbi, but a lawyer. Versed in the writings both of Voltaire and of Leibniz, Hirschel Marx had absorbed French culture as well as German; his mind was filled with the traditions of the great French revolution no less than with those of the imperial age of Germany. Politically, he was a Prussian patriot, but, being a "moderate" by temperament, he was content to play the part of respectable man and good citizen. He was married to an excellent housewife not overburdened with brains, who never learned to speak or write German correctly.

When Karl was six years old, Hirschel Marx and his family became Protestants, Hirschel being baptized as Heinrich. A change of creed is usually determined by cogent reasons, especially when (as in the case of the Marx family) people are bound to the old faith by strong ancestral ties. It was not until after his mother's death that Hirschel Marx became a Christian, and we have no definite information as to the causes of this decisive step. So much is certain, that in Rhineland a century ago the Jews were detested and shunned, and that to be a Jew was a serious handicap in a bourgeois career. It may be presumed, therefore, that the conversion of the elder Marx—a peace-loving man, always inclined to compromise—was the outcome, not only of the wish to free himself from what was regarded as a stigma by his Christian fellow citizens, but also of the resolve to facilitate his son's entry into the domain of European culture.

In the absence of detailed information regarding the early childhood of Karl Marx, we are left to conjecture as concerns the influence his Jewish birth and upbringing must have had upon his mind. As soon as he began to come into contact with the Gentile world, and was intelligent enough to make comparisons, it was inevitable that he should feel his Jewish origin to be a disadvantage, a shackle upon his aspirations. This may have furnished the incentives for ambition, may account for the vehemence of his determination to force his way upwards in the intellectual world. In that case we must regard his exceptional ability, his amazingly developed powers of association, his astonishing insight, his remarkable faculty for exposition, and the breadth of his knowledge, as tools perfected to the utmost in order that, helping him to fame and standing, they might compensate for the drawbacks of his Hebraic descent. We may further suppose that these early impressions gave a primary twist to the development of the child's character. Delighted though the father was to note the lad's "splendid natural gifts," he was made uneasy by the manifestation in Karl of trends towards stubbornness and defiant harshness with which he himself had no sympathy and which he found it difficult to understand. Little Karl learned very easily, but made no friends; in after life he had never a word to say of any of his schoolfellows. Intellectually, he achieved swift progress in his class work, but his classmates made no appeal to his affections. His mental energies were from the first concentrated upon study, performance, success.

None the less, Marx, having entered the university at the age of seventeen, fell ardently in love a year later with Jenny von Westphalen, one of his sister's companions. The two became engaged. Jenny was of noble birth, daughter of a government official of high standing; she was both clever and beautiful. We cannot but regard young Marx's impetuous and successful wooing as an act of conquest, as bravura, as self-assertion on the part of a youth who at heart was dubious as to his own prestige. Consider him as he stands on the threshold of life, equipped with knowledge, supplied with documentary evidence of his academic acquirements. Now the testing time has come; he must face the great tasks of life. But he is not yet sure of himself, he lacks confidence in his powers. The year at Bonn has been disappointing. He has not fulfilled the expectations of his parents and his friends, who had looked for a meteoric rise. His father has even urged a change of plans, a diversion to the study of chemistry and physics. Discouraged, he needs salient proof of his worth, his superiority. He finds what he seeks when he wins the heart of the loveliest and most hotly courted maiden of his circle. His father, alarmed to begin with, consents ere long. Westphalen, too, is won over, and accepts the situation cordially. Thus the young hothead overcomes all obstacles. He is filled with pride, he overflows with self-confidence, now that he has compelled others to recognize him as a man of mark, and has thus established his own spiritual poise. Years afterwards, when revisiting his birthplace, he wrote to his wife in terms of affectionate vanity: "Almost every one I meet asks me for news of 'the prettiest girl in Treves,' for tidings of 'the queen of the ballroom.' It cannot but tickle a man to find that in the fancy of a whole township his wife is enshrined as 'fairy princess.'"

### **Studies**

In the autumn of 1836, Marx went to the University of Berlin. From that centre of learning there radiated a powerful magnetic attraction, drawing towards it the studious youth of all Germany. The names of Hegel, Schleiermacher, Savigny, Gans, and Alexander von Humboldt had made Berlin widely celebrated. In especial, the philosophy of Hegel exercised a powerful influence upon contemporary minds. Marx chose jurisprudence as a special topic of study, regarding it, however, "merely as a subordinate discipline compared with philosophy and history." Besides attending lectures, he devoted himself with the utmost zeal to the most diversified domains of science and literature, trying all things by turns. He read, made extracts, translated, studied languages, wandered into solitary paths, listened to echoes from afar, sought forgotten springs, clambered towards inaccessible peaks. In quiet hours of leisure, he gave expression to his yearning for his beloved in distant Rhineland by writing numerous verses, which must rather be regarded as clumsy products of constructive industry and reflective rhetoric than as manifestations of poetic talent.

Hitherto he had known the writings of Hegel only in broad outline. He had read no more than fragments of the great idealist's philosophy, and its "grotesque craggy melody" had seemed to him "unpleasing." Hegel was one for whom the mainspring of world happenings was not in matter but in the idea; he was one who regarded the content of experience and the rhythmical movement of history as products of the law-abiding activity of the absolute world spirit; he was one for whom thought and being were characterized by a metaphysical identity. Hegel was a man with whom he, Marx, would have to measure swords, and he still shrank from the immensity of the venture. More and more strenuously he wrestled, after the manner of Faust, with himself, with traditional philosophy, and with the monumental grandeur of the Hegelian system. In a letter to his father—a letter penned with a feverish brain, and characterized by ecstatic outbursts of feeling—we find evidence of his mental

condition at the time.

"Dear Father,

"Berlin, November 10, 1837.

"There are moments in life which are placed like boundary stones to mark the close of a period, but which at the same time definitely point in a new direction.

"At such a point of transition, we feel constrained to contemplate the past and the present with the eagle eye of thought, that we may become aware of our actual position. Indeed, universal history itself loves such a retrospect, and looks round and about, which often produces the semblance of a retrogression or an arrest of movement, when in reality the spirit of history has merely thrown herself back in an arm chair that she may collect her thoughts, may impregnate her mind with a knowledge of her own doings.

"In such moments, however, the individual grows lyrical, for every metamorphosis is to some extent a swansong, to some extent the overture of a great new poem, which in still blurred yet brilliant tints strives to attain harmony. But we should like to erect a memorial to that which has already been experienced, so that it may regain in sentiment the place which it has lost in the world of action; and where could we find a holier site than in the heart of a parent, the most clement of judges, the most ardent participator, the sun of love, whose fire warms the innermost centre of our endeavours! How could much that is objectionable, that is blameworthy, better find compensation and excuse, than when it becomes the manifestation of an essentially necessary condition; how [else], at any rate, could the often hostile play of chance, and the aberration of the spirit, escape the reproach of being due to an unkind heart?

"When, therefore, at the close of a year lived here, I now glance back upon what has passed therein, and in this way, my dear Father, answer your most affectionate letter from Ems, you will allow me to contemplate my circumstances, like life in general, as the expression of a mental activity which shapes itself in all directions, in science, art, private affairs.

"When I left you, a new world had just opened for me, the world of love—indeed to begin with a love that was frenzied in its yearnings and void of hope. Even the journey to Berlin, which would otherwise have delighted me in the extreme, would have incited me to the contemplation of nature, would have inflamed me with the joy of life, left me cold. Nay, it depressed me profoundly, for the rocks which I saw were no rougher, no harsher, than the sentiments of my mind; the great cities were not more animated than my blood; the groaning tables in the inns were not more overladen, the food they bore was not more indigestible, than were the contents of my own imagination; and, to conclude, art was not so beautiful as my Jenny.

"When I reached Berlin, I broke all existing ties, paid very few visits and those reluctantly, and sought to immerse myself in science and art.

"In my then state of mind, it was inevitable that lyrical poetry should be my first topic of interest, at any rate the most agreeable and most obvious; but, in accordance with my position, and my whole previous development, this was purely idealistic. An equally remote beyond, my love, became my heaven, my art. Everything real grows vague, and all that is vague lacks boundaries. Onslaughts on the present, broad and shapeless expressions of feeling, nothing natural, pure moonshine, the complete opposite of what is and what ought to be, rhetorical reflections instead of poetical thoughts; but perhaps, in addition, a certain



warmth of sentiment and a struggle for impetus characterize all the poems of the first three volumes I sent to Jenny. The whole width of a longing which sees no frontiers, assumes multifarious forms, and finds 'expansion' in 'poetizing.'

"But poesy could only be, must only be, a casual companion. I had to study jurisprudence, and above all I felt an urge to wrestle with philosophy. The two were so closely interconnected, that I read Heineccius, Thibaut, and the sources, in schoolboy fashion more or less, quite uncritically, translating, for instance, the first two books of the *Pandects* into German; but I also tried, when studying law, to work out a philosophy of law. I prefixed, as introduction, some metaphysical propositions, and in this ill-starred opus carried on the discussion down to the topic of international law—a work of nearly three hundred pages.

"Most notably, here, I was greatly disturbed by the conflict between what actually is and what ought to be which is peculiar to idealism, and this gave rise to the following hopelessly inaccurate classification. First of all, what I graciously christened 'metaphysics of law,' that is to say, principles, reflections, determinative concepts, were severed from all actual law and from every actual form of law; as in the writings of Fichte, only in my case in a more modern and unsubstantial fashion. Furthermore, the unscientific form of mathematical dogmatism (wherein the subject wanders about the topic, argues hither and thither, while the topic itself is never formulated as something rich in content, something truly alive) was from the first a hindrance to the comprehension of the truth.

"The mathematician may construct a triangle and demonstrate its properties; but it remains a mere idea in space, and undergoes no further development. We must put one triangle beside another, then it assumes different positions, and these differences in what is essentially the same endow the triangle with different relations and truths. On the other hand, in the concrete expression of the living world of thought—as in law, the State, nature, philosophy as a whole—the object must be studied in its development; there must be no arbitrary classifications; the rationale of the thing itself must disclose itself in all its contradictoriness, and must find its unity in itself.

"As second part, there now followed the philosophy of law, this meaning, as I then saw the matter, the study of the development of ideas in positive Roman law, as if positive law in the development of its ideas (I do not mean in its purely final determinations) could be anything different from the configuration of the concept of law, which the first part ought to embrace!

"This part I had, over and above, divided into the formal and the material doctrine of law: the former being the pure form of the system in its succession and its interaction, the classification and the scope; the latter, on the other hand, the content, the condensation of the form in its content; such was to be the aim of my description. This was the outcome of an error which I share with Herr von Savigny, as I was to learn later when reading his learned work *Right of Possession*—but with this difference, that he speaks of formal determinative concepts as 'finding the place which this or that doctrine occupies in the (supposititious) Roman system,' and of material determinative concepts as 'the doctrine of the positive which the Romans ascribe to a concept fixed in this way'; whereas I have understood by form the necessary architectonic and the configurations of the concept, and by matter the necessary quality of these configurations. My mistake was that I believed one could and must develop apart from the other, with the result that I did not achieve any genuine form, but only constructed a desk with a number of drawers which I subsequently filled with sand.

"The concept is, really, the intermediary between form and content. In a philosophical disquisition on law, therefore, one must be shown as arising out of the other, for form can only be the continuation of content. Thus I arrived at a classification (for the subject lends itself readily to shallow classification); but the spirit of law and its truth had perished. All law was subdivided into covenanted and uncovenanted. I even ventured upon a classification of *jus publicum* (which has also been formally elaborated) in order to materialize the scheme better...

"But why should I fill pages with an account of things I have discarded? The whole is permeated with trichotomous classifications, penned with wearisome prolixity, the Roman notions being barbarously misused in order to force them into my system. Still, to some extent I gained an affection for my topic, and achieved a general survey of its subject matter.

"When I had reached the close of the discussion of material private right, I perceived the fallaciousness of the whole, which in its fundamental scheme borders on the Kantian, though differing wholly from Kant in matters of detail. Once more it had been made clear to me that I could get no farther on my way without philosophy. I was therefore again able, with a good conscience, to throw myself into the arms of philosophy, and I wrote a new metaphysical elementary system, but when it was finished I was again constrained to recognize its futility, and the futility of the whole of my previous endeavours.

"Meanwhile I had acquired the habit of making extracts from all the books I was reading; as from Lessing's *Laokoon*, Solger's *Erwin*, Winckelmann's *Kunstgeschichte*, Luden's *Deutsche Geschichte*, writing critical reflections in comment thereon. At the same time I translated Tacitus' *Germania*, Ovid's *Tristium libri*. I began the private study (with the aid of grammars) of English and Italian, but as yet have made no progress; I read Klein's *Kriminalrecht* and his *Annalen*; and a mass of modern literature, though this latter only in passing.

"At the end of the session, I once more tried my hand at the dance of the muses and at the music of satire; and already in the last pages I sent you, idealism plays its part in the form of forced humour (*Skorpion und Felix*), and in an unsuccessful imaginative drama (*Oulanem*), until at length it utterly miscarries, and is changed into a purely formal art, for the most part without any stimulating objects, without any enthusiastic movement of ideas.

"Nevertheless these last poems are the only ones in which suddenly, as if by the wave of a magician's wand (the experience was, to begin with, overwhelming), the realm of true poesy flashed open before me like a distant faery palace, and all my creations were shivered to fragments.

"During the first term, I sat up night after night engaged in these multifarious occupations; I went through many struggles, and experienced both objective and subjective perturbations; and in the end I found that my mind had not been greatly enriched, while I had neglected nature, art, and the world, and had alienated my friends. These reflections seemed to disorder my body, a doctor advised country air, and so for the first time I traversed the whole widespread town and went through the gate to Stralau. It never entered my mind that there from being an anemic youth I should ripen to a robustness of frame.

"A curtain had fallen, my holy of holies had been shattered, and new gods had to be found for the vacant shrine.

"Setting out from idealism (which, let me say in passing, I had compared to and nourished with that of Kant and that of Fichte), I proceeded to seek for the idea

in the real itself. If in earlier days the gods had dwelt above the world, they had now become its centre.

"I had read fragments of the Hegelian philosophy, and had found its grotesque craggy melody unpleasing. I wished to dive into the ocean once again, but this time with the definite intention of discovering our mental nature to be just as determined, concrete, and firmly established as our bodily—no longer to practise the art of fence, but to bring pure pearls into the sunlight.

"I penned a dialogue of about twenty-four pages, entitled *Cleanthus, or the Starting-Point and the Necessary Progress of Philosophy*. Here, after a fashion, art and science, which had been wholly severed, were reunited; and now, a lusty vagrant, I set myself to the main task, a philosophico-dialectical discussion of the godhead, manifested as a concept per se, as religion, as nature, and as history. My last thesis was the beginning of the Hegelian system, and this work (for which I had more or less prepared myself with the aid of natural science, Schelling, and history, and which—since it was really designed to form a new logic—had been so [adverb illegible] written that even I myself can now scarcely make head or tail of it), this darling child of mine, nurtured in moonshine, bears me like a false-hearted siren into the clutches of the enemy.

"Overwhelmed with vexation, I was for several days quite unable to think. Like a lunatic I tore up and down the garden beside the Spree's dirty water 'which washes the soul and dilutes tea.' I even went out shooting with my host; and then returned hotfoot to Berlin in the mind to embrace every loafer at the street corners. Thereafter I confined myself to positive studies: Savigny's *Right of Possession*, Feuerbach and Grolmann's work on criminal jurisprudence, Kramer's *De verborum significatione*, Wenning-Ingenheim's *Pandektensystem* and Mühlenthal's *Doctrina pandectarum* (which I am still reading), and finally some of Gauterbach's works, books on civil law and especially on ecclesiastical law. As regards this last, I have read and made extracts from almost all the first part of Gratian, the *Concordia discordantium canonum*, with the appendix, Lancellotti's *Institutiones*. Then I translated part of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, read the *De augmentis scientiarum* of the famous Baco of Verulam, and perused with much delight Reimarus' book *Von den Kunsttrieben der Tiere*. Next I turned to German law, but mainly concerned myself with the capitulations of the Franconian kings, and the letters of the popes to them.

"From grief on account of Jenny's illness and because of the futility of my lost labours, from intense vexation at having to make an idol of a view I detested, I fell sick, as, my dear Father, I have previously related. When I had recovered, I burned all my poems, my sketches for novels, etc., being under the illusion that I could henceforward refrain from anything of the kind—and indeed there is as yet no evidence to the contrary.

"While out of sorts, I had got to know Hegel from beginning to end, and most of his disciples likewise. Through the instrumentality of friends I made while in Stralau, I became a member of a Doctors' Club, to which a number of instructors and Dr. Rudenberg (my most intimate friend in Berlin) belonged. In discussions here, many conflicting opinions were voiced, and I became more and more closely involved in the study of contemporary philosophy, from which I had thought to escape; but all tones were muted, a frenzy of irony had taken possession of me, as was natural enough after so many negations. The trouble of Jenny's silence was superadded; and I could not rest until I had purchased modernity and achieved the standpoint of contemporary science by some poor productions, such as *Der*

*Besuch.*

"If I have perhaps failed to explain this session clearly to you as a whole, and to recount all its details, if its nuances are left hazy, you will excuse me, dear Father, recognizing how eager I am to speak of the present.

"H. v. Chamisso has sent me a few insignificant lines, in which he informs me of his 'regret that the *Almanac* can make no use' of my contributions, 'having long since gone to press.' I had to swallow my vexation. Wigand the bookseller has sent on my plan to Dr. Schmidt, manager of the "Magic Warehouse of Good Cheese and Bad Literature." I enclose Wigand's letter; Schmidt has not answered yet. Meanwhile I have by no means abandoned the scheme, all the more seeing that the aesthetic notabilities of the Hegelian school have promised to co-operate, influenced thereto by Instructor Bauer, who is a big gun among them. Dr. Rudenberg will also lend a hand.

"As regards the question of an official career, I have recently made the acquaintance of an assistant judge, Schmidthänner by name, who advises me to enter upon this after passing the third of my law examinations. The plan smiles to me, since I really prefer jurisprudence to administrative science. This gentleman told me that from the Münster provincial court of appeal he and many others had in three years attained the position of assistant judge, which is easy enough (provided, of course, that one works hard), since in that part of the world the stages are not, as in Berlin and elsewhere, very strictly marked out. If, as assistant judge, one becomes doctor of laws, there are excellent chances of speedy appointment as professor extraordinary. This is what happened to H. Gärtner in Bonn, after he had written a mediocre book on provincial law-codes, his only other title to fame being that he proclaims himself a member of the Hegelian school of jurists. But dear Father, best of fathers, cannot I talk all this over with you face to face? Eduard's illness, dear mother's trouble, your own indisposition (I hope it is nothing serious), all combine to make me long to return home without delay. It is almost imperative that I should come. Indeed, I should already be with you, were I not in doubt as to your approval.

"Believe me, this is not a selfish wish (though I should be so happy to see Jenny again). I am driven by a thought which I cannot put into words. Actually, in many respects, it would be difficult for me to come; but, as my darling Jenny writes, these considerations all give way before sacred duties." I beg you, dear Father, whatever you may decide, not to show this letter (or at any rate this page of it) to mother. My sudden arrival might upset her.

"My letter to her was written long before Jenny's dear letter came to hand, so I may unwittingly have written too much about unsuitable matters.

"In the hope that the clouds which hang over our family will gradually disperse; that I shall be permitted to share your sufferings and mingle my tears with yours, and, perhaps in direct touch with you, to show the profound affection, the immeasurable love, which I have not always been able to express as I should like; in the hope that you too, my fondly and eternally loved Father, bearing in mind how much my feelings have been storm-tost, will forgive me because my heart must often have seemed to you to have gone astray when the travail of my spirit was depriving it of the power of utterance; in the hope that you will soon be fully restored to health, that I shall be able to clasp you in my arms, and to tell you all that I feel,

"I remain always your loving son,

"KARL

"Forgive, dear Father, both the illegible handwriting and the defective style. It is nearly four in the morning; the candle has burned out and my eyes are clouded. Unrest has mastered me; I shall not be able to lay the spectres that haunt me, until I am in your dear presence.

"Please give my best love to my darling Jenny. I have already read her letter a dozen times, finding new charms in it each time. In every respect, style included, it is the most beautiful letter I can imagine a woman writing."

As we learn from the foregoing letter, Marx was revolting against formalism and the abstract speculations of the traditional idealist philosophy. This philosophy had isolated thought from the objective happenings of nature. The idea had been made the guiding authority, the animating principle, of the world process, and was regarded as something self-existent, apart from reality and the happenings of experience. Reality was nothing more than plastic stuff, material waiting to be kneaded, the clay in which reason became manifest.

Marx now set out "to seek for the idea in the real itself," endeavouring to evolve it from reality. But in this way, abandoning the standpoint of the idealist philosophy, he was led (without wishing it, and indeed against his will) straight to Hegel. That philosopher, though an idealist, had transcended the opposition between thought and being, resolving them into a unity. To him, the real was no longer a mere object for reason to work upon, no longer passive clay waiting to be animated by spirit. On the contrary, he regarded thought as a result of the process of nature; he looked on the world of experience as the living self-disclosure of the idea, as the positive elaboration of the world spirit in an autonomous activity. From the vacuum of pure abstraction, he had brought philosophical contemplation back to the world of reality.

Thus far had Hegel gone, but no farther. For him, the conceptual unity of thought and being remained purely metaphysical. Against this, Marx's whole nature rebelled. His interest was concentrated in the real; he detested metaphysics, and he began to see that that was where Hegelian idealism could be given its quietus. The thought fascinated him. What an undertaking, to vanquish the titan of the intellectual world! What a triumph, could he be successful in the endeavour! Marx began the critical study of the environing world; began to examine the realities amid which he lived, that he might test the validity of the Hegelian system. His vision grew keener, and he girded up his loins for the task. More and more frequent, more and more cogent, became the times when he considered the possibility of unthroning Hegelianism. More and more attractive seemed the prospects of success. The goal was now clearly visioned; and with all the impetuosity, the industry, and the consistency that were characteristic of the man, he set forth to attain it.

### **The Young Hegelians**

The origin of the Hegelian philosophy coincided with the rise of the Prusso-German bourgeoisie. With the growth in economic strength of the bourgeois class there ensued a social recognition of the bourgeois members of society and an awakening self-consciousness of the bourgeoisie. These changes secured representation and expression in Hegel's thought system. The classical proposition, "all the real is rational and all the rational is real," was transmuted into the ideal of a constitutional State which would be, so it seemed to the bourgeois, the realization of the moral ideal, the absolutely rational.

Since then, almost two decades had elapsed. The reality of the bourgeois State and the capitalist order had had an opportunity of demonstrating itself in practice. As a result, idea and reality, reason and being, showed themselves crudely opposed. Actual life did not achieve the philosophical conjuring trick whereby, in the metaphysical world, thought and being constituted a unity. The moral ideal incorporated in the monarchical apex of the State conflicted more and more with the vital and developmental needs of the compact mass of the bourgeoisie, which now began to develop its own ideas in conflict with the moral consciousness it proclaimed. The Prussian monarchy, although it had raised Hegelianism to the status of an official philosophy, had not been able to raise itself to the position of a real State in the Hegelian sense. The ideal "ought" of the utopian and socialist demands, as voiced by Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen in a region outside the realities of Prusso-German life, was setting itself up as a contrast to the actualities of the political and social world.

But the first things to attract Marx's attention were not these social contradictions and political contrasts. For him, who still felt most at home in the world of theories and systems, the discrepancies and discords which resulted from the application of Hegel's fundamental ideas in the domain of psychology and philosophy were far more conspicuous. Moreover, in the atmosphere of the Doctors' Club, a circle of Hegel's disciples, his critical faculties were being sharpened in a way which made more and more clear to him that his path was diverging from that of Hegel, and that he must pursue an independent course of development.

Superadded was the influence of an ideological movement whose powerful waves of criticism and opposition began to break upon the shores of the world of religious life.

The July revolution in France (1830) had been followed in Germany likewise by a disturbance of the graveyard tranquillity established under Metternich's regime. Here and there there had been students' riots and abortive risings, but these disturbances had been put down with the strong hand. The press, which had become too outspoken, had been remuzzled; rebellious teachers and professors had been cudgelled into silence; the universities had been purged of liberalism and revolutionary doctrinairism. The Central Committee of Inquiry in Mayence, in its endeavours to maintain the State, had resumed the practice of persecuting demagogues. A meeting of the Prussian, Austrian, and Russian premiers in Teplitz, and another meeting of the monarchs of these three countries in Münchengrätz, had solemnly revived the inquisition of the Holy Alliance. A ministerial conference in Vienna had endorsed the decisions of the reactionary dictatorship.

In especial, the rulers had been at one in considering that the insubordinate masses must once more be made humble and obedient—and that to this end, in addition to dog-whip and dog-collar, the wholesome narcotic of religion must be used in increasing doses. The Prussian court, where, under the growing influence of Prince William, everything was draped in the rags of mediaeval romanticism, aspired to the lead in the training and utilization of a spiritual police. Here the "illuminates" and the "pietists" had their headquarters. Here the social question was being solved by means of devotional exercises, psalm singing, and the circulation of unctuous tracts. Perfervid generals, courtiers and State officials with their eyes turned heavenward, and ranting ecclesiastical magnates, joined their voices in a holy chorus for the salvation of the State. To counteract this pietist plague, the intellectuals of the Hegelian school made their protest in the form of an increasingly rationalist analysis of the Christian legend.

In 1835, David Friedrich Strauss, a young Swabian, published his *Life of Jesus*. Voicing the outlook of the bourgeois enlightenment, he unsparingly stripped the gospels of their haloes, deprived them of the right to claim historical value. By strictly scientific methods of investigation, he showed that the Christian tradition was but myth or saga, was an epic deliberately composed in pious ecstasy by the early Christian community. This demonstration was effected under the very eyes of the intimidated faithful. The result was stupendous. The book marked an epoch in the critical study of religion.

It need hardly be said that Strauss's book, and the whole group of problems arising in connexion therewith, were eagerly discussed in the Doctors' Club. The members of this club (headmasters, men of letters, instructors—Young Hegelians one and all) considered themselves the vanguard of the new intellectuals, took delight in the philosophical campaign against hypocrisy and romanticism, and sharpened their wits for the fray. For them, it is true, the shot fired by Strauss was not yet sufficiently well aimed, and did not prove mortal. Bruno Bauer, in especial, an instructor at the University of Berlin and regarded as one of the most brilliant of the Young Hegelians, entered the lists against Strauss. "The contest between the two," as Engels wrote subsequently in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, "was carried on in the philosophical trappings of a contest between 'self-consciousness' and 'substance.' The question whether the miracles recorded in the gospels had found their way into Holy Writ as the outcome of an unconscious exercise of the mythopoeic faculty in the early Christian community, or whether they had been deliberately invented by the evangelists, was, inflated into the question whether in universal history 'substance' or 'self-consciousness' had been the decisive factor. Then Stirner came along, the prophet of contemporary anarchism, and outtopped sovereign 'self-consciousness' by his sovereign 'individual.'"

For Bauer, this controversy became the fulcrum of his scientific work. He never let the subject drop, but carried on to keener and profounder issues the criticism of the gospels begun by Strauss. Whereas in 1841, in his *Kritik der evangelische Geschichte*, he voiced the opinion that the self-consciousness of the primary evangelist Mark, nourished at the sources of Greek, Graeco-Alexandrian, and Graeco-Roman literature, had found expression in the gospels—in 1843, in *Das entdeckte Christentum* (seized while in the press, and not until recently made available by republication) he carried this idea a stage further, to the extreme of antitheology and atheism. In a work published three decades later, *Der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem Römischen Griechentum*, he contended that not Jesus and Paul, but Seneca and Philo were the creators of primitive Christianity.

Among the Young Hegelians, these religious disputations and philosophical passages of arms had another outcome; they led to the foundation of the "Hallische Jahrbücher," which was planned to be a rallying point for the new intellectuals. The founder of this annual, Arnold Ruge (an instructor in Halle), although a revolutionist, was not especially profound or trustworthy, nor yet a man of markedly independent mind. No doubt, as a victim of the persecution directed against the demagogues, he had had to spend six years in prison, but this had not made his convictions firmer or his character more consistent. None the less, he did invaluable service to the forward movement, and promoted the liberation of people's minds, by providing a tribune. With the advance of the reaction, when all the professorial chairs were packed with obscurantists, and when all periodicals distasteful to the government were subjected to a rigid censorship and plagued with orders of suppression, Ruge found it necessary to transfer his headquarters from Halle to Dresden, and the "Hallische Jahrbücher" became the "Deutsche Jahrbücher." This implied, not merely a change in place of publication and in title, but also an intensification of tone and an

improvement in the quality of the collaborators. In particular Strauss, who had been a dominant figure of the "Hallische Jahrbücher," was replaced by Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach.

### **Bauer and Feuerbach**

Bruno Bauer, involved in a new feud with Hengstenberg, the leader of Berline orthodoxy, had removed from Berlin to Bonn. He brought with him thither a pledge from his protector, Altenberg, the minister of public worship and education, to the effect that his instructorship in Bonn should become a fixed professorship. But Altenberg died, and with him disappeared the last relics of the Hegelian tradition. He was succeeded by Eichhorn, a reactionary, entirely under the influence of the pietists. This was an end of Bauer's hopes of an academic career; all the more since his collaboration in Ruge's "Jahrbücher," and the radical position he had assumed in theological questions, had not tended to promote the number of his friends in the leading circles of the university. Worst of all, there now appeared his *Criticism of the Gospel History of the Synoptics*, which aroused a storm of indignation. Bauer was dismissed from his instructorship, and the freedom of teaching was curtailed at the universities.

Therewith Marx's plans, too, came to naught. He had never seriously considered the question of earning a livelihood, although his father had frequently put him in mind of the need. In 1838, his father had died. Now his concern for his mother, and his eagerness to be able to support a wife, made it necessary for him to seek some remunerative occupation. He had thought of following his friend Bauer to Bonn, in the hope of getting an instructorship there, and perhaps of joining with Bauer in the issue of a scientific periodical. He had not as yet, however, passed his legal examinations, or taken his doctor's degree. He was affected with strong inhibitions against academic studies and examinations, although Bauer was continually urging him forward. "Do make an end of your hesitations, of your dilatory attitude towards a piece of nonsense and a pure farce like an examination," Wrote Bauer to Marx. In the end, Marx pulled himself together, wrote a thesis *On the Difference between the Democritean and the Epicurean Natural Philosophy*, and therewith, in April 1841, was "in absentia" granted his doctor's degree by the University of Jena. But with the new turn of events, there was no professorship for Bauer, nor any hope of an academic post for Marx. Furthermore, in the stifling atmosphere of the reaction, there was no chance of realizing the plans for a progressive periodical. Bauer returned to Berlin, and devoted himself to collaboration in the "Deutsche Jahrbücher" now being published in Dresden.

But while Bauer, like Strauss, was trying to elucidate the origin of Christianity, Feuerbach had gone a step further, throwing open for discussion the very essence of Christianity. Ludwig Feuerbach, a son of the great authority on criminal jurisprudence, Anselm Feuerbach, and a pupil of Hegel, had had to abandon his position as instructor in Erlangen, after the publication of revolutionary writings (which were suppressed) had deprived him of any prospect of advance in his university career. Living in rural seclusion, far from the busy world of affairs, he devoted himself to philosophical study, moving continually farther away from Hegel. In 1839, he published his *Kritik der Hegelschen Philosophie*, in which he stripped Hegel's "absolute spirit" bare of its trappings, showed it to be the "departed spirit of theology," a metaphysical spook, a "theology made over into logic," a "rational mysticism." If Hegel had taught that nature was postulated by the idea, this was nothing more than a philosophical dressing-up of the biblical contention that God had created the world. The absolute spirit was in reality nothing other than the finite subjective spirit of man,



considered abstractly. If, according to Hegel, the absolute spirit manifested itself in art, religion, and philosophy, this could only mean that art, religion, and philosophy were the highest and most absolute things in the human spirit. Ruthlessly he inverted the Hegelian system. Nature and reality ceased to be “manifestations” and “degradations” of the idea. They became independent, became entities having a worth of their own. Man moved forward into the front of the picture, and was activated, although only in the religious domain. Hitherto nothing more than an object, he became essentially a subject. Materialism was raised to the throne.

This furnished Feuerbach with a platform for his philosophy of religion. From man he proceeded to the study of the interconnexions whose tissue presents itself as religion. According to him, man is independent of all philosophy. Man, the highest of beings, is the beginning, middle, and end of religion. Ideas are reflexions of nature; gods are merely creatures of the human imagination, idealist personifications of human qualities and feelings, projected into a heaven. Religion is the relation of feeling, the relation of hearts, between man and man; and the basis of all ethic is the relation between the ego and the tu.

Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christentums* [Essence of Christianity], in which these thoughts were first developed, was published in 1841. It had the effect of an act of enfranchisement. The spell of the Hegelian system had been broken. All contradictions seemed to be solved. Out of the region of ideas, people had got back once more to solid earth. Engels, to whom at this time Feuerbach was revealing “the true life of man,” wrote: “One must oneself have experienced the liberating influence of this book to gain any notion of what an experience it was. Enthusiasm was universal. For the time, we were all Feuerbachians.” Marx, likewise, greeted the new outlook with enthusiasm. “Who has annihilated the dialectic of concepts, the war of the gods which the philosophers alone knew? Feuerbach. Who has put man in place of the old lumber, and in place of the infinite consciousness as well? Feuerbach, and no one else! Feuerbach, who completed and criticized Hegel from a Hegelian standpoint, resolving the metaphysical absolute spirit into the real man standing on the foundation of nature, was the first to complete the criticism of religion—inasmuch as, at the same time, he undertook a critique of Hegelian speculation, and thereby sketched the great and masterly outlines of all metaphysics.” Thus did Marx voice his enthusiastic approval.

### **Revolutionary Flight**

The dethroning of the gods and the dissolution of the ties with a suprasensual world could not be restricted to the domains of religion and philosophy. Once authority had been challenged, dualism questioned, the rights of tradition contested, there could be no limit to the resulting effects. When the absolute monarch in heaven had been dethroned, the throne of the absolute king on earth tottered. When the sovereignty of the idea had been shown to be nothing more than an empty phrase, the nimbus of god-given governmental wisdom and statecraft paled. When it had been recognized that men had had the power to create gods, men were not likely to shrink in future from the thought that they were also capable (without sanction from above) of creating their own political and social conditions.

Thus it was that the Young Hegelians, whose activities had hitherto been confined to the battlefield of theory, became—though not of set purpose—active in the world of political practice. This was the outcome, not of political considerations, not of the formulation of definite aims, but merely of the logic of their own philosophical evolution.

The situation of the Prussian State sufficed to show that reason and reality were not, as Hegel had taught, necessarily coincident. Since the July revolution in France, the demands of reality had diverged more and more conspicuously from the insight and wisdom of the government. In the "Hallische Jahrbücher," Ruge had again and again pointed out that the demand for a constitutional State had not as yet been complied with, that the existence of the censorship betrayed a lack of confidence in the spirit and in science, and that the reactionary revision of the Towns' Ordinance of 1808 implied treason to the Prussian mission. It became more and more obvious that the unity of reason and reality could only be achieved when the rational, which had not hitherto attained form and life, had been purposively translated into reality by human activity.

In the view of the Young Hegelians, this purposive activity would not be a revolutionary transformation, but would be the expression of an organic renewal from within. They considered that the process must take its start where the reforms of Stein and Hardenberg had ended. Only thus, by keeping step with historical reality and with progressive ideas, could Prussia fulfil her mission in universal history, her mission to complete the liberation of the human spirit that had been begun by the Reformation and continued by the Enlightenment. To the Young Hegelians it seemed beyond question that Prussia was predestined by history to conduct the evolution of mankind to its climax. By birth, education, and temperament, they were Prussian to the core; and, belonging as they did to the cultured and possessing strata of society, they were full of the self-satisfaction of an aspiring class. In an address penned by Friedrich Köppen, for a festival in commemoration of Frederick the Great, and dedicated "to my friend Karl Heinrich Marx of Treves," we read, among other turgid outpourings of patriotic enthusiasm: "Prussia can never forget that it was cradled in the cradle-days of the Enlightenment, and that it was led on to greatness by the Hero of the Enlightenment. Heaven does not rest more securely upon the shoulders of Atlas, than Prussia rests upon the seasonable progressive development of the principles of Frederick the Great."

The hopes for the establishment of a Prussian emporium of spiritual freedom were no better fulfilled than were the dreams of a Prussian constitution with a liberal monarch at the head. A transient alleviation of the censorship, an alleviation which from the nature of things could be nothing more than an expression of despotic caprice, did, indeed, arouse ecstatic delight in the minds of the perennially unteachable philistines; but the headache which speedily followed this brief intoxication was a severe one. Marx had foreseen the coming of the reaction, and had written on the topic for Ruge's "Jahrbücher." In this matter, he made a good start, for his first essay on public affairs was forbidden by the censor. Since the "Jahrbücher" had an offshoot in Switzerland, Ruge had the article, together with some other victims of the censorship, published as *Anecdota philosophica* by Julius Fröbel of Zurich. It was entitled *Bemerkungen über die neuste preussische Censurinstruktion* [Remarks on the latest Prussian Censorship Order], and was described as being "by a Rhinelander."

Meanwhile, Marx had turned his attention towards another press organ, which had been appearing in Cologne since January 1, 1842. It was called the "Rheinische Zeitung," had been founded by a group of well-to-do Rhenish merchants and entrepreneurs, and could be regarded rather as a moderate governmental organ than as an opposition journal. Marx, however, was brought into touch with the newspaper by the fact that some active Young Hegelians (friends of the Young Hegelians in Berlin) were on the editorial staff. For a time Marx had it in mind to settle in Cologne, but in the end decided in favour of Bonn.

As contributor to the "Rheinische Zeitung," Marx for the first time had an opportunity of sharpening the theoretical reasoning of philosophy upon the whetstone of the practical realities of political life. He set himself vigorously to the task, taking a firm stand on the platform of contested opinions, and using his rapier with a master hand. Thus it was that the "Rheinische Zeitung" served as a door by which he entered upon his brilliant journalistic and political career.

### **Rise of the Bourgeoisie**

Thanks to the economic boom of the thirties, the Prussian bourgeoisie had greatly improved and stabilized its position as compared with a couple of decades earlier.

The application of steam-power to production had advanced rapidly. Under the stimulus of improved technique, manufacturing industry had flourished abundantly. New fields of enterprise had disclosed themselves. The utilization of coal and metallic ores had been greatly promoted by the development of railways. The growth of large-scale industry and commerce was leading to the growth of large towns. In certain industries, especially in metallurgy and cotton textiles, gigantic enterprises were being formed. The landed proprietors were emerging from their isolation, were shaking off the fetters of feudalism, and, as distillers and sugar growers, were adopting the more lucrative methods of capitalist production. The revolutionizing of production and distribution was transforming social life. Old traditions were being abandoned, outworn institutions were being scrapped, time-honoured opinions were being revised. The pulses of the bourgeoisie were tingling with the consciousness of power. The minds of members of the rising class were filled with self-confidence. There loomed upon the horizon the image of vigorous individuality, which brooks no restrictions, rebels against oppression, mocks at tutelage, refuses to bow beneath the yoke. This mood began to find expression in literature.

The heroes of classical literature, affrighted by the roughness and barbarity of everyday life, had fled, discouraged, withdrawing into a world of aesthetic illusion, where imagination reigned supreme, and where they could find compensation for the impotence from which they suffered in the real world. The longer the incubus of social slavery and political subjection continued, the more did the most sensitive and most creative among men feel at home in the realm of illusions. The region of ideas is a secure refuge for those who are threatened or maltreated by the realities of the world. The ageing Goethe, despite the universality and the cosmopolitan superiority of his genius, was unable to emerge from the classical domain of a sublimity remote from the actualities of life. But Klopstock, Lessing, and young Schiller were ready for the new world that was in course of formation; its coming struck sparks in their minds, and nourished revolutionary flames. Chamisso drew near to the domain of contemporary social reality. Platen, a bold St. George, fiercely attacked the dragon of reaction, corruption, and subjugation by force. Grabbe inveighed against the cramping particularism of German life with all the clamour and defiance of a titan.

In the thirties and forties, when from the crumbling walls of reaction young green shoots and fresh rice were everywhere thrusting heavenward, a bold, cheerful, self-confident swarm of singers and apostles of freedom appeared in the forest of German poesy. Georg Herwegh, the "iron lark," published his *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* [A Live Man's Poems], and in his triumphal campaign through Germany, set the hearts of thousands aflame. Franz Dingelstedt, in *Lieder eines kosmopolitischen Nachtwächters* [Songs of a Cosmopolitan Night Watchman], unsparingly lashed the police, the clergy, the ministers of State, and "the whole pack of refined and distinguished persons." In the comedy entitled *Die politische Wochenstube* [The Political

Lying-in Room], Robert Prutz poured the vials of his scorn and mockery on the German people as slaves, and on the German princes as tyrants. Hoffmann von Fallersleben paid forfeit of his official position and his means of livelihood for the political sallies in his *Unpolitische Lieder* [Unpolitical Lays]. Ferdinand Freiligrath, whose exotic verses about deserts and lions had a brilliant success, devoted his rhetorical powers to the service of the awakening revolution. Gottfried Kinkel, Karl Beck, Moritz Hartmann, Alfred Meissner, Kühne, Jung, and many others, singing enthusiastic battle-songs and paeans on behalf of liberty, joined in the chorus of Germany's awakening after the night of the Middle Ages. From across the frontiers, Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Börne, publishing a succession of criticisms, polemics, and pamphlets, were indefatigable in their fierce onslaughts on the Prussian reaction. They made merry over the blunders of the police; they stigmatized the narrow-mindedness and the obscurantism of the authorities; they pilloried the drowsy inactivity of the philistines; and, filled with moral indignation, they depicted the behaviour of the reactionary despotism in a way that made Europe rock with laughter. Treading in Heine's footsteps, but working independently of him, were the champions of Young Germany, who took up arms against the obsolete and the outworn, and fought on behalf of the new. Gutzkow, Laube, Wienbarg, Mundt, and others had a fine flair for all that was springing into life, and felt it their mission to collaborate in the birth. They wrote about the historical conditions requisite for a Prussian constitution, the principles of democracy, the unity of Germany and its significance for the political and intellectual development of the country, and so on; and although they were anything but revolutionists, the very fact that they were so closely watched by the Prussian police made them contribute nobly towards dispelling the prevalent spirit of dull subserviency. The more suspiciously the reaction supervised and persecuted every tendency towards free movement, the more did even timid appeals acquire the significance of trumpet blasts, of calls to arms, and of apotheoses of freedom.

The significance of these poetic revellies was underlined by the results of pioneer work in the scientific field. The capitalist method of production, in its need for the unsealing of nature's treasure houses that commodity production might be intensified, had called natural science and technical acquisitions to its aid. Research was stimulated, experiments were encouraged, people's senses were sharpened for the observation and discovery of natural processes which might be turned to account for the purposes of the new developments. In the laboratories, the workshops, and the lecture theatres, the secrets of a new world were being disclosed. Theodor Schwann discovered the cell as the basic element in the bodies of animals and plants. Justus Liebig enunciated new views on chemistry, founded a new theory of plant nutrition, and thus inaugurated a new epoch in agriculture. Johannes Müller created the foundations of modern physiology. In a series of mathematical, physical, and astronomical discoveries, Karl F. Gauss enlarged the boundaries of knowledge. Alexander von Humboldt, geographer and naturalist, gave people a new conception of the world by the record of his extensive travels, and did pioneer work in the fields of geology, mineralogy, zoology, botany, meteorology, and climatology. Robert Mayer formulated the mechanical theory of heat and enunciated the principle of the conservation of energy. The Siemens brothers, making numerous discoveries in the matter of the production of alcohol and of sugar, in electrotechnique, telegraphy, etc., laid the foundation of a number of new industries. A rebirth of society was in progress amid this general competition of active minds. Society, inasmuch as it would only pay heed to what was manifest to human senses and demonstrable by the methods of exact research, freed itself intellectually from dependence on all the old codes, and would now give credence only to the principles of a materialist philosophy, a philosophy with concrete

aims. This materialism, an emphatic protest against theological and idealist outlooks, formed the soil on which Feuerbach's trenchant criticism of religion was able to grow so vigorously.

In 1842, when Marx became one of the contributors to the "Rheinische Zeitung" of which he was soon to be editor-in-chief, it was plain to him that in the general paean to liberty this newspaper could only be one chord. But he was determined that it should be a chord having a timbre of its own.

### **The "Rheinische Zeitung"**

Frederick William III had promised to give the Prussian people a constitution. This promise had not been fulfilled. Consequently, the pledge given to the creditors of the State that every new loan should be sanctioned by the estates of the realm, could not be kept. For the sake of appearances, however, provincial diets were established, impotent bodies, vegetating under the shelter of secrecy, bodies in which the squirearchy continued to exercise its territorial despotism behind the mask of parliamentary procedure. Even the Rhenish diet, in respect of political initiative and status, was no better than the feudalist servants' halls which sat eastward of the Elbe.

Frederick William IV, the heir of his father's unfulfilled promise, had summoned the Rhenish diet in 1841. Taking the minutes of the proceedings as his text, Marx dealt pitilessly with this masquerade. In a series of articles, he discussed the question of the freedom of the press, which had not secured in the diet any advocate against the malicious onslaughts of the authorities. Then he dealt with the matter of the imprisonment of the Archbishop of Cologne, with the result that his article was expunged by the censorship. Finally he referred to the debates concerning a law to punish thefts of wood in the forests. This last gave him hard nuts to crack, seeing that "there was no provision in Hegel's ideological system" for the consideration of social problems and material interests.

The articles on the freedom of the press were brilliantly written. Ruge praised them highly, saying: "We can congratulate ourselves upon the appearance on the journalistic stage of one so highly instructed, so talented, and with such a sovereign power of marshalling ideas upon a topic where confusion is apt to prevail." In this matter, Marx was in his element. He was fully informed regarding the subject matter, and the vigour of his writing could not fail to attract attention. But when it came to the third of the before-mentioned topics, he was verging on the limits of his extant abilities. Proceeding further, when he had to discuss hunting rights, the prosecution of poachers, and the difficulties of the small-farming system, with all the involved questions of property relations, he felt that the task was beyond him; he knew that he would not be able to cope with it until he had undertaken a thorough study of political economy, and had faced up to the problem of socialism. His training in philosophy and law had been exhaustive, but this was of little use to him in the handling of economic questions. His idealist outlook upon the State and society involved him in hopeless perplexities when he had to choose a side where the interests of bourgeoisie and proletariat diverge.

A further difficulty was that the "Rheinische Zeitung" had to take a definite line regarding problems and events which were interwoven with the ideas of the French socialists or affected the interests of Rhenish proletarians. The perusal of a book by Lorenz von Stein, *Geschichte der sozialistischen Bewegung in Frankreich* [History of the Socialist Movement in France], which was strongly adverse to the outlooks of Saint-Simon and Fourier, had made Marx realize the necessity of becoming well acquainted with this matter. A dispute with the "Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung"

had forced upon him the unpleasant necessity of openly admitting that he knew nothing about the theories of French socialism and communism. The "Augsburger" had reproached the "Rheinische Zeitung" for coquetting with communism. Marx had rejoined that the "Rheinische" did not concede even theoretical validity to communist ideas "in their present form," and still less did it desire their practical realization or regard such a realization as possible. But, he said, the journal wished to subject these ideas to exhaustive criticism. The real danger lay, not in any practical endeavour, but in "the theoretical carrying out of communist ideas." He went on: "Practical attempts, even if made on a large scale, can be answered with big guns as soon as they become dangerous; but ideas which gain the victory over our intelligence and our feelings, ideas to which reason has welded our conscience, these are chains which we cannot break without breaking our hearts, these are demons which man can only conquer by subjecting himself to them." The emotionalism of the words had its due effect; but Marx was only too well aware that problems as serious as this could not be permanently shuffled out of the world by declamation or by "amateurish comment."

In the sequel, the problems of socialism and the revolution played a part likewise in the differences that arose between Marx and his Berlin friends. The Doctors' Club had transformed itself into a Society of the Free, which was being joined by literary men of various shades of opinion. In these circles there was a mishmash of ideas, the high-flown theories of cultured academicians being voiced side by side with the more prosaic and straightforward schemes of Chartists, Owenists, and Saint-Simoni-ans—schemes which had been imported into Germany from England and France. It was a crazy amalgam, for the doctrinairism of the German schools could not mingle satisfactorily with the explosive notions of foreign origin. Moreover, raw student zeal made a pretence of being revolutionary efficiency, while crudeness and coarseness were mistaken for manifestations of mental enfranchisement. Friedrich Engels, son of a factory owner in Barmen, and at this time doing his year's military service as an artilleryman in the guards, found his way into the Society of the Free, and played his part there wittily by composing a Christian heroic poem *Die frech bedräute, jedoch wunderbar befreite Bibel oder Triumph des Glaubens* [The impudently threatened, but miraculously saved Bible, or the Triumph of Faith], which mirrors in a fanciful way the intellectual world of these "free spirits."

The only consequence of the hubbub was the vexatious one that Marx was overwhelmed with correspondence, and with proffered contributions, from Berlin, "scrawls weighty with plans for a world revolution but empty of ideas, clumsily written, and tinged with a certain amount of atheism and communism (which the writers have never studied)." He would have nothing to do with all this. "I insisted on the need for less vague argument, pretentious phraseology, and self-satisfied contemplation of one's own image in the mirror; and upon the need for more definiteness, more concern with concrete actualities, more accurate knowledge of the matters in hand. I declared that I regarded it as inappropriate, not to say immoral, to smuggle socialist and communist dogmas—a new outlook on the world—into casual columns of dramatic criticism; and I said that if communism was to be discussed it must be discussed in a very different and far more thorough fashion." If the members of the Society of the Free thereupon rejoined that it was time for the "Rheinische Zeitung" to exchange halfhearted dallying for earnest endeavour, this did not seem to Marx sufficient reason for doing anything foolhardy; but it was made evident to him as a logical necessity that he must devote himself to a thorough study of the problem of socialism.

The censorship, apparently, wished to give him a push in this direction. The "Rheinische" was harried more and more as its circulation increased, and as it gained prestige and influence. At length, by a decision of the ministerial council in Berlin,

adopted in the king's presence and perhaps at the king's instigation, an order for the suppression of the paper was issued on January 21, 1843.

The protests and petitions of the shareholders were of no avail. The utmost the authorities would grant was a postponement of the suppression until the end of the quarter. On March 17th, Marx retired from the staff. Thereupon he breathed more freely, since for a long time, as he wrote to Ruge, he had been "weary of hypocrisy, stupidity, the rough handling of authority, and our own smirking, bowing, scraping, and quibbling."

The government had "set him free." What was the best use he could make of this regained freedom? What could he do better than devote himself wholeheartedly to the study of socialism?

## **Chapter 02: Clarification, Part 1**

### **A New Platform**

The enthusiasm with which Marx had devoted himself to his work on the staff of the "Rheinische Zeitung" had speedily evaporated. A mood of depression and disillusionment had ensued. In the end, he had withdrawn from the editorship with a sigh of relief. Yet there was no obvious cause for his feelings.

He had wielded a vigorous pen, had given his best energies to his task, had done yeoman's service to the opposition of the day, using all his knowledge and all his talents in the cause. His period of activity had been brief, but it had been brilliant and fruitful.

No doubt his wranglings with the censorship and with the publisher had been wearisome and dispiriting. But such occurrences were a necessary part of a journalist's life in those days, and things were no worse in Cologne than elsewhere. Besides, what could these trifles matter to a born fighter? Marx had only been in harness for five months. Some champions have to endure worse troubles for decades, and even for a long lifetime. This was no reason for discouragement.

The root of the trouble lay elsewhere. Marx had sustained a discomfiture in the dispute with the "Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung." As editor-in-chief of a great modern newspaper, he had had no definite opinion and had been able to express no definite views regarding a topical political matter of outstanding importance, the ideas of the French socialists. Not an overwhelming misfortune, perhaps, for who can know everything? But Marx had been shamed by the need to avow his ignorance, and his activities had been damped down. He was a man of masterful, not to say dictatorial temperament his vanity was mortified, his sensitive vanity, which hid a subconscious feeling of inadequacy. That was why he hastened to evacuate the field; no longer to him a field of brilliant journalistic successes, but one in which he had sustained a defeat.

Marx was "greedy" for time and opportunity in which to undertake "enduring and profound studies" of the contentious matter. He hurled himself into the new theatre of war, and sought a new platform. Here he would redeem his losses! Not again should he have to renounce a combat, not for a second time should he have to avow himself incompetent. Perhaps in the rivalry for the mastery of the thought world of socialism, he would one day outdo all competitors!

He had decided to go to Paris, where he could study socialism at the source. He would join forces with Ruge, for whom the German censorship was making the issue of the "Jahrbücher" increasingly difficult. They would publish in Paris. "Deutsch-

Französische Jahrbücher,” he enthusiastically exclaimed, “that would be a notable principle, a remarkable event, an undertaking to which one could devote oneself with all one’s heart.”

He married, and thus freed Jenny von Westphalen from a crossfire which had been going on for seven years, a crossfire of intrigue which her bigoted and blue-blooded relatives had been directing, in the hope of bringing about a rupture. The young couple spent a few months of honeymoon in the house of the elder Frau Marx, who had removed to Kreuznach after her husband’s death. In September, Ruge settled in Paris, whither Karl and Jenny Marx followed him in November.

Moses Hess, who had accompanied Ruge to Paris, gave the young men their first introduction into the circle of French socialists. Sprung from a family of prosperous Jewish manufacturers in Rhineland, Hess was in a mood of vigorous protest against his father, and was filled with ruminating unrest. A perpetual seeker after truth, he was trying to scale all the heights and to plumb all the depths of our spiritual life. He had taken a considerable part in the foundation of the “Rheinische Zeitung,” and in that connexion had made Marx’s acquaintance. He was well informed concerning the philosophical development of Germany, the economic development of England, and the political development of France. Thus he was eminently fitted to play the part of interpreter between the Young Hegelians, who had been led to the world of politics and to socialism through the study of Feuerbach, and the French socialists, who were to be guided to Hegel, and to the “logical insight” of the Germans, by way of their political experiences. Moses Hess had been the first to draw his friend Engels’ attention to the internal logical necessity thanks to which the Hegelian way of thinking must inevitably culminate in communism. Now he made himself useful to Ruge and to Marx by bringing them into touch with the representatives of French socialism.

In truth, the result of his labours was nothing to boast of. No doubt Ruge and Marx became personally acquainted with a number of prominent socialists: Louis Blanc, Dézamy, Considérant, Leroux, Proudhon, and others. One and all, however, they were of jealous disposition; or disputatious, narrow-minded, lacking knowledge of German philosophy, and with no inclination to weigh the pros and cons of any other theories or systems than those with which they were already familiar. Thus there was little scope in Paris for the establishment of a “Gallo-German” alliance. Still less promising were the prospects of the “Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher.” When Marx wanted to realize the programme of the new annual, wanted “to make an end of the celestial policy of the Middle Kingdom, and to replace it by the real science of human affairs,” he found that he would have to depend exclusively upon German collaborators.

Not until the end of February 1844 was it possible to issue the first and second parts of the new “Jahrbücher,” combined in a single slender volume. The design had been to publish twelve parts in a year, but this double part was all that ever went through the press.

From a business standpoint, the undertaking was stillborn. From the standpoint of socialist evolution, it was a bold onrush into a new world, a world whose first need was self-knowledge!

### **The “Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher”**

Arnold Ruge opened the ball with a “Plan of the ‘Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher.’”



He began by speaking of Prusso-German conditions, and the stifling atmosphere which the periodical had to breathe.

“In Germany, hypocrisy seems invincible, as if science were indifferent towards life; or, if not so, as if at least the heaven of science were unattainable for the masses of mankind. In reasonable circumstances, the kernel of science will become the property of all in the form of practice, will be part of the universal consciousness. A practical thought, however, a word that would fain move the world, is in Germany a direct onslaught on everything that is regarded as sacred and uplifted above the mob. German science, like the German State, is sacred and respectable, not human and free; and it is regarded as treason to both to make science the common property of mankind. Yet this act of treason must now be committed.”

To say truth, not now first committed, but only continued. Events in Germany had shown that philosophy had already become of political importance. “If, for the nonce, the German movement has taken refuge in a bookish world, which has seemingly, no concern with actual history and with the revolution in which we live, it will be our business to make an end of such hypocrisy and indifference, and deliberately to pursue political aims. We shall stake everything upon freedom. Indifferent learning does not exist for the philosopher. Philosophy is freedom, and wishes to create freedom. By freedom we mean genuinely human freedom, that is to say political freedom, not some sort of metaphysical blue vapour which a man can conjure up in his study, and even in a prison.

The purpose of the “Jahrbücher” was “to make known to the general consciousness, in as pregnant a way as possible and in an artistic manner, everything going on in the old world relating to the great transformation.” The carrying out of this undertaking led to France, which by its glorious revolution and the conquest of the rights of man had fought its way to the acquisition of a “cosmopolitan mission” which applied to the whole world. A hatred for France was always equivalent to a blind hostility for political liberty. “In Germany, we can appraise in every one his intelligence and his moral enfranchisement when we know what opinion he holds regarding France. The more cloudy a German’s intelligence, the more servile his way of thinking, the more unjust and ignorant will be his opinion of France. He will stigmatize as immorality the greatness and moral energy of a nation which on its own behalf and that of Europe has conquered all the freedom which the world now enjoys; he will say that the French are unfeeling because they have made short work of his own favourite principle of philistinism; and he will not admit that the godless French have any conception of family happiness. One who in Germany understands the French and recognizes their merits, is by that fact alone a cultured man, a free spirit.”

Germany is put to shame by the French. “They study us, they respect us, indeed they prize us and our transcendental science too highly; and even if they are not yet acquainted with the mundane trend of the most recent epoch, it will soon become plain that here for the first time they are really on a common ground with us.” The interchange of their cultures is the true bond of union between the two nations, and will bring about the victory of freedom. “We Germans have wasted a great deal of time upon furbishing up our old ways in religion and politics. While doing this, we have injured our eyesight, and have become romanticists. None the less, we have thereby gained a sense of order, and have acquired a faculty of logical insight which gives us a safe guide in the metaphysical domain and in the imaginative world, whereas here the French scud rudderless before the wind.” The Hegelian system has done good service in this way, that it has freed us from arbitrary fancies; and in like manner it will safeguard the French spirit from the dangerous illusions and

seductions of a “genius that has taken the bit between its teeth and of an unbridled fantasy.” Thanks to the freedom of the press in France, it will be possible to demonstrate to all and sundry “that we in the womb of German obscurantism have become strong enough to bear, of a sudden, the light of the world.” This is a new epoch, in which there is occurring a “fraternization of principles, and in which the nations will be able to foregather.”

The formal introduction is followed by an arranged correspondence between Marx, Ruge, Feuerbach, and Bakunin. Marx is supposed to be writing from Holland, and describes the shame inspired by conditions in Prussia. “The splendid cloak of liberalism has been dropped, and the most repulsive despotism is exposed in all its nakedness to the eyes of the whole world. This is also a revelation, though a perverted one. It is a revelation of the truth, a revelation that certainly enables us to learn the emptiness of our patriotism, the unnatural character of our State system; a revelation which discloses our true visage. You smile at me, and ask what is gained thereby. You say that shame cannot make a revolution. I answer that shame is itself already a revolution. ... If a whole nation were really ashamed, the lion crouching for a spring would refrain.” The comedy of despotism will necessarily lead to a revolution, but “the State is too serious a thing to be made into a harlequinade. A ship manned by fools might drive before the wind for a good long time; but it would drive onwards to its fate for the very reason that the fools did not believe that such a fate was in store for them. That fate is the impending revolution.”

Ruge begins his reply with a quotation from Hölderlin, as a motto to signify his profound depression. “Do you expect a political revolution? Do you think that we, the contemporaries of such Germans as live today, can expect anything of the kind? My friend, the wish is father to the thought ... More courage is needed for despair than for hope. But the courage of despair is a reasonable courage, and we have reached a point when we can no longer delude ourselves.” Tearfully, and at great length, he describes the impression produced upon him by the “despotic maxims” of the reaction, and by the “eternal submissiveness” of the ordinary Germans. “Had we not better console ourselves with the thought that these things are inevitable, that man is not born to be free?” Marx had said that the ship of fools would not escape its revolutionary destiny; but he had failed to add that this revolution would only be the convalescence of the fools. “Your image does no more than lead us to the idea of destruction, but I will not even concede you this destruction.” In profound resignation, he concludes by saying: “You may reproach me with being no better than the others; you may challenge me to promote the coming of a new age with the assistance of the new principle; you may ask me why I do not show myself to be one of those authors whom a free century follows. You may say as many bitter things as you please, but my withers will be unwrung. Our nation has no future, so what is the use of summoning it to the fray?”

To this “elegy,” to this “funeral lay,” Marx rejoins that he finds it utterly unpolitical. “It is true that the old world belongs to the philistine, but we must not regard him as a spectre before which we flee in terror. We must face up to him boldly.” What does this philistine look like? “The philistine world is the political world of lower animal life. ... Centuries of barbarism have created and evolved it, and now it exists as a consistent system, whose ruling principle is the dehumanization of the world ... The only idea of despotism is contempt for man, the dehumanized man. ... The principle of monarchy in general is man despised, man despicable, man dehumanized. ... Where the monarchical principle is in the majority, human beings are in the minority; where no one challenges the monarchical principle, there are no men at all. ... The philistine is the substance of the monarchy, and the monarch is never anything more than the

king of the philistines. ... Why should not such a man as the king of Prussia follow his caprices unhesitatingly? So long as caprice stands its ground, caprice is in the right. ... I maintain that the king of Prussia will be a man of his time for just so long as our perverted world is the real world." Marx sets forth how the king, in his own manner, had tried to effect a reform; "but the servants of the ancient despotism soon made an end of this un-German activity." Besides, the lord of all the farther Russians had been made uneasy by the restless movement in the heads of the hither Russians, and had insisted upon the restoration of the good old quiet times. "Such was the unsuccessful attempt to uplift the philistine State upon its own foundation. ... A brutal system can only be maintained by brutality." The extant methods of industry and commerce, property, and the exploitation of man by man, would speedily lead to a rupture within society, and under the old regime there could be no cure. "From our side, the old world must be brought fully into the daylight, and the new world must be developed in a positive sense. The longer the time that events leave for thoughtful humanity to reflect, and for suffering humanity to collect its forces, the more finished, when born, will be the product which the present bears in its womb."

The letters of Bakunin and Feuerbach are likewise full of encouragement. "This is not the moment for folding our arms, for cowardly despair," exclaims Bakunin. "If such men as you no longer believe in Germany's future, no longer wish to work for the coming of that future, who will believe, and who will act? We must scourge our metaphysical arrogance, which does not make the world warm; we must learn; we must work day and night that we may be able to live like men with men, that we may be free and may make others free; we must (I always come back to this) enter into possession of our time by entering into possession of our own ideas." Feuerbach writes in a similar tone. Thereupon Ruge writes to Marx: "It is true, Poland has been destroyed, but Poland is not yet lost. ... The 'Jahrbücher' have been destroyed, the Hegelian philosophy belongs to the past. Here in Paris we will found an organ in which we can judge ourselves and the whole of Germany with perfect freedom and with inexorable uprightness."

In his concluding epistle, Marx acclaims Ruge's decision for action, and sketches the programme of the new periodical: "We shall not dogmatically anticipate the coming world, but shall begin by discovering the new world through criticism of the old one. Hitherto the philosophers had had schemes for the solution of all riddles lying ready in their desks, and the stupid exoteric world had merely to open its mouth wide that the roast pigeons of absolute science might fly into its mouth. Philosophy has been secularized, the most striking proof of this being that the philosophical consciousness has itself rushed into the fray, not only outwardly, but inwardly as well. ... We are developing the principles of the new world. We do not say to the world: 'Cease your struggles, which are foolish, for we will give you the true battle-cry.' We merely show the world for what it is really fighting, and the world must become self-conscious whether it will or no. ... Our motto must therefore be: 'Reform of the consciousness, not by dogmas, but by analysis of the mystical consciousness, of the consciousness which is not fully clarified, whether it be religious or political.'" In conclusion, summarizing the trends and the aims of the periodical, he writes: "To make the time fully understand its struggles and its wishes." Thus the flag was hoisted. Brief, alas, was to be the period in which it fluttered in the breeze. The "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher" had very few readers. As a business undertaking, it was unsuccessful. A great many of the copies were intercepted when the attempt was made to smuggle them into Germany. Through the instrumentality of Guizot, the Prussian government took action against the editors. Meanwhile the editors were quarrelling. They broke away from one another, moving in opposite directions, Ruge to the right, Marx

more and more to the left. Ruge, being unable to free his mind from personal animus in a dispute about ideas, cherished a grievance against Marx. As for Marx, he recked little henceforward of Ruge's personality, and devoted his attention to matters of greater importance.

### ***Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie***

Rather less than a year elapsed between the suppression of the "Rheinische Zeitung" and the publication of the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher."

Marx had devoted this brief period to intensive culture of the soil of his own mind. He had made a giant stride forward in his development towards socialism.

He had criticized Hegel unsparingly, had advanced upon Feuerbach, and had adopted a position of his own towards the French socialists. He had put history upon the throne from which he had unseated religion. In his hands, secularized philosophy had become politics. His world was spinning on a new axis.

Positively amazing was the amount of scientific literature perused by Marx in the summer and autumn of 1843. In his notebooks of this year we find an enormous quantity of extracts from books on the history of France (Schmidt, Wachsmuth, Chateaubriand, Lacretelle); England (Lappenberg, Russell); Germany (Ranke); and the United States: also from Möser's *Patriotische Phantasien*, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. He had studied the history of political systems; had read the economic works of Ricardo and McCulloch; and had even entertained plans of writing a history of the Convention. In Paris, where he had access to great libraries, he immersed himself in the relevant literature. A precipitate from all these studies forms his *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* [Introduction to a Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right], which appeared in the first section of the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher."

In this article, Marx, with the boldness of the man of genius, sketches the elements of his later system of thought. Daringly, and in letters of flame, he writes the watchwords of the manifesto of proletarian enfranchisement on the firmament of the epoch.

Setting out from Feuerbach, briefly and clearly summarizing the results of that philosopher's criticism of religion, he makes history the fulcrum of future developments, and therewith comes to politics.

"Man makes religion; religion does not make man. Religion, indeed, is the self-consciousness and the self-feeling of the man who either has not yet found himself, or else (having found himself) has lost himself once more. But man is not an abstract being, squatting down somewhere outside the world. Man is the world of men, the State, society. This State, this society, produce religion, produce a perverted world consciousness, because they are a perverted world. Religion is the generalized theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compend, its logic in a popular form. ... The fight against religion is, therefore, a direct campaign against the world whose spiritual aroma is religion."

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feelings of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people."

"The people cannot be really happy until it has been deprived of illusory happiness by the abolition of religion. The demand that the people should shake itself free of illusion as to its own condition is the demand that it should abandon a condition which needs illusion."

“Thus it is the mission of history, after the other-worldly truth has disappeared, to establish the truth of this world. In the next place, it is the mission of philosophy, having entered into the service of history after the true nature of the reputed saint-hood of human self-estrangement has been disclosed, to disclose all the unsaintliness of this self-estrangement. Thus the criticism of heaven is transformed into a criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into a criticism of law, the criticism of theology into a criticism of politics.”

“German history plumes itself upon a movement which no other nation in the historical firmament has ever made before it, and which no other nation will ever make after it. We have shared the restorations of the modern nations without sharing their revolutions. We experienced a restoration, first of all because other nations ventured a revolution, and secondly because other nations had to suffer a counterrevolution; the first was because our lords and masters were afraid, and the second was because our lords and masters were not afraid. Led by our shepherds, we found ourselves in the company of freedom only on the day of its funeral.”

“It behoves us that the Germans should not be allowed a moment for self-deception and resignation. Rather should the actual pressure be intensified, so that the consciousness of pressure should be superadded, the smart being increased by publication. ... These petrified conditions must be made to dance by having their own tune sung to them.”

“Just as in ancient days the nations knew their primal history in the world of imagination, in mythology, so have we Germans experienced our history of days to come in thoughts, in philosophy. We are the contemporaries of the present in philosophy, without being its contemporaries in history. German philosophy is the continuation of German history in the world of the ideal.”

“That which, among more advanced nations, is a practical quarrel with modern political conditions, is in Germany, where these conditions have not even yet come into existence, a critical quarrel with the philosophical mirroring of these conditions.”

“In the world of politics, the Germans have thought that which other nations have done. Germany has been their theoretical conscience. The abstractness and exaggeration of Germany’s thought has always kept pace with the one-sidedness and the inadequacy of the realities of German life.”

“The German people, therefore, must bring its dreamland history into harmony with extant conditions, and must subject to criticism, not only these extant conditions, but also their continuation in the abstract world!”

“The weapon of criticism cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Physical force must be overthrown by physical force; but theory, too, becomes a physical force as soon as it takes possession of the masses.”

“The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the highest being for man; it ends, that is to say, with the categorical imperative that all conditions must be revolutionized in which man is a debased, an enslaved, an abandoned, a contemptible being. ... A radical is one who cuts at the roots of things. Now, for man, the root of things is man himself.”

“A radical revolution, the general emancipation of mankind, is not a utopian dream for Germany; what is utopian is the idea of a partial, an exclusively political revolution, which would leave the pillars of the house standing. Upon what does a partial, an exclusively political revolution rest? Upon this, that a part of civil society emancipates itself, and attains to general dominion; upon this, that a particular class, from a position peculiar to itself, should undertake to effect the general

emancipation of society. That class can free the whole of society, but only on the proviso that the whole of society is in the position of that class.”

“Only in the name of the general rights of society is a particular class entitled to claim universal dominion. Abundant revolutionary energy and mental self-confidence will not be enough to enable it to take this emancipatory position by storm, and thus to effect the political utilization of all spheres of society in the interests of its own sphere. If the revolution of a nation is to coincide with the emancipation of a particular class of civil society, if one particular estate is to be an estate tantamount to the whole of society, then, conversely, all the defects of society must be concentrated in another class, one particular estate must sustain the general attack, must be the incorporation of the general restrictions; one particular social sphere must be the scapegoat for all the sins of society, so that the enfranchisement of this sphere will be equivalent to a universal self-enfranchisement. If one estate is to be preeminently the estate of liberation, then, conversely, another estate must manifestly be the estate of subjugation.”

“What, then, are the practical possibilities of German emancipation? Here is the answer. They are to be found in the formation of a class with radical chains, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society; of an estate which is the dissolution of all estates; of a sphere which is endowed with a universal character by the universality of its sufferings; one which does not lay claim to any particular rights, the reason being that it does not suffer any one specific injustice, but suffers injustice unqualified; one which can no longer put forward a historically grounded title, but only a general human title; one which is not in any sort of one-sided opposition to the consequences, but only in a general opposition to the presuppositions of the German political system; and, finally, a sphere which cannot emancipate itself, without emancipating itself from all the other spheres of society—one which, in a word, has been completely deprived of its human privileges, so that it can only regain itself by fully regaining these human privileges. This dissolution of society as a particular estate—is the proletariat.”

“If the proletariat heralds the dissolution of the world order as hitherto extant, it is merely, thereby, expressing the mystery of its own existence, for it is the actual dissolution of this previous world order. If the proletariat demands the negation of private property, it is only raising to the level of a principle of society that which society has made the principle of the proletariat, that which is incorporated in the proletariat as the negative result of history without any cooperation on the part of the proletariat.”

“The only practically possible liberation of Germany is liberation upon the standpoint of the theory which declares man to be the highest being for man. ... The emancipation of the German is the emancipation of mankind.”

“Philosophy cannot be realized without the uprising of the proletariat; and the proletariat cannot rise without the realization of philosophy.”

The foregoing extracts will give the reader a general idea of the thought process of the essay from which they are taken; but they serve very inadequately to convey the originality and momentum of the ideas, the elemental force of the logic, the compactness of the argumentation, and the creative imagery of the phrasing, which combine to make a masterpiece of this pioneer revolutionary document, and thanks to which its general conclusions form a brilliant prophecy of the proletarian revolution.

In later years, Marx summarized the contents of the article in the following terms: “My investigation culminated in the recognition that legal and political forms

are not comprehensible of themselves, nor yet explicable in terms of the so-called evolution of the human mind, but are rooted in the material conditions of life, whose totality Hegel, following the example of English and French eighteenth-century writers, subsumed under the name of 'civil society'; and in the recognition that the anatomy of civil society is to be sought for in political economy."

With this recognition, Marx had laid the foundation stone and built in the corner stone of the monumental edifice of his future social theory.

### **The Jewish Question**

Another of Marx's contributions to the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher" dealt with the Jewish question. He took as his theme an article on the same topic which had been contributed by Bruno Bauer to the "Deutsche Jahrbücher," and had subsequently been published as a pamphlet.

The Jewish question was a topical one. Those who then used the phrase, had in mind the political and civic liberation of the Jews from their exceptional position before the law, a position which was a relic of the Middle Ages. The reactionaries, naturally, had done nothing to bring about this emancipation. Nay more, they had deprived the Jews of certain advantages gained in Germany under the stimulus of French advocacy of the rights of man. In Prussia alone, says Mehring, there were no less than eighteen laws dealing with the Jews.

On the other hand, the Jews had themselves shown little inclination to come into close contact with the intellectual life of the German nation. Thanks to the conservatism of their Old Testament ideology, they could not but seem foreign bodies in the community during a period of growing enlightenment and emancipatory movement. In so far as they had become objects of political attention, it was because their most notable representatives (moneylenders who kept the princes and other feudal magnates in funds, farmers of the taxes, debasers of the currency, financiers of one kind and another) were regarded with detestation as being the secret and last but powerful props of the feudal system.

The general economic progress of the times was advantageous to Jews as well as Gentiles. Jews had become of economic importance, and in proportion to this development there was a tendency towards the growth of their civic and political importance. But whereas in the actual world they had already acquired a better position, their legal and ideological positions lagged behind. Such was the content of the Jewish question. Amid the chorus of the voices of the day, Jewish voices were raised ever more insistently in criticism of the injustices from which the Jews suffered. Thus Jews made common cause with liberals and even with revolutionists, turning the mental and moral sciences, and philosophy itself, to account in the struggle for Jewish emancipation. The Young Hegelians' fierce attack on Christianity and religion brought grist, here, to the Jewish mill.

Bruno Bauer, like Feuerbach, had taken a definite line upon the Jewish question. But neither of these champions had freed the problem from its entanglement in the web of theological, religious, and philosophical criticism.

Marx tore the meshes of this speculative net in sunder, envisaged the question from a clear outlook, and discussed it upon the concrete basis of its secular determinants. What had been a theological problem became in his hands a mundane one.

Then he turned upon his old friend and opponent with the challenging technique of a fighter who is sure of his own ground. His training had been one which gave him enormous advantages over Bauer, and disclosed to him the weaknesses of his

adversary. He was victor from the first thrust of his lance.

If the German Jews, he said, covet political, civic emancipation, they must be told that the State cannot emancipate itself as long as it is Christian, any more than the Jew can be emancipated so long as he remains a Jew. "Upon what title do you Jews ground your claim for emancipation? On your religion? It is the mortal foe of the State religion. As citizens? In Germany there are no citizens. As human beings? You are not human beings, any more than those to whom you are appealing."

In Bauer's view, the Jew, if he wished to become free, must first become a Christian, and must then transcend Christianity with the aid of the Hegelian philosophy.

Things must go the other way about, said Marx. If, as Feuerbach had proved, the existence of religion was the outcome of the existence of a lack, and if the source of this lack were to be found in the nature of the extant State, then it logically followed, not that it was incumbent upon the Jews to rid themselves of their "religious limitations" in order that they might thereafter free themselves of their secular limitations; but, conversely, that their religious limitations would spontaneously disappear as soon they had freed themselves from their secular limitations.

In this way the question of the relation of political emancipation to religion had become the question of the relation of political emancipation to human emancipation.

The modern bourgeois State represents the result and the reservoir of political emancipation. A man need not, because he is a citizen, cease to be a Christian, a Jew, an adherent of one creed or another. As citizen, he is a member of a species, but as Christian or Jew he is a private individual. "The State can free itself from a limitation without the individual human being having really freed himself from that limitation; the State can be a free State although the individual is not yet a free man."

Marx goes on to say, in illustration of his argument, that the religious question finds an analogy in the question of property. Politically, the State abolishes private property when it abolishes the property qualification for the exercise of the suffrage. After its own manner, it abolishes distinctions of birth, standing, education, and occupation, when it declares birth, standing, education, etc., to be differences devoid of political significance, and when it allows every member of the community to participate equally in the exercise of popular sovereignty regardless of such distinctions. Yet at the same time, property, education, standing, birth, and so on, remain intact as concrete distinctions between private individuals. Indeed, the State "only exists on the proviso that these differences exist, and only makes its universality valid in contrast with these elements of itself."

Thus the individual human being leads a double life: one life politically, in the State, as a member of the species; and another life as a private individual in civil society. "The conflict in which a man is involved between his position as one who professes a particular religion and as one endowed with citizenship in a State (wherein he is related to his fellow-men inasmuch as he and they are all members of a community), reduces itself to the secular cleavage between the political State and civil society." It is thus an outcome of the contradiction between the State and its presuppositions; or, to put the matter yet more simply, of the contradiction between general interest and private interest. In the bourgeois State, this contradiction is illimitable; and in that State, therefore, the Jewish question, as an expression of this contradiction, can find no solution. "If you Jews desire political emancipation before you have emancipated yourselves humanly, the halfheartedness and the contradiction do not exist only in you, for they are also to be found in the nature and the category of political emancipation. If you are yourselves entangled in this category, you share in its



general entanglement. If the State proselytizes, in so far as it, although a State, assumes a Christian attitude towards the Jews, so, likewise, does the Jew enter the field of politics when he, although a Jew, demands civil rights.”

But how should human emancipation be realized?

If the political revolution has reduced civic life into its constituents without revolutionizing it, so that the egoistic individual is the passive, unrevolutionized result of this process of dissolution, is a constituent of the dissolved society—then human emancipation, or the social revolution, will be characterized by “the leading back of the human world, of relations, to the human being himself.”

“Not until the concrete individual human being takes back into himself the abstract citizen of the State, and, as an individual human being, has become a member of the species in his empirical life, in his individual work, in his individual relations; not until the human being has recognized and organized his own forces as social forces, so that social force is no longer severed from itself in the form of political force not until then will human emancipation be completed.”

The splendid conclusion of the argument therefore runs as follows. Man is for man the highest being, and as such—as individual and as member of the species rolled into one—has to mount the throne of human history.

The gods have been dethroned. Their existence has been shown to be the outcome of men’s attempts to find compensation for their own defects and weaknesses. Ideas are but reflexions of the soul’s anxiety.

Nor can matter, unaided, achieve anything. It needs man as fulfiller of its dynamic conformity to law, which finds expression as the necessity of interests.

The political revolution has cloven man in twain, into the member of the species, who leads an abstract life, and the private individual, who is a slave to his own egoism.

The member of the species belongs to the State, which is not (as Hegel thought) the realization of the moral idea, the manifestation of the absolutely rational, but only the framework for the anarchical conflict of individualities, the fight between individual interests. The private individual belongs to civil society, which makes him pay for his apparent freedom and independence by depriving him of his power to be a real human being.

Mankind will only be able to pursue its emancipatory ascent successfully, when it becomes competent to make every individual willing and able to bring his subjective scheme of life into harmony with the objective evolutionary scheme of society—when the private individual is wholly merged in the member of the species.

Only the objectively socialized and subjectively communalized human being will be able to effect the emancipation of mankind, thus becoming master of his own fate.

### **Friedrich Engels**

In September 1844, Marx had an encounter which was to exercise a decisive influence upon his career.

He made the acquaintance of the man whose activities were thenceforward to be indissolubly associated with his own, so closely intertwined that the name of one can never be mentioned without calling up the name of the other.

This man was Friedrich Engels. On his way from Manchester to Barmen, he spent ten days in Paris, met Bakunin for the first time, and sought out Marx.

The two had corresponded before, and had even had a brief interview, when Marx was still editor of the "Rheinische Zeitung." Engels had contributed to the paper. Later he had sent from England two articles for the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher," *Die Lage Englands* [The Position of England], and *Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie* [Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy]. Now, at length, he and Karl Marx came into close contact.

Friedrich Engels was born in Barmen on November 28, 1820. His father was a well-to-do manufacturer, partner in the great textile firm of Ermen and Engels, which had a lucrative cotton-spinning enterprise in Manchester in addition to its German plants. Friedrich's mother was a woman of culture, daughter of the headmaster of the high school in Hamm. She had eight children, of whom Friedrich was the eldest. He had had the advantages of a prosperous bourgeois upbringing, in a household governed by strict principles—but one where intellectual development was crippled by the restrictions of a Calvinistic pietism. Outside the immediate family circle, the life of a manufacturing town of the day, where the workers were badly housed, where proletarian misery in all its forms was rife, where alcoholism flourished, and where children were ruthlessly exploited, formed the environment of his early years, and supplied the leading impressions of his childhood.

Up to the age of fourteen, he attended the middle school at Barmen, subsequently going to the high school in Elberfeld. He made good progress in the natural sciences, and was especially distinguished by his talent for languages. To his father, his character trends gave rise to considerable anxiety, for as the years passed young Friedrich manifested an unmistakable, if not unduly aggressive, attitude of protest against the sanctimonious atmosphere of the home and against all orthodox and conservative dogmatism. Quitting the Wuppertal when he was eighteen, he went to Bremen, to enter as a mercantile pupil the business house of one of his father's friends. In his eagerness for knowledge, he read all the books he could get hold of. At length, one day, Strauss's *Life of Jesus* fell into his hands, and a breach with orthodoxy was the result. Although young Engels did not escape a period of religious struggle, he pursued to their logical conclusion the new ideas he had absorbed. In this way he was led to Hegel, whose writings were a revelation to him. "These colossal ideas," he wrote to a friend, "exercised a formidable influence upon me."

Simultaneously, Engels discovered the existence of Young Germany, the bold disrespect and swashbuckling onslaughts of the members of that militant group arousing his enthusiasm. To this offshoot from pietist circles, such exuberant tones were most alluring, and he tells us that he could not sleep of nights because his head was filled with "the ideas of the century." An additional step forward was taken when he became acquainted with the writings of Börne, whose *Paris Letters* made known to him the political conceptions of western European radicalism. He got into personal touch with the leading spirits of Young Germany. When his period of apprenticeship in Bremen was finished, he travelled in Switzerland and Italy. Then came his year of military service in Berlin, and, under an alias necessitated by his position in the army, he entered the circle of the Young Hegelians. As "Dr. Oswald," he played his part in the Doctors' Club, the only oasis in the intellectual desert of the Prussian capital prior to the March revolution, joining in the attempts of the energetic but unsystematic group of talented youths who were setting themselves to solve the riddle of the universe. While this was going on, he was attending lectures at the university, which had then entered upon a reactionary phase.

Schelling, now well on in years, had been summoned to Berlin by the reaction, and was to deliver a course of lectures on the philosophy of revelation. The first of

these lectures was a bitter disappointment to Engels, being full of "invectives over Hegel's grave." Engels, enraged at this, was moved to action, and penned a fierce polemic, published anonymously, entitled *Schelling and the Revelation, a Criticism of the Reaction's Latest Onslaught upon the Freedom of Philosophy*. This had so striking a success that the authorship was actually ascribed to Bakunin. From this time onwards Engels, equipped with the reputation of being a philosophical and literary force, was numbered with Bruno and Edgar Bauer, Köppen and Buhl, Stirner and Meyen, Rutenberg and Jung, among the champions who rallied to the support of Ruge and the "Jahrbücher," of Marx and the "Rheinische Zeitung." Returning to Barmen by way of Cologne, when his year of military service was finished, Engels met Moses Hess, who pointed out to him the political implications of the Hegelian philosophy, and made him acquainted with the ideas of the French socialists. Writing in 1843, Hess said: "Last year, when I was about to start for Paris, Engels came to see me on his way from Berlin. We discussed the questions of the day, and he, a revolutionist of the Year One, parted from me a convinced communist. Thus did I spread devastation." At the end of 1842, Engels went to England.

In the model land of capitalism, his attention was primarily attracted by economic developments and problems. No less interesting, however, was the Chartist movement, the first of the great political mass movements, which had begun in 1837, and in 1842 had attained its climax in imposing strikes and self-sacrificing struggles. He met Feargus O'Connor, the great Chartist leader, whose eloquence was able from time to time to infuse new vigour into a movement that was already decaying; and he wrote for the "Northern Star," the central organ of the Chartists. He also became involved in Cobden's Anti-Corn-Law movement. Finally, he was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of Robert Owen, whose long life had been devoted to the cause of utopian socialism. He frequently attended the Owenite meetings held on Sundays in the Manchester Hall of Science, but did not play an active part in this movement, whose primitive, utopian, and obsolete character was at once plain to him. Nevertheless, he contributed to Owen's newspaper, the "New Moral World," writing an article on the progress of social reform on the Continent.

But the most important of the new relationships entered into by Engels in the year 1843 was that he came into touch with the Communist Workers' Educational Society, which had been founded in London by refugees from Paris in the year 1840. "Three real men," says Engels, "Schapper, Moll, and Bauer, were the leaders of this organization. ... In Manchester, it had been borne in on me that economic phenomena, to which historians had hitherto ascribed little or no importance, are unquestionably a decisive historical power in the modern world; that they form the groundwork for the development of contemporary class oppositions in the countries where such class oppositions have been intensified by the growth of large-scale industry—especially in England; that they also form the groundwork for the development of political parties, of party struggles, and therewith of political history as a whole. Marx had not only come to the same conclusion, but had already, in the 'Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,' given utterance to the generalization that the State does not condition bourgeois society, but that, on the contrary, bourgeois society conditions and rules the State; this meaning that political life and its history are to be explained as the outcome of economic conditions and their development, instead of the converse being true. When I visited Marx in Paris during the summer of 1844, our complete agreement upon all theoretical matters became manifest, and from that time onwards we joined hands in our work."

The first outcome of Engels' studies and observations in England was the *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*, which appeared in the "Deutsch-Französische

Jahrbücher," and which Marx described as a work of genius. In this essay we discern, glowing like tongues of flame, the same thoughts as those which had flashed up in Marx's mind as the outcome of his analytical study of the French revolution and his critical examination of French socialism.

### **Paris**

To Engels, eager for knowledge, England had seemed a unique and well-stored repository of economic and commercial facts, demanding political appraisal. In like manner Marx discerned in Paris, in addition to a past of immense interest, a political present which was no less momentous, and was ripe for a revolutionary solution.

The July revolution had set up the bourgeois monarchy. Since then, capital had enjoyed complete freedom of initiative, had had full opportunity for the development of its impulses and instincts, for expansion, for the practice of unlimited exploitation. "Enrich yourselves!" Guizot had exclaimed to the bankers, stockjobbers, railway kings, mine-owners, contractors for State supplies, and financial aristocrats. Taking him at his word, they had unhesitatingly engaged in all possible methods of plunder, corruption, robbery on a gigantic scale. But while the stock exchange was wallowing in money, while vast fortunes were being made, while millionaires were being conjured up out of the ground, the masses were sinking into an abyss of poverty and despair.

The instinct of self-preservation, in conjunction with vestiges of the revolutionary tradition, drove them, if they were not to abandon themselves to utter hopelessness, to form combinations which, under the pressure of the police and the terrors of the law, could only be secret. Thus it was that great underground organizations had come into being one after another, and had spread an invisible network over the country. Paris was their nodal point. Bernard, Barbès, and Blanqui, were the most notable among the leaders. In the Friends of the People, the Champions of the Rights of Man, the Society of Families, and the Society of the Seasons, the opposition was kept alive, republicanism flourished, preparations were made for revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was advocated. The accumulated energy was discharged from time to time in conspiracies and abortive risings.

In the underworld of the revolutionary movement there was a German element at work. It consisted of intellectuals, petty bourgeois, manual workers, and craftsmen, many of whom were enrolled in the Exiles' League, founded in the year 1834, which issued a small periodical, the "Exile." Although this league had not freed itself from utopian ideas, it had made considerable advances in the theoretical field, its members being familiar with the notions of the class struggle, the concentration of capital, continually increasing proletarianization, the need for a social revolution as well as a political one, and the theory of national workshops. As far as practice was concerned, it was opposed to the use of force. In 1836, the Federation of the Just came into existence as an offshoot from the Exiles' League. The two most noted leaders of the parent body were the sometime instructor Schuster from Göttingen and Venedey from Heidelberg. Among the leaders of the Federation of the Just were Schapper, who had at one time been a student of forestry in Nassau, Bauer, a boot-maker from Franconia, and Wilhelm Weitling, a tailor from Magdeburg. "The aims were those of the coexistent secret societies in Paris. It was half a propaganda society, half a conspiracy, Paris being regarded as the focus of revolutionary action, although the preparation of occasional risings in Germany was not excluded. Since, however, Paris was to be the main centre of action, the federation was, in reality, little more than a German branch of the French secret societies, and especially of the Society of

the Seasons led by Blanqui and Barbès. ... The French took action on May 13, 1839. The sections of the federation joined in the fray, and were thus involved in the general defeat." Schapper and Bauer, who had taken part in the affair, and had spent a considerable time under arrest, had to leave France, and removed to London, whither they transferred the central committee of the Federation of the Just. Marx got into touch with those of the members who remained in Paris, and they produced both on him and on Engels a "considerable impression." Marx and Engels continued, therefore, to keep an eye on the sometime members of the federation.

In the days when Marx was there, Paris was a great crucible full of socialist and revolutionary ideas. There were relics of Saint-Simonism; vestiges of Fourierism, cherished by Considérant; Christian socialism of the Lamennais type; petty-bourgeois socialism such as was advocated by Sismondi, Buret, Pecqueur, Leroux, Vidal, etc. In the early forties, Étienne Cabet had reappeared in Paris, after making in England the acquaintance of Thomas More's *Utopia* and of the practical activities of Robert Owen. Out of his impressions and experiences he had woven his utopian romance *Voyage en Icarie*, which had attracted widespread attention, and had led to a vigorous propaganda on behalf of utopian socialism. Cabet professed a communist faith, which was adopted by vast numbers of the workers. His *Icarian Almanac* sold to the extent of 8000 copies in 1843 and of 10,000 copies in 1844. His paper the "Populaire" and his numerous pamphlets found their way into the hands of an ever-widening circle of readers; but Dézamy, who in 1842 had published his *Code de la Communauté*, in which he attacked Fourier, Lamennais, and Cabet, and demanded that socialism should be purged from religious admixture, had also a considerable number of adherents.

Another movement, characteristically petty bourgeois, was associated with the names of Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, and Flocon. For them, the organization of labour and the right to work were the fulcra of their system, which was expounded in Louis Blanc's book *Organisation du travail* published in 1842.

The kaleidoscopic picture of socialist ideas had assumed a dominant tint since 1840, through the influence of J. P. Proudhon, a talented compositor from Besançon, whose book *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* had speedily become famous. Marx thought highly of Proudhon, whom he regarded as the embodiment of his own speculative gifts. Even at a considerably later date, when the two men's paths had diverged, Marx described Proudhon's book as "epoch-making in its new and bold way of saying everything"; and expressed himself as having been enraptured by the "vigorous musculature" of Proudhon's style. While staying in Paris, Marx took all possible opportunities of making Proudhon acquainted with the Hegelian philosophy and with the means for its critical supersession. "During prolonged discussions, which often lasted far into the night, I infected him (to his misfortune) with Hegelianism, which his ignorance of the German language made it impossible for him to study properly."

Whereas this acquaintanceship ended in an inevitable breach, the friendship between Marx and Heinrich Heine established on both sides strong feelings of mutual esteem. Heine, whose mere name was enough to arouse a terrified commotion in the Prussian reactionaries he delighted to stigmatize, was (if only because he was an enemy of the Prussian reaction) a man after Marx's own heart. Furthermore, a year earlier, Heine had unreservedly avowed his support of communism. Writing under date June 15, 1843, he said: "The communists are the only party in France that is worthy of respect. I might, indeed claim respect for the vestiges of Saint-Simonism, whose champions still linger on under strange devices, and also for the

Fourierists, who are alive and kicking; but these worthy persons are moved only by words, by the social problem as a problem, by traditional ideas; they are not urged onward by elemental necessity, they are not the predestined servants through whose instrumentality the supreme world-will carries its titanic resolves into effect. Sooner or later, the scattered family of Saint-Simon and the whole general staff of the Fourierists will go over to the growing army of communism, and, equipping crude necessity with the formative word, will, as it were, play the part of the Fathers of the Church." Thus what brought Marx and Heine together, and made their union enduring, was an inner conformity of ideas. The respect they inspired in one another, as philosopher and as poet, could not fail to strengthen their alliance. Marx urged Heine to devote himself to singing the sufferings of the oppressed instead of the sufferings of passionate lovers, to exchange the lyrical flute for the satirist's scourge. The advice bore fruit, and thenceforward Heine was indefatigable in his satires upon reaction, sanctimoniousness, and philistinism.

Marx and Heine had common sympathies, not only because they were fighters in the same cause, but also because they shared in the afflictions of the persecution to which they were exposed. When leaving Cologne, Marx had thought to escape from the spies by whom he was surrounded, to break through the network of hostile machinations. But here in Paris he was once more under the observation of men whose mode of livelihood was, to say the least of it, ambiguous. Now Arnim, the Prussian ambassador in Paris, reported to Berlin that, in the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher," Heine had published "base and scandalous" *Lobgesänge auf König Ludwig* [Odes to King Louis of Bavaria], while, in the same publication, Marx had openly advocated a revolution in Germany. Thereupon the Prussian minister of police arranged that Marx, Heine, and Bernays (the last-named had published, also in the "Jahrbücher," the concluding minute of the Viennese Ministerial Conference of 1834) were, in the event of their return to Germany, to be promptly arrested on a charge of high treason and lese-majesty.

In Paris there lived a man named Börnstein, at one time an actor, and now picking up a livelihood as a theatrical agent and advertisement tout. With the aid of funds supplied by Meyerbeer, kapellmeister to the king of Prussia, and with the collaboration of Bornstedt, a provocative agent in the service of the king of Prussia, he had founded a German newspaper called "Vorwärts." In its first incarnation, as a patriotic journal, this had no success. Changing its tone, it became ultra-revolutionary, and the editor asked Marx and Heine to contribute to its columns. Heine, who was in Hamburg upon a short visit to his mother, wrote to Marx: "People ascribe to me a more important participation in 'Vorwärts' than I can really boast of. To say truth, the paper shows itself to be a master in the art of incitation, and in the publication of compromising matter. I wonder what's afoot. Perhaps a web of perfidy is being spun in Paris!"

Marx sent a few articles to "Vorwärts." Heine contributed, among other things, the gruesome strophes of the *Weberlied* [Weavers' Song]. Bernays, who was editor, being a young hothead, saw to it that when this stimulating diet came to table there should be no lack of pepper and salt. Thus the spy-directors in the Prussian government were given the pretext of which they were in search, and were at length able to complain to the French government on the ground that journalistic attacks on Prussia emanating from Paris were "increasing in impudence and coarseness." Guizot hesitated to take action, for he had no wish to burn his fingers, and he knew that the suppression of the offending periodical and the expulsion of Marx and Heine from Paris would be a public scandal and would arouse heated expostulations. In the interplay of intrigue and negotiation, Arnold Ruge (who had in the meanwhile been

completely estranged from Marx) played a remarkable part. He was "the Prussian" against whom the first of Marx's unmistakably communist articles, a contribution to "Vorwärts," was directed. In the end Guizot was persuaded, by no less a man than Alexander von Humboldt, to take measures against the offenders. Bernays was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and had to pay a fine of three hundred francs. On January 11, 1845, it was decreed that Marx, Ruge, Bakunin, Börnstein, and Bernays were to be expelled. Börnstein and Ruge, being able to pull strings, secured the cancelling of the expulsion order as far as they were concerned. The order did not cover Heine, for the authorities feared that undesirable comment would be aroused if they were to proceed to extremities against him. Marx removed to Brussels.

Paris had been hospitable to him for a season only. Though he must have quitted it with regret, after a year's sojourn, he could console himself with the knowledge that while there he had gained riper insight, had gathered experience, and had equipped himself for the fray. From his visit to Paris dates his career as a socialist.

### *Die heilige Familie*

When Marx and Engels met in Paris, one of the chief topics of conversation was the question how the criticism of the Hegelian philosophy could be most consistently and fruitfully given a political trend.

It occurred to them that an excellent plan would be to make an unsparing onslaught upon the extravagances of speculative idealism, especially in the form that doctrine had assumed in the hands of the brothers Bauer.

The friendship between Marx and Bruno Bauer had been broken off since Marx, writing in the "Rheinische Zeitung," had issued an unambiguous challenge to the "Berliner Freien." The personal dispute between the two men had eventuated in increasingly marked differences of opinion. Bruno Bauer was annoyed that Marx should have developed independently, without his patronage and friendly assistance. He looked askance at the activities of Marx in 1842, and at the political legacy of the "Rheinische Zeitung" of blessed memory." Asked to collaborate in the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher," he had ignored the invitation. On the other hand, in conjunction with his brother Edgar, he had founded the "Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung," an organ which was to "expose all the halfheartedness and inflated phraseology of the liberalism and radicalism of the year 1842." He announced that the "pretentious, malicious, petty, envious" political criticism of the "Rheinische Zeitung" was to be replaced by "free human criticism." The new journal was designed, not to join in the movement towards socialism (which, he said, was only a helpless gesture of philosophical incompetence); it was to inaugurate a return to pure philosophical theory, to the "idea of infinite self-consciousness."

Marx and Engels were not slow to accept the gage of battle. They decided to deliver thrust upon thrust, so promptly that their adversary would be unseated before he had time to recover. They were sturdy fighters, equipped with all the weapons of the intellect, full of power, courage, and lust for battle; and, now that they had joined hands for the fray, almost overbold. Their philosophical training had been identical, and they had shared an enthusiasm for Feuerbach; they had both of them passed on from philosophical radicalism into the field of practical politics, taking this step independently of one another, but both of them with the same logical consistency and the same inevitability. Now they were united by the same interest in the problem of socialism and communism, and by the same sense of responsibility towards the questions of the day. At the present juncture, they considered, the most important thing was to make a clean sweep of vestiges from earlier phases of development,

to put an end to everything which barred advance or rendered it difficult to see the goal.

Taking as his text an article by Ruge about the rising of the Silesian weavers in 1844, Marx, writing in "Vorwärts," had had a controversy with Ruge, and therein had taken a notable step forward. Renouncing State socialism, and declaring the State to be "an institution of society," he had come to hold that the State was subordinate to society. In view of his rejection of utopian socialism, the socialism of those who hoped to attain their aims without revolution, he arrived at the definition of revolution as a social phenomenon, in so far as it effected the breakup of the old society, and as a political phenomenon, in so far as it overthrew the old State authority. A logical inference from this was that politics must be made subordinate to socialism, that politics could only be a means, an instrument, for the realization of socialism. Thus the path taken from philosophical radicalism to politics led consistently to an end that lay beyond politics. Marx's frank recognition of socialism in his article came as the appropriate climax of his previous recognition of politics.

In view of his own rapid development, it was inevitable that Marx's critical zeal should be whetted by the arrogantly reactionary attitude of Bauer, who was still content with the old wisdom of the professorial chairs. Engels, who was never backward when the call to arms sounded, was delighted. While still in Paris, he sat down to write what he had to say, providing matter for twenty or thirty printed pages. The remainder was written by Marx, the remainder of a volume of three hundred and fifty pages. It may be that the book was deliberately spun out to this length because volumes containing more than three hundred pages were immune from censorship; it may be, however, that there was no deliberate policy in the matter, and that Marx, enjoying the opportunity of letting himself go, had given no thought to limitations of space.

Engels was alarmed at first sight of the ponderous tome, published by Rütten and Löning, in Frankfort-on-the-Main. He was still more startled to find that, although he had contributed so small a share of the contents, his name was given precedence of Marx's on the title-page. Most of all, however, he was aghast at the title. Marx had wanted to call the book *Kritik der kritischen Kritik* [Criticism of Critical Criticism], but the publisher had recommended, as "more incisive and more epigrammatic," the title *Die heilige Familie* [The Holy Family]. *Kritik der kritischen Kritik* had remained as subtitle, with the addition of the words *gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten* [against Bruno Bauer and his consorts]. Engels wrote to Marx: "The new title will certainly involve me in a family rumpus with my pious parents, who are already much out of humour with me; though of course you could not be expected to know this. ... But certainly the book is too big. The sovereign contempt with which we profess to regard the 'Literatur-Zeitung' is in sharp contrast with the three hundred and fifty pages we devote to the criticism of that periodical. Furthermore, most of the criticism of speculation and of abstract matters will be incomprehensible to the general public, and will not prove of interest to many. In other respects, however, the book is brilliantly written, and makes one burst one's sides with laughing."

Engels was right. The book was too big, too heavy; it was neither popular nor topical. No one had time or patience to read it until he should reach the passages which would make him burst his sides with laughing—and these, in truth, were only amusing to the connoisseur. Worst of all, the "Literatur-Zeitung" had gone the way of all flesh long before the book appeared. Even as gravedigger, *The Holy Family* came too late.



The significance of *The Holy Family*, therefore, does not depend so much upon the critical matter the book contains, upon criticism which is often intricate and wearisome, as upon the elaboration of profound thoughts, fundamental concepts, basic formulas, which were subsequently to be built into a splendid intellectual edifice destined to endure for centuries.

In especial, the vigorous aphorisms concerning the proletariat, concerning idea and mass, concerning the role of the active individual in the fulfilment of history, are as precious as finely cut and highly polished jewels.

Consider the following extracts regarding the proletariat.

“Proletariat and wealth are opposites. As such, they form a whole. They are two configurations of the world of private property. We are concerned with the definite position which the two assume in the contrast. It does not suffice to describe them as two aspects of one whole.”

“Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain its own existence, and therewith the existence of its opposite, the proletariat. It is the positive side of the contrast, private property satisfied with itself. The proletariat, on the other hand, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself, and therewith to abolish private property, the opposite that has determined its own existence, that has made it into a proletariat. It is the negative side of the contrast, its discontent with itself, private property dissolved and dissolving itself. The possessing class and the class of the proletariat represent an identical human self-alienation. But the former class feels itself comfortable and assured in this self-alienation, recognizes the alienation as its own power, and possesses in it the semblance of a human existence; the latter feels itself annihilated in the alienation, regards in it its own impotence, and perceives in it the reality of an unhuman existence.”

“Beyond question, private property, in its economic movement, advances towards its own dissolution, but only through a development of an independent and unconscious character, which it undergoes without the exercise of its own will, and impelled by the nature of things; only inasmuch as it generates the proletariat as proletariat, creates poverty that is conscious of its own mental and physical poverty, creates dehumanization that is conscious of itself and therefore abolishes itself. The proletariat fulfils the judgment which private property has brought upon itself by the creation of the proletariat, just as it fulfils the judgment which wage labour has brought upon itself by creating the wealth of others and its own poverty. When the proletariat is victorious, it has not thereby in any way become the absolute aspect of society, for it is only victorious inasmuch as it abolishes itself and its opposite. Then both the proletariat and its conditioning opposite, private property, disappear.”

“When socialist writers ascribe this role in universal history to the proletariat, they are far from doing so because they regard proletarians as gods. It is very much the other way. Because, in the fully developed proletariat, the withdrawal of all humanity, and even of the semblance of humanity, has been practically completed; because, in the living conditions of the proletariat, all the living conditions of contemporary society are comprised in their unhuman climax; because, in the proletariat, the human being has lost himself, but has gained something more than the theoretical awareness of this loss, for he has gained this in addition, that it has become an imperious necessity for him to revolt against unhumanity—for all these reasons, the proletariat can and must liberate itself. Yet it cannot liberate itself without abolishing its own living conditions, without abolishing all the unhuman living conditions of contemporary society, the conditions that comprise the situation of the proletariat.”

“We are not concerned, therefore, with what this or that proletarian, or even the proletariat as a whole, may regard as an aim. What we are concerned with is, what the proletariat actually is; and what the proletariat will, in accordance with the nature of its own being, be historically compelled to do. Its goal and its historical action are obvious, are irrevocably indicated, in the vital situation of the proletariat, and also in the whole organization of contemporary bourgeois society.”

Now consider what is said about the questions, idea and mass:

“Hegel’s interpretation of history is nothing other than the speculative expression of the Christo-Germanic dogma of the opposition between spirit and matter, between God and the world. This opposition finds expression, according to Hegel, within history, within the human world itself, in such a way that a small number of select individuals stand contrasted as active spirit with the rest of mankind as a spiritless mass, as matter.”

“Hegel’s interpretation of history presupposes an abstract or absolute spirit, which evolves in such a way that mankind is only a mass which bears it up unconsciously or consciously. Within empirical, exoteric history, he therefore assumes that there is in progress a speculative, esoteric history. The history of mankind is transformed into the history of the abstract spirit of mankind, which, because it is abstract, is something beyond real human beings.”

“Hegel is thus guilty of a twofold halfheartedness: first of all, because he declares philosophy to be the existence of absolute spirit and is at the same time careful to guard against declaring the real philosophical individual to be absolute spirit; in the second place, because he makes the absolute spirit, as absolute spirit, only the semblance of history. For, inasmuch as the absolute spirit comes into the philosopher’s consciousness as creative world spirit post festum, his fabrication of history exists only in the consciousness, the opinion, the idea of the philosopher only in the speculative imagination.”

“Speculative philosophy, and the Hegelian philosophy in especial, must translate all questions out of the form of the healthy human understanding into the form of the speculative reason, and must transform all real questions into speculative questions, before it can answer them. After speculation had twisted my question in my mouth, and had, like the catechism, thrust its own question into my mouth, it was naturally able, like the catechism, to supply its own answers to all my questions.” “Just as, according to earlier theologians, plants exist in order to be eaten by animals, and animals in order to be eaten by human beings, so history exists as fodder in the theoretical field, to serve as means for demonstration. Man is there that there may be history, and history is there that there may be demonstration of truth. In this critical and trivialized form recurs the speculative wisdom, that man is there, and that history is there, that truth may become self-conscious.”

“The ‘idea’ has always made itself ridiculous in so far as it has been detached from ‘interest.’ On the other hand it is easy to understand that every widespread ‘interest,’ every ‘interest’ that is historically valid, diffuses itself, when it first appears on the world stage, into the ‘idea,’ and thus greatly transcends its concrete limits and coalesces with the general human interest. Illusion constitutes what Fourier termed the ‘tone’ of every historical epoch.”

“Speaking generally, mass is an indefinite object, which therefore cannot perform a definite action, and cannot enter into a definite relation. Mass, as object of critical criticism, has nothing in common with real masses, which, for their part, form their massive oppositions among themselves. Their mass is ‘made’ by itself, as if an

investigator, instead of talking of definite classes, should contrast class with itself.”

“As soon as man has been recognized as the essence, as the foundation, of all human activities and conditions, criticism can only discover new categories, and transform man himself, as it has just done, into a category once more, and into the principle of a whole series of categories, thus discovering the last way of retreat open to intimidated and persecuted theological unhumanity. History does nothing; ‘has no overwhelming wealth’; ‘fights no battles.’ Man, the real, living man, does all things, owns, and fights. ‘History’ does not use man as an instrument to fulfil its own purposes, as if it were a person apart. History is nothing else than the activity of man pursuing his own aims.”

“No great perspicacity is needed—setting out from the teachings of materialism regarding the primitive goodness and the equal intellectual endowments of men; regarding the omnipotence of experience, habit, education, environing conditions over man; regarding the great importance of industry, the right to enjoyment, etc., etc. to deduce the necessary connexion of materialism with communism and socialism. If man derives all his knowledge, and his perceptions, etc., from the world of the senses and from experience in the world of the senses, it is our business to order the empirical world in such a way that man shall have truly human experiences in it, shall experience himself to be a human being. If self-interest rightly understood is the basic principle of morality, it behoves us to make sure that the private interest of the individual shall coincide with the general human interest. If man is unfree in the materialist sense (this meaning that he is free, not through the negative power of avoiding this or that, but through the positive power of fulfilling his own true individuality), it behoves us, not to punish individual offences, but to destroy the antisocial foci of crime, and to give every one social space for the manifestation of his life activities. If man is formed by circumstances, we must make the circumstances human. If man is social by nature, he can only develop his true nature in society, and we must measure the power of his nature, not by the power of the isolated individual, but by the power of society.”

With the publication of *The Holy Family*, Marx and Engels broke away entirely and on general principles from utopism and from the philanthropic tendencies of the utopists, which had long since become the mere ornamental trappings of bourgeois charity. What the utopists had never grasped, namely that socialism must be the outcome of a historical evolution, and that this evolution must be brought to pass by a self-conscious and independent movement on the part of the working class, secured lucid and cogent expression for the first time.

The young tree of historical materialism, though not yet fully cleared from encumbering tendrils of speculative philosophy, was already growing vigorously. Its foliage was spreading so lustily, that it could not fail ere long to occupy the leading place in the garden of the intellect.

### **Brussels**

The expulsion from Paris and the removal to Brussels involved Marx in financial difficulties, from which, however, he was speedily extricated by the prompt and generous help of his new friend and companion-at-arms Friedrich Engels. From the first day of their friendship, Engels, self-sacrificing and loyal, was Marx’s chief pillar of support alike in mental and in material affairs.

Writing from Barmen under date February 22, 1845, Engels says: “After inquiring all over the place, I have at length learned your address from Cologne, and immediately take up my pen to write to you. As soon as the news of your expulsion arrived,

I thought it expedient to open a subscription without delay, so that the extra expense in which you are involved could be shared by us all in communist fashion. The whip-round met with a ready response. Still, I am not sure whether the sum we have collected will suffice to give you a fresh start in Brussels, so please take it as a matter of course that it will be the greatest pleasure in the world to place at your disposal the fee I hope shortly to receive for my English literary venture. I can get along without the money just now, for my governor will have to keep me in funds. We cannot allow the dogs to enjoy having involved you in pecuniary embarrassment by their infamous behaviour.”

Not long afterwards, Engels went to Brussels. Since meeting Marx in Paris, he had been busily at work. He had brought back from England materials concerning the development of capitalist production in that country, concerning the forms and methods of exploitation, concerning the conditions under which the British proletariat lived, concerning the miseries caused by the ruthless employment of children, etc. From these he had compiled a noteworthy book, *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* [The Condition of the Working Class in England]. Published at Leipzig in the summer of 1845, it attracted wide-spread attention. It was designed as the first installment of an extensive work upon the social history of England. He had also planned the issue of a socialist monthly, in producing which Moses Hess, with whom he was again in close touch, was to help him. On January 20, 1845, he wrote to Marx: “The latest news is that on April 1st Hess and I are going to publish the first number of a new monthly, ‘Gesellschaftsspiegel,’ which will deal with the social wretchedness of the day and with the bourgeois regime.” In actual fact, publication was postponed until July 1st, when the magazine appeared as an “organ to represent the non-possessing classes, and to throw light on the social conditions of the present day.” It had a short life; but, just as Hess was the first communist, so this monthly was the first consistent attempt to establish a communist press, the first attempt to run a periodical in which attention should be concentrated upon the criticism of economic conditions. Engels, indeed, had little more to do with the matter, for he was soon fully occupied in other plans, such as the issue of a German library of the works of foreign socialist authors, the writing of a critique of Friedrich List, etc. Furthermore, he had set the whole Wuppertal buzzing by holding numerous meetings for the propaganda of communism. “Wonders have come to pass here in Elberfeld,” he wrote to Marx. “Yesterday, in the largest hall and the leading hotel of the town, we held our third communist meeting. At the first the attendance had been been 40, at the second it was 130, and at the third it was at least 200. The whole of Elberfeld and Barmen, from the financial aristocracy down to the shopkeepers, was represented every one except the proletariat. Hess made a speech; some of Shelley’s poetry and prose was read; also the article about the extant communist colonies in Püttmann’s ‘Deutsches Bürgerbuch.’ Afterwards discussion went on till one in the morning. The movement has caught on. Every one is talking about communism, and adherents flock to join us from day to day.” Still, the movement was speedily suppressed. Engels was now seriously at variance with his family, and was glad to seize the opportunity of getting away to Brussels.

He settled down in the Belgian capital for the next few months, living next door to Marx, and remaining in constant companionship with him. In the summer, the two men paid a visit to England, where they spent six weeks. Engels had some private affairs to attend to in Manchester, to arrange for the transport of his books, and to resume his collaboration on the staff of various periodicals. His main object, however, was that Marx should become personally acquainted with England, with British conditions, with English literature, and with the notable personalities of the British

labour movement. This visit was of considerable value to Marx, who hunted up literature concerning the history of political economy and social theories, and got into touch with the leading Chartists.

Having returned to Brussels, Marx and Engels promptly set to work once more. In the preface to *The Holy Family* they had announced: "This polemical work is a prelude to the independent writings in which we (each of us, of course, on his own account) shall expound our positive outlook, and therewith our positive attitude towards the more recent philosophical and social doctrines." They now set themselves to fulfil this undertaking, their aim being to settle accounts with the whole body of post-Hegelian philosophy. At the same time they wished to explain their present position as contrasted with their own "earlier philosophical attitude."

Directly he came to Brussels, Engels became aware that Marx had outstripped and abandoned the "realist humanism" which he had still advocated in the preface to *The Holy Family*. Marx, a man of fiery spirit, hastened to slough one philosophical skin after another, so that Engels, though of a more elastic and sympathetic disposition than Marx, often found it hard to keep pace with his companion.

It had become clear to Marx that there was "no possibility of understanding historical reality without a knowledge of industry." For him, philosophy was no longer the crown and sum of all human knowledge, and it had therefore become superfluous. In especial he had been led to this radicalism of insight and judgment by his criticism of Feuerbach. By the time he had finished writing *The Holy Family*, he had broken away altogether from Feuerbach.

In the last resort, Feuerbach could not come to terms with the sensible world. Though he "detested" the realm of abstractions, he could not find his way out of it. His sensible world was an abstract entity, a phenomenon that had existed from all eternity, unchanging. He never understood that this sensible world is the outcome of an interminable evolution, is the product of innumerable generations, each of which stands on the shoulders of its predecessor. For him, likewise, man was an abstract conception. "He clings desperately to nature and man," wrote Engels, "but for him nature and man are words, and nothing more. He cannot tell us anything definite either about real nature or about the real man." The abstract man was the uttermost thing philosophy could reach after turning away from the idea. It had, indeed, replaced the idea by man, but at bottom had done nothing more than substitute one abstraction for another. This was in accordance with the very nature of philosophy; but when reaching abstract man, philosophy had got no nearer to the world of reality. Philosophy, then, must be abandoned, if the real man were to be reached. Now for Marx this real man was man active, man at work, man engaged in the process of production, man leading a social life, pushed forward and pulled onward by interests, acting in history, and thus fulfilling evolution.

The discovery of man, of real, living man, of man making history, was the pioneer stride taken by Marx beyond Hegel, Bauer, and Feuerbach.

In one of Marx's notebooks dating from this period, among extracts and annotations in an almost illegible handwriting, have been found the famous *Theses on Feuerbach*—a formidable boundary stone, as it were, to indicate the enormous magnitude of the new discovery, and to mark the advance in the development of Marx's investigations. Engels has described them as the "splendid germ of a new outlook on the universe."

Here are the theses.

"1. The main defect of all earlier materialism (Feuerbach's included) is that the object, reality, the sensible, is conceived only under the form of the object or of contemplation, not as human sensory activity, not as practice, not subjectively. Hence, in opposition to materialism, the active side is developed abstractly from idealism, which naturally knows nothing of actual sensory activity as such. Feuerbach is in search of sensible objects, really distinguished from the objects of thought; but he does not grasp human activity itself as objective activity. Consequently, in the *Essence of Christianity*, he regards only theoretical behaviour as truly human, whereas practice is only conceived and fixed in its contaminated Jewish phenomenal form. Hence he does not understand the importance of revolutionary activity, of practical-critical activity.

"2. The question whether human thought has circumstantial truth, is not a theoretical but a practical question. In practice, a man must prove the truth of his thought, that is to say its reality and power, its mundaneness. The dispute concerning the reality or unreality of thought isolated from practice, is a purely scholastic problem.

"3. The materialist doctrine of the transformation of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances must be altered by men and that the educator must himself be educated. It therefore has to divide society into two parts, one of which is elevated above it.

"The coincidence of the changing of circumstances, and human activity or self-alteration, can only be grasped and rationally understood as revolutionary practice.

"4. Feuerbach sets out from the fact of religious self-alienation, and the duplication of the world into a religious world and a mundane one. His work consists in reducing the religious world to its mundane foundation. If the mundane foundation lifts itself above itself and establishes itself in an independent realm in the clouds, that is only to be explained as an outcome of the dismemberment and self-contradictoriness of this mundane foundation. The mundane foundation must, therefore, be understood as practically revolutionized both in itself and in its contradiction. Thus as soon as the earthly family has been revealed as the mystery of the holy family, the former must itself be annihilated both theoretically and practically.

"5. Feuerbach, not content with abstract thinking, wants contemplation; but he does not conceive the sensible as practical sensory-human activity.

"6. Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the human essence. But the human essence is not an abstraction in reality, it is the totality of social relations.

"Feuerbach, who does not enter into the criticism of this real essence, is therefore compelled:

"(a) To ignore the historical process, to establish the religious sentiment per se, and to postulate an abstract isolated human individual.

"(b) The essence, therefore, can only be grasped as a 'species,' as an inward, dumb generality naturally uniting numerous individuals.

"7. Feuerbach, therefore, does not see that the 'religious sentiment' is itself a social product, and that the abstract individual he analyses belongs to a determinate social form.

"8. All social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which drive theory into the realm of mysticism, find their rational solution in human practice and in the understanding of this practice.

"9. The highest to which contemplative materialism attains (the materialism which does not grasp the sensible as practical activity), is the contemplation of isolated individuals and of bourgeois society.

"10. The standpoint of the old materialism is bourgeois society; the standpoint of the new materialism is human society or social humanity.

"11. Philosophers have done nothing more than interpret the world in various ways; our business is to change it."

These *Theses on Feuerbach* were penned only as a prelude for the great settlement of accounts between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and Feuerbach, Bauer, Stirner, and all the post-Hegelian philosophers, on the other.

## **Chapter 03: Clarification, Part 2**

### ***German Ideology***

As the outcome of nearly a year's work (the year extending from September 1845 to August 1846), Marx and Engels wrote two thick volumes which were to be published under the title *Die deutsche Ideologie*. A friend and admirer of Marx, the sometime Lieutenant Weydemeyer, working in Westphalia as a geometrician, hoped that his brother-in-law Lüning, the publisher of the "Westfälisches Dampfboot" in Bielefeld, would issue the new book. The manuscript was sent to him, but the book never appeared, the reason being, as the authors learned in due course, that "changed circumstances made it impossible to print it." Nor could any other publisher be found. "We decided, therefore," wrote Marx at a later date, "to leave our manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice—and did so all the more willingly since we had attained our chief purpose, self-understanding."

Self-understanding all along the line—this was the essential characteristic of the book. It was "to expose the sheep which regarded themselves and were regarded as wolves"; it was to show "how the rodomontade of the expounders of philosophy served merely to reflect the pitiful character of actual conditions in Germany" it was to make known to all the world "the process of putrefaction which had set in in the absolute German spirit."

Such were the aims of its authors. But it did more than this. It freed Marx and Engels from the last vestiges of philosophical lumber with which, unwittingly, their thought was still burdened; led them beyond the criticism of philosophy, of politics, and of economics, to the criticism of the interpretation of history; and thus revealed to them a fact of overwhelming importance, that the motive force of history is not the idea, not criticism, but the revolution, man—revolutionary man.

The discovery of the real, active human being, of man engaged in the process of making history, as announced in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, is here followed up by the discovery of revolutionary man. Step by step, Marx the investigator had made his way to this result.

"The first presupposition of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. The first facts to investigate, therefore, are the bodily organization of these individuals and the resultant relation between these individuals and the rest of nature."

"All history-writing must set out from these natural foundations and their modification in the course of history by the action of human beings."

“We may distinguish human beings from animals by consciousness, by religion, by anything you please. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their own means of subsistence, a step which is necessitated by their bodily organization. Inasmuch as human beings produce their own means of subsistence, they indirectly produce their own material life.”

“The necessities of life are, above all, food, drink, shelter, clothing, and a few others. Hence the first historical act is the production of the means for the satisfaction of these needs, the production of material life itself, and this one historical fact is a fundamental determinant of all history.”

“As individuals express their lives, so they are. Thus what they are, coincides with what they produce; and not only with what they produce, but with how they produce. Consequently, what individuals are, depends upon the material conditions of production.”

“Determinate individuals, productively active in a determinate way, therefore enter into determinate social and political relations.”

“Social classification and the State are continually proceeding out of the life process of determinate individuals, not, however, of these individuals as they may appear to themselves or others, but as they really are; that is to say as they work, as they are engaged in material production, as they are active under determinate material limitations, presuppositions, and conditions which are independent of their will.”

“The production of ideas, representations, consciousness, is, primarily, directly interwoven into the material activity and the material intercourse of human beings, is the language of actual life. Representation, thought, the intellectual intercourse of human beings, arise as the direct outcome of their material behaviour. The same thing is true of mental production, as displayed in the language of the politics, the laws, the morality, the religion, the metaphysics, etc., of a people. Human beings are the producers of their representations, ideas, etc.; but the actual working human beings are determined by a specific evolution of their productive powers and of the appropriate method of intercourse in its furthest ramifications.”

“Consciousness can never be anything other than conscious being, and the being of man is man’s true vital process.”

“In sharp contrast with German philosophy, which came down from heaven to earth, here an ascent is made from earth to heaven. This means that we do not set out from what men say, fancy, represent to themselves, nor yet from man as said to be, thought to be, fancied to be, represented to be, in order thence and by that path to reach man in the flesh; we set out from real, active human beings, and from their actual vital processes we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this vital process. Even the phantasmagorias in the human brain are necessary supplements of man’s material vital process, of a process that is empirically demonstrable and is linked with material presuppositions. Morality, religion, metaphysics, and ideology in general, with their appropriate forms of consciousness, thus forfeit the semblance of independence. They have no history, no evolution, of their own. Human beings, developing material production and material intercourse, and thus altering the real world that environs them, alter therewith their own thought and the products of their thought. Consciousness does not determine life, but life determines consciousness.”

“This observation is not devoid of presuppositions. It sets out from real presuppositions, and never for a moment abandons the ground of the real. Its presuppositions are human beings, not in any fanciful circumscription and fixation, but in their



actual, empirical, perceptible developmental process under specific conditions. As soon as this active vital process has been demonstrated, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts.”

“Once reality has been demonstrated, philosophy as an independent discipline loses the medium of its existence.”

“Not criticism, but revolution, is the motive force of history.”

“This conception of history shows that history does not end by resolving itself into ‘self-consciousness’ as ‘the spirit of spirit’; but that in history at every stage there exists a material outcome, a sum of productive forces, a historically created relation to nature and a historically created relation of individuals one to another, which are handed down to each successive generation by its predecessor; that there are in each stage of history a mass of productive forces, capitals, and circumstances, which are indeed modified by the new generation, but on the other hand prescribe to the new generation its own vital conditions, and give to it a definite development, a specific character—so that circumstances make men quite as much as men make circumstances.”

“Finally we obtain the following results from the fully developed conception of history. 1. In the development of the forces of production a stage is reached at which productive forces and means of intercourse are evolved which, under the extant conditions, only do harm; which are no longer forces of production, but forces of destruction (machinery and money). In association with this we find that a class is evolved which has to bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages, which is forced out of society into the most marked contrast to all other classes; a class which forms the majority of all the members of society, and one from which the consciousness of the necessity for a thorough going revolution, the communist consciousness, proceeds—a consciousness which, of course, can only arise in the other classes thanks to the comprehension of the position of this particular class. 2. The conditions within which determinate forces of production can be applied, are the conditions of the dominion of a specific class of society, of a class whose social power (arising out of ownership) secures practical-idealist expression in the extant form of State, with the consequence that every revolutionary struggle is directed against a class which has up to that time been dominant. 3. In all revolutions that have hitherto taken place, the kind of activity has remained inviolate, so that there has never been anything more than a changed distribution of this activity, with a new distribution of labour to other persons; whereas the communist revolution is directed against the kind of activity which has hitherto been exercised, and does away with labour, and makes an end of class rule when it does away with classes, the reason being that this revolution is brought about by the class which no longer counts in society as a class, is not recognized as a class, but is the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc., within extant society. 4. For the widespread generation of this communist consciousness, and for the carrying out of the communist revolution, an extensive change in human beings is needed, which can only occur in the course of a practical movement, in the course of a revolution; so that the revolution is not only necessary because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but is also necessary because only in a revolution can the uprising class free itself from the old yoke and become capable of founding a new society.”

“For us, communism is not a condition of affairs which ‘ought’ to be established, not an ‘ideal’ towards which reality has to direct itself. When we speak of communism, we mean the actual movement which makes an end of the present condition of affairs. The determinants of this movement arise out of the extant presupposition.”

The foregoing remarkable passages from the fragment of the work which has been rescued, and which has been recently published for the first time at Frankfort-on-the-Main in the opening volume of the "Marx-Engels Archiv," give no more than an imperfect picture of the mental energy with which the before-mentioned process of self-understanding was carried through.

They contain an elementary formulation of the materialist interpretation of history, which was subsequently to be worked out as a complete method. Here and there, the actual wording of the extracts is identical with that of the later elaborated formulation.

### **"True" Socialism**

The great settlement of accounts with a world of adversaries would have been incomplete, and the victorious champions in this battle of the intellects would have remained unsatisfied, had not Marx and Engels, in the second volume of their *German Ideology*, made a ruthless onslaught upon "German or true socialism," as voiced "by its various prophets."

Among the "true socialists," perhaps the most notable was Karl Grün, a Westphalian. He had been one of Marx's fellow students, and Moses Hess had made him acquainted with Engels. His socialist career had started from the radical "small-beer liberalism." Then he had coquetted with Fourierism for a time, until at length, having got into touch with Hess, he deviated towards early socialism. All possible varieties of socialism were jumbled together in his head. Out of borrowed and undigested thoughts from Proudhon, Feuerbach, Hess, and Marx, he had brewed the most amazing elixir of happiness, whose formulas were aesthetically tinted and were couched in a feuilleton style. From Paris, writing hastily and irresponsibly, he sent his lucubrations to the German press, and especially to the "Triersche Zeitung." He had wrongfully accused Marx of not protesting with sufficient vigour against expulsion from France, and Marx, who was always too ready to take offence, had therefore conceived an animus against Grün which formed the undertone of a fierce criticism of the latter's attitude towards the problems of socialism.

Grün had influence among the socialist handicraftsmen and apprentices in Paris, the "Straubinger" (travelling journeymen) as Engels contemptuously termed them. Since it was hoped to win them over to communism, Grün must be discredited. To lay him low in the literary lists would not suffice. Engels must go to Paris, and there, by personal intervention, undermine Grün's position. In October 1846, Engels wrote to Marx from Paris: "I think I shall get my way here with the Straubinger. The fellows are terribly ignorant, however, and their condition in life has not prepared them in any way. ... Grün has done a tremendous lot of harm. He has turned all that was definite in their minds into mere day-dreams, humanist aspirations, and the like. Under the pretext of attacking Weitlingism and other systematized forms of communism, he has filled their heads full of belletristic and petty-bourgeois phraseology, and has declared that anything else than his teaching is enslavement to system. Even the joiners, who have never been Weitlingians (except for a few), have a superstitious horror of 'bread-and-butter communism,' and prefer the most preposterous day-dreaming, peaceful plans for inaugurating universal happiness, and so on, to what they call 'bread-and-butter communism.' The most hopeless confusion prevails." The net upshot of the visit was that Engels, though he did indeed put an end to Grün's influence, only increased the confusion, so that the "Straubinger" ceased to be possible recruits for an international communist league such as Marx and Engels already hoped to found.

Intellectually, Karl Grün was closely allied with Moses Hess, who was also living in Paris at this time. Engels, therefore, in his letters from Paris, was not sparing in savage attacks on the "communist rabbi," as Ruge had called Hess. Marx, too, since May 1846, had put Hess upon the proscription list. Weitling, in a letter to Hess, had informed the latter regarding Marx's plans and views. "There must be a winnowing in the communist party. ... Handicraftsmen's communism, philosophical communism, is to be fought; sentiment is to be despised: these are merely day-dreams. Communism can only be realized after the bourgeoisie has got command of the ship." In the struggle between Marx and Weitling, Hess had taken Weitling's side, and this was enough to infuriate Marx, and to make him look for a means of crushing Hess. Nevertheless, Moses Hess, despite many deviations and peculiarities had in the course of his socialist development come so near to Marx's standpoint, that, as late as July 28, 1846, Hess wrote to Marx: "I am in full agreement with your views concerning communist authorship. However necessary it may have been at the outset that communist endeavours should be linked to German ideology, it is no less necessary now that they should be based upon historical and economic premises, for otherwise we shall never be able to settle accounts either with the 'socialists' or with the adversaries of all shades of opinion. I am now devoting myself exclusively to economic literature." Although Marx regarded this declaration as a "capitulation," in Paris Engels had, as he himself admitted, treated Hess with "coldness and mockery." Still, in August 1847, when the Workers' Educational Society (an organization dominated by Marx and Engels) was founded in Brussels, Hess, who had now settled in that city, not only became a member of the organization, but was actually elected president, and, further, collaborated with Marx and Engels as a regular contributor to the "Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung."

Among the other representatives of "true" socialism, three demand special mention. Hermann Kriege, a student who had been a disciple of Feuerbach, had at first aroused great hopes in Engels, but, having emigrated to New York, founded there a periodical, the "Volkstribun," in which he advocated a confused form of communism based on brotherly love. Hermann Püttmann had at one time been on the staff of the "Kölnische Zeitung," and had then for two years in succession, published the "Deutsches Bürgerbuch" and the "Rheinische Jahrbücher," which served to voice the hazy views of a number of freethinking socialist enthusiasts. Otto Lüning of Bielefeld was the publisher of the "Westfälisches Dampfboot," a journal which carried on propaganda on behalf of socialist ideas, and did not shrink from the thought of revolution.

Like the philosophers, the "true" socialists were critically disembowelled by Marx and Engels according to all the rules of art. It was continually being made plain, said the critics, that this true socialism was nothing more than a botched German translation of the ideas of French socialism, was communism that had been emasculated into German ideology. In the heads of such eclectic philanthropists, the old illusion was still firmly fixed that a cleavage in the conceptual world must inevitably precede a cleavage in the real world of history, the former bringing the latter to pass. "They endeavoured to hide how pitiful a part the Germans have played in actual history, by putting the illusions to which the Germans have always been peculiarly prone on the same footing with reality. As the Germans have never had a talent for anything but looking on and looking after, they believed it to be their mission to sit in judgment on all the world, and they cherished the illusion that the whole of history was attaining its ultimate aim in Germany."

Since Marx and Engels were ruthlessly endeavouring to reach self-understanding, self-laceration could not be avoided. This self-laceration conjured up an army of

adversaries, and involved them for five years or more in the most venomous personal quarrels. A further result was that the proletarian united front, which was already in course of formation, was, prematurely and without any sufficient objective reason, broken for decades to come. The intolerant way in which the purging of the communist ranks was effected and in which the cleavage in the communist camp was brought about, was not the outcome of unavoidable necessity, not dependent upon the progress of economic evolution. Its primary cause was Marx's craving for exclusive personal predominance, which he rationalized into a fanatical confidence in the conquering power of his own idea.

Beyond question, however, this idea, distilled to absolute purity by a pitiless process of clarification, and running on ahead of the evolution of historical reality, pointed the way (like the star of Bethlehem) which would lead infallibly to liberation. Just as it was the main service of Moses Hess to deliver socialism from its entanglement with opposition bourgeois radicalism, so was it the unparalleled service of Marx and Engels to draw a clear distinction—however remorselessly and however fanatically, and however much at the cost of unity—between ethico-philosophical socialism and economic socialism.

### **Dialectic**

A close scrutiny of Marx's intellectual labours down to this time shows that for years past, considered as a whole, they had been an uninterrupted onslaught on Hegel, sometimes direct and sometimes indirect.

This young man—endowed with a leonine strength and equipped with a lion's claws, a giant fighting desperately to maintain and increase his own sense of self-esteem, discountenanced, shunned, and persecuted by society—dared to measure his forces against those of Hegel, that monumental figure, universally admired, overtopping all, venerated by the whole intellectual world.

Marx's writings for years past, against Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, Stirner, the Young Hegelians, and the "true" socialists, had, in the last analysis, been shafts aimed at the Hegelian principle of the absolute, at the Hegelian priority of the idea, at Hegel's metaphysical trend, at the aloofness from the world characteristic of Hegel's way of looking at things, at Hegel's "abstract man." In a word, whatever the ostensible target, Marx's missiles had really been thrown at Hegel's head. It was under the stimulus of this profound antagonism that Marx had been converted to materialism side by side with Feuerbach, had attacked Hegel's philosophy of right, had advanced from philosophy to politics, had put man in place of the idea, had substituted the active man for the abstract man, had replaced criticism by the revolution, and had declared that the revolutionary proletariat would achieve the fulfilment of historical evolution.

Throughout: Marx in conflict with Hegel, titan wrestling with titan.

But a work of such fundamental significance as Hegel's system, a philosophy which had had so overwhelming an influence upon the mental outlook and the development of an entire nation, could not (as Engels phrased it) be thrust aside by ignoring it, nor yet overcome by running atilt against it.

It must be 'superseded' after its own kind, must be dealt with in such a way that, whilst its form was annihilated by criticism, the new content with which it had enriched thought would be preserved."

This new content of the Hegelian system was the dialectical method.

When we contemplate things and phenomena, we may proceed by regarding them one by one, detached from their environment, in abstract isolation. At times this may be indispensable and useful. But, as a general method, it leads to unsatisfactory results. The most important characteristics elude us. In the world there is nothing isolated, there is nothing at rest, there is nothing to be found apart from all other things, there is no self-existent phenomenon. Everything is in a flux, dynamically mobile, interconnected by inseparable ties with the whole world of phenomena. By the law of becoming, which is realized in the totality of life, all being is resolved into eternal movement. This movement is change, is the passage from what has existed to a new condition. Hence it is logically indispensable to contemplate every thing, every phenomenon, in all its manifestations and all its interconnexions. The method which fulfils this demand is the dialectical method, and by that method the principle of evolution is scientifically justified.

Hegel had gone back to the method of dialectical thought which was in use already among the ancients, and was advocated, above all, by Heraclitus. Taking over from Fichte the three stages of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, he had replaced the principle of the old logic "Everything is identical with itself, nothing contradicts itself," by the new principle "Nothing is identical with itself and everything contradicts itself." In accordance with this principle, he conceived every notion as a necessary product of the interaction of two antecedent notions, which, their oppositions having been fused into a new unity, had both been subsumed in the higher notion. To notions, concepts, or ideas, he ascribed a validity which was not eternal or absolute, but merely transient and historical. "According to Hegel," says Engels, "the truth to be recognized by philosophy was no longer a collection of ready-made dogmatic propositions which, once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart. Truth lay in the very process of cognition, in the long historical evolution of science, rising from lower to ever higher stages of knowledge, but never reaching (by the discovery of a so-called absolute truth) the point beyond which no advance would be possible, the point at which all we should have to do would be to fold our arms and go on admiring the absolute truth that had been won. ... Every stage is necessary, that is to say justified for the time and under the conditions out of which it arises; but it becomes invalid and forfeits its justification under new and higher conditions which gradually develop within its own womb; it has to give place to a higher stage, which in its turn will decay and perish. ... Thus this dialectical philosophy does away with any thought of permanent, absolute truth, and of absolutely final conditions for man-kind dependent on such a truth. To the dialectical philosophy, nothing is final, absolute, or sacred; everything is transient, subject to an uninterrupted process of becoming and disappearing, of an unending ascent from the lower to the higher-dialectic itself being no more than a reflexion of that process, a reflexion within the thinking brain." Hegel gave several definitions of the term dialectic as he understood it. In his *Encyclopaedia* he says that true dialectic is the inner and progressive transition of one explanation into another, in course of which it becomes manifest that the explanations of the understanding are one-sided and narrowly limited, this meaning that each of them contains its own negation. All this acquires its peculiar character in that it does away with itself. In his *Logic* he describes the dialectical developmental process brought about by the play of the internal oppositions. He says that the forward movement begins with abstract and simple concepts or categories, and passes into the next concepts, which continually become richer and more concrete. At every stage of the enlarged particular concept, the whole mass of its earlier content resurges; and, in the course of the dialectical development, none of this earlier content is lost, for, rather, all succeeding new acquisitions are borne onward with the

rest, so that the whole is an enriched condensation. The climax is reached in the absolute idea. In Hegel's *Science of Logic* we read: "The immediate, moving in this negative direction, has been submerged in the other, but the other, essentially, is not an empty negative, not nothing, as is assumed to be the ordinary result of dialectic; it is the other of the first, the negative of the immediate; thus it is determined as the mediate, contains the determination of the first in itself. Thus the first is preserved and maintained in the process of alteration."

Hegel was an idealist. He regarded the idea as the living soul of the world, and in accordance with this it was natural that for him dialectic should play its primary part in the realm of ideas. Only in that the dialectically won concept "alienated itself," did it undergo transformation into nature, "where it experiences new development, unconscious of itself, clothed as natural necessity, and at long last returns to self-consciousness in man. Thenceforward, in the course of history, this self-consciousness works itself up again from the raw, until at length, in the Hegelian philosophy, the absolute idea comes to itself fully once again. Thus, for Hegel, the dialectical development which occurs in nature and history (that is to say the causal interconnexion of the progressive movement from lower to higher, the progressive movement which is continuous despite zigzags and momentary reverses), is nothing but an enfeebled copy of the spontaneous movement of the idea, that movement which has been going on from all eternity, no one knows where, but in any case independent of the thinking human brain." (Engels.)

On first coming into contact with Hegelianism, Marx had recognized conceptual dialectic to be a speculative mystification, without, however, questioning or rejecting the dialectical method per se. When, subsequently, he was led to materialism by Feuerbach, he was able to free dialectic from its idealist trappings, and to translate the mirror-writing of abstraction into a readable, concrete formula. Then it was seen that reality is not a mere reflexion of ideas; but, conversely, that ideas are copies of reality, copies formed by a materialistic process. In this way the Hegelian conceptual dialectic, which had been standing on its head, was turned back on to its feet, and exhibited itself as a factual dialectic.

When, still later, Marx broke away from Feuerbach, he did so (as we know) because the materialism of the objective world of nature had for him been transformed into a materialism of social conditions which, dialectically regarded, present themselves as the outcome of processes. In so far as man acts on nature external to himself, in the course of this action he modifies his own nature. The production of the idea and of concepts takes place in close connexion with the material activities of men and with their material relations. Man's being is the real process of his life. Cognition, therefore, can be nothing else than the cognition of this actual being. This being of man, a series of processes, was disclosed by Marx (when he developed philosophy into politics) to be the production of material life, to be a succession of struggles for power, struggles undertaken on behalf of interests. These interests, economic interests, relate to the domain of production, to the field of political economy. Now here it was plain that the struggles which arise in connexion with the production of the material necessities of life, are carried on between classes which confront one another as hostile powers.

Marx was not the original discoverer of this. He found the notion ready-made in English and French sociological literature, and beyond question Engels must have directed his attention to some of these sources. "Since the establishment of large-scale industry," writes Engels in his essay *Ludwig Feuerbach*, "that is to say at least since the peace of 1815, it has been no secret in England that the whole political

struggle in that country turns upon the rival claims of two classes, the aspirations of the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie respectively to achieve dominion. In France, the same fact became obvious when the Bourbons returned to power. The historians of the Restoration period, Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, and Thiers, all presented this idea to their readers as the key for the understanding of French history since the Middle Ages. From 1830 onwards, both in England and in France, it was recognized that the working class, the proletariat, had become a third competitor in the struggle for power. Conditions had been so greatly simplified that nothing but wilful blindness could hide from the observer the struggle among these three great classes, could prevent the recognition that the conflict of their interests is the motive force of modern society. This is true, at any rate, as regards the two most advanced countries.”

In this conflict of interests, bourgeoisie and proletariat are related each to the other as thesis and antithesis. The dialectical process works itself out as a class struggle, which carries the movement on beyond the oppositions of the antithetical relation. A new society, socialist society, appears as a synthesis.

Thus Marx, investigating, drawing inferences, shaping things in his mind, welding link into link to form a chain, evolved the Feuerbachian materialism of nature into a materialism of society, transformed the abstract conceptual dialectic of Hegel into a concrete factual dialectic, saw the dialectical contradiction incorporated in classes, and recognized the dialectical process in the class struggle. In this way he was led to a new dialectic, a new conception or interpretation of history.

Nay more, he came to regard socialism as a logical upshot of historico-economic evolution, arising in virtue of an inherent law.

Engels made the same scientific discovery. He reached it as the outcome of practical experience and direct observation in England. In that country, the contradictions inherent in the capitalist method of production, working themselves out in the form of social conflicts, had been manifest to him in all their nudity. Already in the “Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher” he had incorporated the gist of his observations and deductions upon these matters in two articles, embodying entirely new outlooks.

This discovery sufficed to show that he was the predestined collaborator of Marx.

### ***Misère de la Philosophie***

According to Hegel, human beings are puppets, jerked hither and thither on the stage of life by the strings to which they are suspended—the strings of the idea.

Feuerbach describes them as real human beings, gives them flesh and blood, but they do not know how to set about their business.

In Marx’s hands they at length become independent actors, performing their own drama on their own stage. They experience history, and fulfil it, in actual practice. They are not in the leading strings of a higher will, are not subordinated to an idea outside themselves, are not guided by a consciousness existing apart from themselves and working towards its own preconceived ends. There is no prompter in the wings. They are independent beings; they act solely in accordance with the dictates of their own human interests.

These interests, in Marx’s view, are directed towards effecting man’s mastery over nature, towards safeguarding human existence, towards promoting the expansion of that existence by the development of the forces of production and of social relations. In a society divided into classes, the respective classes pursue their rival interests amid the vicissitudes of the class struggle. The aim of the proletarian class struggle is the establishment of a socialist society. The way thither is through

revolution.

From year to year, in one book after another, and with increasing definiteness, Marx had been developing these ideas in all their convincing inexorability. The results of his process of self-clarification, at the outset no more than little tongues of flame in the thorny thicket of philosophical confusion, had gradually become a circle of lights, and had then taken the form of torches borne onwards in proletarian hands as a demonstration making its progress through an intimidated world. But this did not suffice our titan. Now a lighthouse was to be erected, shedding its beams far and wide over the whole extent of the globe; a conflagration was to be inaugurated, bringing society and civilization face to face with an inevitable destiny.

Marx's next book, *Misère de la philosophie* (1847), penned and published in Brussels, achieved this end.

*Misère de la philosophie* [Poverty of Philosophy] was a polemic in answer to Proudhon's *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère* [System of Economic Contradictions, or Philosophy of Poverty], which had appeared earlier in the same year. The talks the two men had had in Paris had not brought Proudhon over to Marx's way of thinking, or at any rate Proudhon had not followed Marx in the latter's new thought-trend. In the preface to the *Poverty of Philosophy* Marx writes banteringly: "Monsieur Proudhon enjoys the misfortune of being misunderstood in a peculiar way. In France, he is excused for being a bad economist because he is regarded as thoroughly well versed in German philosophy; in Germany, on the other hand, he is excused for being a bad philosopher because he is regarded as one of the most outstanding among French economists. Being myself both German and economist, I feel it incumbent on me to lodge a protest against this twofold error." In a letter to Marx, Proudhon had referred to his forthcoming volume and had said: "I await the lash of your criticism." He was to receive a lashing unexampled in its severity!

Marx scourged Proudhon with a criticism so remorseless, dismembered the philosopher of poverty with so unsparing a hand, roasted his victim so unmercifully, that there could no longer be any question of friendship between the pair. Some, even, who had little concern with the quarrel, were outraged that controversy should be conducted in such a tone. In earlier and subsequent disputes with more formidable opponents, with foemen more worthy of his steel, Marx was more lenient. On this occasion he excelled himself in cut and thrust, in sovereign contempt, in self-confident scorn for his adversary. The book was not so much a criticism as a liquidation. The enemy's ship was positively blown out of the water.

There was something more, however, than an impressive public execution, for here a man of genius was engaged in the work of creation. When making a clearance of the remnants of speculative illusion, when revealing all the inconsistency of utopian romanticism, when pillorying the half-heartedness and obliquity and folly of economic quackery, he was clearing the ground on which science could erect the solid edifice of a new interpretation of history and a new theory of society.

In the *Misère de la philosophie*, Marx for the first time gives a concrete and comprehensive account of the materialist interpretation of history, which hitherto in his writings has been referred to only in passing, sketchily and allusively. Now he expresses his theory in unambiguous terms. He declares that economic production, and the social stratification which is its necessary outcome, form, in each historical epoch, the foundations of the political and ideological history of this epoch. The whole course of history down to our own times has been a history of class struggles. Today, these class struggles have reached a phase of development at which the



exploited and oppressed class of the proletariat cannot effect its liberation from the bourgeoisie without a revolutionary transformation of society at large. Such, in broad outline, is the theory of historical materialism.

At a later date, Marx described the tenor of his book in the following terms: "I showed therein how little Proudhon had penetrated into the mystery of scientific dialectic; and how, on the other hand, he shared the illusions of speculative philosophy, inasmuch as, instead of regarding economic categories as the theoretical expressions of historical relations of production corresponding to a definite evolutionary phase of material production, he wandered off into the belief that they were pre-existent and everlasting ideas, and returned by this devious path to the outlook of bourgeois economics.

"I showed, further, that his acquaintance with the 'political economy' which he was venturing to criticize was defective, worthy of a schoolboy; and that he set out in company with the utopists in search of a so-called 'science' which was to provide an a priori formula for the 'solution of the social problem,' instead of creating the science out of a critical knowledge of the historical movement—a movement which itself produces the material conditions of emancipation. In especial I showed how Proudhon continued to hold unclarified, fallacious, and half-hearted views concerning the basis of the whole, concerning exchange-value, mistaking the utopian interpretation of the Ricardian theory of value for the foundation of a new science. As to his general standpoint, I may sum up my judgment as follows:

"Every economic relation has a good and a bad side; that is the only matter in which Monsieur Proudhon does not slap his own face. He considers that the good side is presented by the economists, and that the bad side is brought into accusatory relief by the socialists. He borrows from the economists the necessity of the eternal relations; he borrows from the socialists the illusion that poverty is nothing more than poverty (instead of recognizing in poverty the revolutionary and destructive trend which will overthrow the old society). He agrees with both parties, endeavouring to prop himself by the authority of science. For him, science is reduced to the dwarfed stature of a scientific formula; he is always on the hunt for formulas. Monsieur Proudhon, therefore, plumes himself on having effectively criticized both political economy and communism—although both are far above his head. He stands below the economists because, as a philosopher possessed of a magical formula, he believes himself competent to enter into purely economic details; and he stands below the socialists because he has neither sufficient courage nor yet sufficient insight (were it but purely speculative insight) to lift himself above the bourgeois horizon."

The first part of the book deals with use-value and exchange-value, constitutive value and synthetic value, labour time, money, and surplus labour; the second part discusses the division of labour and machinery, competition and monopoly, landed property and land-rent, strikes and working-class combination. The reader is amazed to find how perfectly Marx is already acquainted with the anatomy of bourgeois society. He has studied the whole body of the literature bearing on the question. He quotes Adam Smith and Ricardo, refers to Lauderdale, Sismondi, Storch, Atkinson, Hodgkin, Thompson, Edmonds, Bray, John Stuart Mill, Sadler, to Cooper the American, to the French writers Boisguilbert, Quesnay, Say, and Lemontey. He puts his finger on all Proudhon's weak spots, discloses every one of the speculative entanglements, and makes merry over his adversary's utopian confusions.

The following passages are of especial importance as regards the foundation and the formulation of the materialist interpretation of history.

“A true philosopher, Monsieur Proudhon stands everything on its head, and discerns in actual relations nothing more than the incarnation of those principles, of those categories, which (as Monsieur Proudhon the philosopher tells us) slumber in the womb of the ‘impersonal reason of humanity.’ Monsieur Proudhon, the economist, knows well enough that human beings make cloth, linen, silk, under specific productive relations. But what he has failed to grasp is that these specific social relations are just as much products of human activity as are cloth, linen, etc. The social relations are intimately interconnected with the forces of production. With the acquisition of new productive forces, men modify their method of production; and as they modify the method of production, as they change the way in which they make their livelihood, they simultaneously transform all the relations of social life. The handmill produces a society with feudal lords, the powermill produces a society with industrial capitalists. But these same human beings, who create social relations in accordance with the material relations of production, also create principles, ideas, categories, in accordance with social relations. Thus these ideas, these categories, are no more eternal than the relations they express. They are historical, transitory products.”

“Let us assume, with Monsieur Proudhon, that real history, in its temporal succession, is the historical succession in which ideas, categories, principles, have manifested themselves. Each principle has had its own century, in which it has revealed itself. For instance, the principle of authority has had the eleventh century, just as the principle of individualism has had the eighteenth. Logically, therefore, the century belongs to the principle, not the principle to the century. In other words, the principle makes history, history does not make the principle. If we then ask, in the hope of saving principles as well as history, why this principle has revealed itself in the eleventh century, and that one in the eighteenth century, and neither the one nor the other in some other century, we are necessarily compelled to enter into details, and to inquire what the men of the eleventh and the eighteenth century were like, what were their respective needs, their forces of production, their method of production, the raw materials out of which they produced, and what, finally, were the relations between man and man, the relations proceeding out of all these conditions of existence. Well now, to study all these questions, does not that mean to study the actual mundane history of human beings in each century; to describe these human beings as at one and the same time the authors of and the actors in their own drama? But as soon as we come to regard human beings as the actors in and the authors of their own history, we have, after a detour, found our way back to the real starting-point, for we have dropped the eternal principles whence we set out.”

“Providence, a providential aim, this is the high-sounding phrase wherewith, nowadays, the course of history is to be explained. In reality, the word or the phrase explains nothing, being at most a rhetorical form, one of many ways in which the facts can be paraphrased. It is a fact that landed property in Scotland has acquired enhanced value thanks to the development of industry, because the development of industry has opened new markets for wool. For the production of wool on the large scale, ploughlands have had to be put under grass. To effect this transformation, estates must be centralized, and small holdings must be abolished. Thousands of smallholders must be driven from their homes, must be replaced by a few shepherds who guard millions of sheep. Thus the outcome of land ownership in Scotland is, through successive transformations, that men are driven off the land by sheep. If you then declare that it has been the providential aim of land ownership in Scotland to have men driven off the land by sheep, you will have written history as it appears to those who believe in providence.”

“Monsieur Proudhon knows no more of the Hegelian dialectic than its manner of speech. His own dialectical method consists in a dogmatic distinction between good and evil. Well, let us take Monsieur Proudhon himself as category; let us study his good and his bad sides, his merits and his defects. If, as compared with Hegel, he has the merit of propounding problems which he proposes to solve for the benefit of mankind, he has, on the other hand, the defect of utter sterility as soon as he is concerned to call a new category into life by the activity of dialectical procreation. What characterizes the dialectical movement is the coexistence of two opposed aspects, the conflict between them, and their issue in a new category. The exclusive attempt to eliminate the bad side, cuts the dialectical movement in twain.”

“Economic conditions begin by transforming the masses of the population into [manual wage] workers. The regime of capital has created for this mass a common situation, joint interests. Thus this mass is already a class confronting capital, though not yet aware of its own position as a class. ... The interests it defends, become class interests. Now, a struggle of class against class is a political struggle.”

“The existence of an oppressed class is the vital condition of every society based upon class oppositions. Consequently, the liberation of the oppressed class necessarily involves the creation of a new society. If the oppressed class is to be able to liberate itself, it must have reached a stage at which the already acquired forces of production and the extant social institutions can no longer continue to exist side by side. Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive force is the revolutionary class itself. The organization of the revolutionary elements as a class presupposes the existence of all the forces of production which can develop within the womb of the old society.”

“Just as a necessary condition for the liberation of the third estate, of the bourgeois estate, was the abolition of all estates and of all orders, so the necessary condition for the liberation of the working class is the abolition of all classes. In the course of its development, the working class will replace the old bourgeois society by an association which will exclude classes and their oppositions; and there will no longer be any kind of political authority, properly speaking, seeing that political authority is the official expression of the class conflicts within bourgeois society. Pending this development, the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie is a struggle of class against class, a struggle which, when it attains its highest expression, is a complete revolution. Need we wonder that a society founded upon class oppositions should culminate in crass contradiction, in the collision of man with man, as ultimate outcome? It is an error to say that the social movement excludes the political movement. There is no political movement which is not a social movement at the same time. Not until things are so ordered that there are no classes and no class oppositions, will social evolutions cease to be political revolutions.”

The foregoing paragraphs read like a rough draft of the *Communist Manifesto*. There can be no question that the *Misère de la philosophie* was a preliminary sketch (and though preliminary, a ripe one) of that classical document which, six months later, in the sultry atmosphere of the days just before the revolution of 1848, was to fall as a gift from destiny into the lap of the unsuspecting proletariat.

### **Before March**

If (as Marx considers) thoughts and ideas are reflexions of the realities of life, reflexions of practical experiences, then the thoughts and theories of Marx himself must have had a sub-stratum in the economic and political conditions of his day. His theories must be demonstrable as the materials of the world that environed Marx, when

they had been transformed within the human head.

If we analyse the social situation, the economic life, and the political relations of the eighteen-forties, what picture do we get?

There were abundant indications that a revolution was imminent in continental Europe. In France, the bourgeoisie had risen to power in 1830, but only the topmost stratum of the bourgeoisie, the financial aristocracy. The members of this stratum had understood very well how—with the aid of State loans, contracts for supplies to the government, corruption, speculation, shady financial manoeuvres, etc.—to turn their dominant position to account as a means of enrichment. “The July monarchy,” says Marx, “was nothing but a joint-stock company for the exploitation of the national wealth of France, the dividends being shared out among ministers of State, the chambers, 240,000 electors, and their hangers-on. Louis Philippe was the director of the company.”

As time went on, however, industrial capital, favoured by the long series of discoveries in the fields of natural science and technique and by the extensive development of machinery, attained such proportions, that it began to bulk more imposingly than financial capital, and was able to aspire towards the control of the government. It began to regard itself as the leading element of the national economy and as the main pillar of the State, rose in revolt against the banking magnates and the lords of the stock exchange who would fain have kept it in tutelage while neglecting its interests, and demanded its share in legislative authority. Simultaneously with the voicing of these claims, there was heard, like a threatening echo, a murmur from the depths of the proletariat. Among the workers, innumerable groups, secret societies, and sects, led by a motley crowd of reformers, enthusiasts, apostles of universal happiness, and would-be shapers of the future, were in search of a way out of unutterable wretchedness towards a better, a more human existence.

Marx's stay in Paris, his exhaustive study of socialist literature, his intercourse with notable representatives of utopian schools and systems, had led him into the centre of this fermenting and struggling world. It was, we must remember, not only a world of ideas and theories, but also, and above all, a world in which hecatombs of men were perishing of hunger and unregulated toil, in which sweat and tears poured down the faces of overworked women, in which the poverty of exploited children cried to heaven.

In Germany, too, the bourgeoisie, thanks to the enormous advance in the forces of production, had taken on a new and powerful impetus during the thirties and forties. Marx has given us a vigorous description of the situation of the various classes of the population at that time: “The bourgeoisie was becoming aware of its own strength, and was determined to break the chains wherewith feudal and bureaucratic despotism had fettered its commercial enterprise, its industrial capacity, its united activities as a class. Some of the landed gentry had already devoted themselves to the production of commodities for the market; this section had identical interests with the bourgeoisie, and made common cause with it. The petty bourgeoisie was discontented, grumbled at the burden of taxation, complained of the hindrances that were imposed upon its business activities, but had no definite programme of reforms that might safeguard its position in the State and in society. The peasantry was weighed down, partly by the burdens of the feudal system, and partly by the extortions of usurers and lawyers. The urban workers were partners in the general discontent, were inspired with an equal hatred for the government and for the great industrial capitalists, and were being infected with socialist and communist ideas. In a word, the opposition consisted of a heterogeneous mass, driven onward by the most

diversified interests, but led, more or less, by the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, in Prussia, there was a government lacking the support of public opinion, one from which part even of the nobility had become disaffected, relying for its maintenance upon an army and a bureaucracy which from day to day were increasingly influenced by the ideas of the bourgeois opposition. Furthermore, it was a government whose treasury was empty, and one which could not raise a penny towards balancing the ever-increasing deficit without capitulating to the bourgeois opposition.”

Thus revolution was in the air, in Germany no less than in France. The bourgeoisie was beginning to pay attention to the social problem and to the question of the revolution. In the periodical press, there was an increasing stream of articles upon labour, pauperism, the reform of society, the harmfulness of competition and monopolies, free trade and protection, socialism, and the like. After the weavers' rising in the Eulengebirge, even the “Kölnische Zeitung” (a semi-official organ), followed the example of the liberal journals, and opened a collection for the benefit of the widows and children of the fallen rebels. Jung wrote to Marx: “Day after day, pauperism, socialism, and so on, a rag here, a rag there—at length the German philistine comes to believe what is thus buzzed in his ears without alarming him too much. In the end, he would actually share out, if he were told every day for a few years it was necessary.” Communist clubs and cliques were formed on all hands, and these held meetings and engaged in discussions without asking permission of the police. Writing to Marx from Barmen as early as 1844, Engels said: “You may turn whithersoever you please, you will stumble over communists.” In an article for Owen's “New Moral World,” under date December 14, 1844, he announced that within the brief space of a year a powerful socialist party had come into existence in Germany, a middle-class affair for the nonce, but hoping soon to get into touch with the working class. The frozen crust of reaction was beginning to break up. March 1848, was near at hand.

Of course, this revolution could not, in the circumstances, be anything more than a bourgeois revolution, designed to liberate the forces of the capitalist economy, and to establish a form of State that would be appropriate to the needs and interests of the bourgeoisie. If the German bourgeoisie were not to lag behind its foreign competitors in the development of its productive forces and in the expansion of its field of economic activity, if it were not to forfeit its laboriously acquired access to the world market, it must win control over the State apparatus, and thus ensure its position in the world. For the German bourgeoisie, victory or defeat of the revolution signified advance or withdrawal in the immediate necessities of life and development.

Thanks to the study of history, and thanks to the insight into the determinism of the historical process which he had secured by means of the materialist interpretation of history, Marx had come to realize that the success of the bourgeois revolution would, while fulfilling the demands of the bourgeoisie, leave the hopes and claims of the masses unsatisfied. The nature of the epoch in which he was living was fully revealed to him he understood it, and he looked beyond it. His gaze ranged across the age that was to follow. Thinking in decades, reckoning in generations, he contemplated the bourgeois revolution in historical perspective as the threshold of the subsequent revolution, the proletarian revolution. Here and now, the social revolution would only be procreated, not yet born. Whereas the bourgeois looked to the imminent revolution to end his struggles and gratify his wishes, Marx knew that the revolutionary process then beginning would not close until the bourgeois system of society had been annihilated.

Nevertheless, Marx recognized that, as a matter of historical necessity, the bourgeois revolution must first be helped onward to victory. Only upon the trail broken

by the bourgeoisie, could the proletariat advance along the course marked out for it by history. What had happened to the proletariat in England, France, and America, gave plain demonstration that the winning of political power by the bourgeoisie did not merely put new political weapons into the hands of the workers, but, permitting the workers to constitute themselves into a political party without any breach of the law, enabled them to occupy a far more favourable position on the political fighting front.

Marx, therefore, did everything in his power to assist the coming of the bourgeois revolution. In Brussels, he got into touch with the radicals of the town, took part in the foundation of the Democratic League, became its vice-president, and, as delegate of the league, spoke at the meeting held in London during 1847 in support of the Poles. He also contributed to the "Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung," a journal of revolutionary trend, run by Bornstedt, sometime editor of the Paris "Vorwärts." After a time, Marx and his adherents were able to get the periodical entirely under their influence and to dictate its position upon topical questions, such as those relating to protection and free trade. In the columns of the "Brüsseler," he and Engels carried on a vigorous campaign against Karl Heinzen, a revolutionary phrasemonger who, having fled from Germany to escape a charge of lese-majesty, was advocating a loud-mouthed communism of his own manufacture. Another campaign was directed against Hermann Wagener, assistant judge in one of the ecclesiastical courts, who was endeavouring in the "Rheinischer Beobachter" to win adherents for a hybrid doctrine halfway between State socialism and Christian socialism. One example will suffice to show how Marx dealt with this adversary: "The social principles of Christianity have now had eighteen hundred years for their development, and do not need any further development at the hands of Prussian consistorial councillors. The social principles of Christianity find justifications for the slavery of classical days, extol mediaeval serfdom, and are ready in case of need to defend the oppression of the proletariat—somewhat shamefacedly perhaps. The social principles of Christianity preach the need for a dominant and an oppressed class, expressing the pious hope that the former will deal kindly with the latter. The social principles of Christianity declare that all infamies will be spiritually compensated in heaven, the assertion being made a justification for the continuance of these infamies on earth. According to the social principles of Christianity, all the misdeeds wrought by the oppressors on the oppressed, are either a just punishment for original sin and other sins, or else are trials which the Lord in his wisdom sends to afflict the redeemed. The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, abasement, subjection, humility, in a word, all the qualities of the mob; whereas for the proletariat, which does not wish to allow itself to be treated as a mob, courage, self-esteem, pride, and independence, are far more necessary than bread. The social principles of Christianity are obsequious, but the proletariat is revolutionary." Therewith Wagener was put to silence for the time—to crop up again in due course as editor of the "Kreuzzeitung," a pious periodical. Here, Bruno Bauer was his right-hand man.

The most weighty and the most distressing of the conflicts Marx waged in Brussels was the one with Wilhelm Weitling, the only distinguished utopian socialist in Germany, a man of character and ability. A working tailor from Magdeburg, he had as an apprentice in Paris absorbed the ideas of Saint-Simon and Fourier. Subsequently, in Switzerland, prosecuted as an ardent propagandist, he had endured a long term of imprisonment. Then his book, *Die Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*, had attracted widespread attention. Marx had been enthusiastic about it, welcoming it as "a brilliant literary debut," and predicting a happy future for the proletariat after so excellent a start. But when Weitling turned up in Brussels, and joined

the Workers' Educational Society there, it became apparent that his development had proceeded no further, and that he had become infected with inordinate vanity, with an undue sense of superiority. He was continually talking about utopias and conspiracies, and imagined himself a prey to the persecution of envious rivals. One day, when Marx insisted upon the rejection of fanciful and overenthusiastic schemes for universal happiness (passing by the name of communism), Welding advocated the cause of the utopists, the dispute leading to an open breach between him and Marx. Since the latter had an unhappy talent for introducing personal animus into theoretical disputes, the relations between the two men were poisoned henceforward, and they became irreconcilable enemies.

Unconcerned whether he made friends or enemies, Marx, amid all the ferment and confusion of a troublous time, devoted himself relentlessly to clarifying the theory of the class struggle. With inexorable steadfastness, he continued to make this theory the centre of his thought process. He was the first to conceive of socialism as the outcome of an automatic evolution, was the first for whom the severance from utopism was a matter of principle. Moreover, he was the first to regard the proletarian masses as the fulfillers of the evolution to socialism. He was the first to look upon capitalism as an inevitable phase of development, as an economic and political fact which could not be argued out of the world or evaded by tactical manoeuvres. He, likewise, was the first who fully identified himself in his whole outlook with the social position of the proletariat, which he declared to be a daily and hourly class struggle. He attacked with the fierceness of an angry lion everything which threatened to obscure this clear line of advance, or tended to confuse the unambiguous consistency of the tactic of the class struggle.

The utopists, too, had their gaze fixed upon a socialist future, and fought on behalf of a social ideal. But their aim was to upbuild their social edifice as the top story of the feudalist building, either circumventing capitalism, or else attempting to come to an understanding with capitalism. What they announced as a doctrine of salvation, came from them as a gift from above, bestowed by a patron, and with a philanthropic gesture. They were animated by ethical impulses, or by sentimentalism; were moved by compassion, overwhelmed by pity, spurred on by hatred. It was inevitable that their socialism should remain a cloud castle, because they failed to understand the most elementary, the most essential feature of all society—reality. Also, because they failed to discern the inner causality of the historical process—dialectic. Also, to conclude, because they believed that it was possible to dispense with the living motive force of the movement leading to socialism—the class-conscious fighting proletariat.

Marx drew a sharp line between himself and these utopists. In daily combats, which were continually raising up against him new troops of foes, he went on demonstrating that his socialism was the only genuine, the only sound variety.

### **The Workers' Educational Society**

Through the activities of Marx and Engels, in the course of two or three years Brussels had become a centre of communist propaganda.

From the Belgian capital there issued to every quarter of the world strong and persistent currents of incitement, calls to arms, clarification, and influence. Here were centred countless threads of communication with all revolutionary foci; with representatives of the communist idea; with kindred movements in France, England, Germany, Poland, and Switzerland—though as yet these movements may have been based on other principles.

By means of an extensive correspondence with all persons who held modern ideas and were in any way worth considering from the standpoint of communism, new meshes were perpetually being woven in the network of relations. Engels, in repeated journeys to Paris, supplemented the information received from friends in that city, enrolled and trained new collaborators, helped to clarify the Babel-like confusion of utopism. The teachings of Saint-Simon and Fourier were obsolete, and lived on only as a tradition; but Cabet, Weitling, and Proudhon had taken the place of the two great utopists, and had as supporters a great number both of intellectuals and of manual workers. There were also confusionists like Karl Grün, conspirators like Mazzini, Christian socialists, and all kinds of sentimental reformers, each of them with a following of his own.

In this medley, Brussels had become a quiescent pole and a Mecca for a number of serious-minded persons who were interested in communism, wished to discuss important questions with Marx or Engels, needed their advice, desired enlightenment, or offered collaboration. From London had come, besides Wilhelm Weitling, Wilhelm Wolff, the Silesian, who soon became one of Marx's most trusted adherents. From Switzerland came Sebastian Seiler; from Westphalia, Joseph Weydemeyer; from the Wuppertal, Kriege, on his way to America. Engels brought back with him from Paris the talented young compositor Stephan Born. A number of adherents were also found in Brussels: above all, Gigot, an employee in the public library; and Heilberg, who published a small working-class newspaper.

The general centre of this movement was formed by the Workers' Educational Society, which had been founded in connexion with the Democratic League. The meetings of the society were held on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when questions of the day were discussed, lectures were given, weekly reports were read, and so on. Writing of them to Herwegh, Marx said: "We debate matters in a thoroughly parliamentary fashion, hold conversations, have songs, declamation, theatricals, etc. ... If you would only come over, you would find that even as regards direct propaganda there is more to be done in little Belgium than in big France." One of the revolutionists who were assembled in Brussels had little sympathy with the doings of the society-Bakunin. He and Marx had already got into touch with one another in Paris. A Russian of Bakunin's circle had then described Marx in the following words: "Marx is of a type composed of energy, a strong will, and inviolable conviction; of a very remarkable type, too, in externals. He has a thick crop of black hair, hairy hands, an overcoat buttoned awry; but he looks like one endowed with the right and the power of demanding respect, however he may look and whatever he may do. His movements are awkward, yet bold and self-confident. His manners conflict sharply with the ordinary conventions of social life. He is proud, somewhat contemptuous, and his harsh voice, with a metallic ring, is admirably suited to his revolutionary opinions about persons and things."

Bakunin and Marx differed glaringly in their respective revolutionary trends, and this soon led to disputes. "He called me a sentimental idealist," said Bakunin later, "and he was right; I called him gloomy, unreliable, and vain, and I was right too." We can readily understand that this man who replied to a philosophical judgment by a judgment of character, should have held aloof from the Workers' Educational Society on personal rather than circumstantial grounds. Writing from Brussels, Bakunin said: "Marx is carrying on the same sort of futile activities as of old, corrupting the workers by making them argumentative. The same crazy theories and the same discontented self-satisfaction."



Marx delivered some lectures at the Workers' Educational Society. An epitome of these was subsequently published in the form of newspaper articles, and eventually secured wide publicity as a propaganda booklet. Under the title *Lohnarbeit und Kapital* [Wage Labour and Capital] it constituted the first of a series of fundamental writings in which Marx incorporated his criticism of political economy and gave the results of that criticism. It is especially noteworthy because it shows how Marx, feeling his way, learning, growing by slow degrees, at first finds incomplete solutions and gives lopsided demonstrations, but ultimately, after the lapse of a considerable time and after exhaustive studies, attains to finished results. In *Wage Labour and Capital*, for instance, it is especially the notion of the commodity labour power which discloses to us the slow growth of Marx's economic ideas.

As Engels tells us in the preface, classical political economy adopted from industrial practice the current conception of the factory owner as one who buys and pays for the labour of his workers. This conception was perfectly adequate for business practice, for the factory owner's book-keeping, and for his calculation of prices. But when thus naively transferred to political economy, it gave rise to extraordinary errors and generated confusion.

Economists discovered that the prices of all commodities, and among them the price of the commodity they termed "labour," are continually changing; that these prices rise and fall owing to the influence of manifold circumstances, which often have no connexion with the production of the commodity, so that prices seem as a rule to be determined by pure chance. But as soon as economics became a science, one of its first tasks was to search for the law hidden behind the apparently casual changes in the price of commodities, the law which must control what seemed to be chance movements. Economists wanted to discover a fixed centre amid the vacillations of price; they set forth from the prices of commodities in search of the regulative law of the value of commodities which was to explain all perturbations of price.

The classical economists then discovered that the value of a commodity is determined by the labour contained in it, the labour necessary for its production. The explanation contented them. But as soon as they came to apply this determination of value to the commodity labour itself, they found themselves involved in one contradiction after another. How is the value of "labour" determined? By the amount of necessary labour contained in it. But how much labour is contained in the labour of a worker for a day, a week, a month, a year? If labour is the measure of all values, then we can only express the "value of labour" in labour. Yet we know absolutely nothing about the value of an hour's labour, when we know no more than this, that it is equal to an hour's labour. We have not got a hair's-breadth nearer to our goal, but are still gyrating in a circle.

The classical economists then tried another turning. They said: "The value of a commodity is equal to the cost of producing it." But what is the cost of producing labour? To answer this question, the economists had to strain their logic a little. Instead of studying the cost of producing labour itself, which eluded inquiry, they investigated the cost of producing the worker. This was discoverable. It corresponded to the sum of the means of subsistence (or the money price of these) necessary, on the average, to keep the worker fit for work and to maintain him and his family.

Now an interesting fact came to light. The value of the labour which was paid to the worker as wages, was always considerably less than the value of the labour which the employer annexed as the product of labour. Either labour must have two values, a small value for the worker and a large value for the capitalist; or else the formula

must be inadequate, or based upon false premises.

The classical economists could not solve the riddle. The last offshoot of classical economy, the school of Ricardo, came to grief mainly because of the insolubility of this contradiction. Classical political economy had wandered into a blind alley. The man who discovered how to get out of this blind alley was Karl Marx, and his first step towards the solution of the riddle was made in his lectures on *Wage Labour and Capital*.

This was an enormously important step on the way towards clarification. The man who had found trustworthy clues leading out of the chaos of philosophy, had formulated an intelligible social theory and expounded a new interpretation of history, was now continuing his labours as pioneer in the domain of political economy. In *Wage Labour and Capital*, just as in *Poverty of Philosophy* (the two books were written in the same year) Marx gave his first remarkable discoveries to the world.

### ***Communist Manifesto***

To the last period of Marx's stay in Brussels belongs his relationship with the central committee of the Federation of the Just in London, a body which was already in touch with Engels.

In January, 1847, a member of this central committee, the watchmaker Moll, came to Brussels empowered to ask Marx and Engels to join the federation, which wanted, said Moll, to adopt their theoretical outlooks as its foundation. The federation was organizing a congress, at which those who held other views were either to be won over or to be cleared out. At this congress, too, the process of clarification was to be completed, and the distillate was to be formulated for propaganda purposes as a manifesto. Marx had no objection, for he had thought well of the Federation of the Just in his Paris days, and had seen no reason since to change his opinion.

The congress took place in London, in the summer of 1847. Marx, however, was unable to attend. In his place, Wilhelm Wolff went to London as representative of the Brussels comrades, and Engels travelled with him, as delegate from the Paris comrades. At the congress, new rules and regulations were drafted, and a new name was given to the organization, but no final decisions were reached, for no decisions could be valid until they had been submitted to the various local groups (communes) represented at the congress. A second congress was summoned for December of the same year.

At the end of November, Marx met Engels in Ostend and the two went together to London, primarily as commissioned by the Democratic League of Brussels to participate in the meeting which the Fraternal Democrats were to hold on November 29th in anniversary commemoration of the Polish revolution. At this meeting, Marx made a speech and handed in an address. Immediately after the meeting, in the same room (the headquarters of the Communist Workers' Educational Society in Great Windmill Street), was opened the second congress of the Federation of the Just, now known as the Communist League. This congress lasted about ten days, and definitively repudiated the old doctrine of utopism. It disavowed conspiratorial tactics, inaugurated a new method of organization, and announced a new programme. Among the items of this programme were: the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the dominion of the proletariat, the abolition of a class society, and the introduction of an economic and social order without private property and without classes—all in accordance with Marx's views. At the close, Marx and Engels were commissioned to draft a manifesto embodying the communist principles of the newly constructed revolutionary platform.

When he and Marx returned to Brussels, Engels set to work promptly, and wrote a draft in the form of a catechism, comprising five-and-twenty points, phrased in popular language, as basic constituents of the programme. Marx waited a while, and then decided upon a different method of presentation. Though he was guided to some extent by existing manifestos, which formed part of the stock in trade of every political group, every club, and every sect in those days, he compiled an imposing manifesto bearing the imprint of his outstanding genius, one thoroughly original in content and in its general train of thought. It was at one and the same time a historical demonstration, a critical analysis, a programme, and a prophecy. It was a masterpiece.

With a vividness and liveliness such as Marx had never achieved before and was never to achieve again, the manifesto describes the historical evolution of class society down to the rise of modern capitalism, down to the appearance of the bourgeoisie and the modern industrial proletariat. This was done at a time when capitalism was still struggling with all kinds of hindrances to its development; when the bourgeoisie was first beginning to establish itself as the ruling class; and when the proletariat, with faltering steps, was only just appearing on the political stage. Marx's amazing talent for lifting himself above the narrow confines of his actual surroundings, and, as if from the zenith, looking down upon the course of evolution into a distant future, so that the law of the movement and its trend, the ensemble and the details, were equally plain to him—this marvellous faculty is here brilliantly displayed. He foresees all the struggles and defeats, all the stages and vacillations, all the dangers and victories, of this evolution. He watches the mechanism of the advance, numbers the steps of social ascent, feels the pulse of the bourgeoisie, hears the tread of the advancing proletariat, sees the victorious banner of the social revolution. Everything decades before the materialization of the facts, generations before their onset; everything, though seen almost as if in a vision, described with minute particularity and accurate conformability to the real. Eighty years have passed, now, since the *Communist Manifesto* was written, and it is as apposite, as true to life, as contemporary, as topical, as if it had been penned yesterday by a man intimately acquainted with our own day.

The *Communist Manifesto* sets out from the fact that we live in a class society which is a historical product. At the present time, bourgeoisie and proletariat confront one another as hostile classes. They condition one another's existence, but their historical relation each to the other is a class struggle. From this Marx deduces the fundamental idea of the manifesto, that the liberation of the proletariat from poverty, enslavement, exploitation, and debasement, can be effected in no other way than by the overthrow of capitalism, the abolition of a class society and a class State, and the establishment of a communist order upon the foundation of communal ownership and a classless society. The significance and the aim of the proletarian revolution are to be found in the fulfilment of these tasks. That revolution will not be the outcome of an arbitrary resolve, for the bringing of it to pass is the historical mission of the working class.

It is essential to have the fundamental lines of this classical demonstration of scientific socialism in Marx's own words.

“The history of all human society, past and present, has been the history of class struggles.”

“Modern bourgeois society, rising out of the ruins of feudal society, did not make an end of class antagonisms. It merely set up new classes in place of the old; new conditions of oppression; new embodiments of struggle.”

"Our own age, the bourgeois age, is distinguished by this—that it has simplified class antagonisms. More and more, society is splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great and directly contraposed classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat."

"From the serfs of the Middle Ages, sprang the burgesses of the first towns; and from these burgesses, sprang the first elements of the bourgeoisie.

"The discovery of America and the circumnavigation of Africa opened up new fields to the rising bourgeoisie. The East Indian and the Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the multiplication of the means of exchange and of commodities in general, gave an unprecedented impetus to commerce, navigation, and manufacturing industry; thus fostering the growth of the revolutionary element in decaying feudal society.

"Hitherto industrial production had been carried on by the guilds that had grown up in feudal society; but this method could not cope with the increasing demand of the new markets.

"The expansion of the markets continued, for demand was perpetually increasing. Even manufacture was no longer able to cope with it. Then steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. Manufacture was replaced by modern large-scale industry; the place of the industrial middle class was taken by the industrial millionaires, the chiefs of fully equipped industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

"Large-scale industry established the world market, for which the discovery of America had paved the way. The result of the development of the world market was an immeasurable growth of commerce, navigation, and land communication. These changes reacted in their turn upon industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, and railways expanded, so did the bourgeoisie develop, increasing its capitalized resources, and forcing into the background all the classes that lingered on as relics from the Middle Ages."

"Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance. ... The modern State authority is nothing more than a committee for the administration of the consolidated affairs of the bourgeois class as a whole."

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without incessantly revolutionizing the instruments of production; and, consequently, the relations of production; and, therefore, the totality of social relations. ... That which characterizes the bourgeois epoch in contradistinction with all others is a continuous transformation of production, a perpetual disturbance of social conditions, everlasting insecurity and movement.

"Urged onward by the need for an ever-expanding market, the bourgeoisie invades every quarter of the globe. It occupies every corner; forms settlements and sets up means of communication here, there, and everywhere."

"By rapidly improving the means of production and by enormously facilitating communication, the bourgeoisie drags all the nations, even the most barbarian, into the orbit of civilization. Cheap wares form the heavy artillery with which it batters down Chinese walls, and compels the most obstinate of barbarians to master their hatred of the foreigner. It forces all the nations, under pain of extinction, to adopt the capitalist method of production; it constrains them to accept what is called civilization, to become bourgeois themselves. In short, it creates a world after its own image."

"More and ever more, the bourgeoisie puts an end to the fractionalization of the means of production, of property, and of population. It has agglomerated population, centralized the means of production, and concentrated ownership into the hands of the few. Political centralization has necessarily ensued. Independent or loosely federated provinces, with disparate interests, laws, governments, and customs tariffs, have been consolidated into a single nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one fiscal frontier."

"But the time came, at a certain stage in the development of these means of production and communication, when the conditions under which the production and the exchange of goods were carried on in feudal society, when the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacture, when (in a word) feudal property relations, were no longer adequate for the productive forces as now developed. They hindered production instead of helping it. They had become fetters on production; they had to be broken; they were broken.

"Their place was taken by free competition, in conjunction with a social and political system appropriate to free competition—the economic and political dominance of the bourgeois class."

"A similar movement is going on under our very eyes. Bourgeois conditions of production and communication; bourgeois property relations; modern bourgeois society, which has conjured up such mighty means of production and communication these are like a magician who is no longer able to control the spirits his spells have summoned from the nether world. For decades, the history of industry and commerce has been nothing but the history of the rebellion of the modern forces of production against the contemporary conditions of production, against the property relations which are essential to the life and the supremacy of the bourgeoisie. Enough to mention the commercial crises which, in their periodic recurrence, become more and more menacing to the existence of bourgeois society."

"The weapons with which the bourgeoisie overthrew feudalism are now being turned against the bourgeoisie itself."

"But the bourgeoisie has not only forged the weapons that will slay it; it has also engendered the men who will use these weapons—the modern workers, the proletarians.

"In proportion as the bourgeoisie, that is to say capital, has developed, in the same proportion has the proletariat developed the modern working class. ... These workers, who are forced to sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity like any other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition and to all the fluctuations of the market."

"Those who have hitherto belonged to the lower middle class—small manufacturers, small traders, minor recipients of unearned income, handicraftsmen, and peasants—slip down, one and all, into the proletariat. They suffer this fate, partly because their petty capital is insufficient for the needs of large-scale industry and perishes in competition with the superior means of the great capitalists; and partly because their specialized skill is rendered valueless owing to the invention of new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population."

"The proletariat passes through various stages of evolution, but its struggle against the bourgeoisie dates from its birth.

"To begin with, the workers fight individually; then the workers in a single factory make common cause; then the workers at one trade combine throughout a whole locality against the particular bourgeois who exploits them. Their attacks are

levelled, not only against bourgeois conditions of production, but also against the actual instruments of production; they destroy the imported wares which compete with the products of their own labour, they break up machinery, they set factories ablaze, they strive to regain the lost position of the mediaeval worker.

"At this stage the workers form a disunited mass, scattered throughout the country, and severed into fragments by mutual competition. Such aggregation as occurs among them is not, so far, the outcome of their own inclination to unite, but is a consequence of the union of the bourgeoisie, which, for its own political purposes, must set the whole proletariat in motion, and can still do so at times. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their own enemies, but attack the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of the absolute monarchy, the landowners, the nonindustrial bourgeois, and the petty bourgeois. The whole historical movement is thus concentrated into the hands of the bourgeoisie; and every victory so gained is a bourgeois victory.

"As industry develops, the proletariat does not merely increase in numbers: it is compacted into larger masses; its strength grows; it is more aware of that strength. Within the proletariat, interests and conditions of life become ever more equalized; for machinery obliterates more and more the distinctions between the various crafts, and forces wages down almost everywhere to the same low level. As a result of increasing competition among the bourgeois themselves and of the consequent commercial crises, the workers' wages fluctuate more and more. The steadily accelerating improvement in machinery makes their livelihood increasingly precarious; more and more the collisions between individual workers and individual bourgeois tend to assume the character of collisions between the respective classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form coalitions against the bourgeois, closing their ranks in order to maintain the rate of wages. They found durable associations which will be able to give them support whenever the struggle grows acute. Here and there this struggle takes the form of riots.

"From time to time the workers are victorious, though their victory is fleeting. The real fruit of their battles is not the immediate success, but their own continually increasing unification. Unity is furthered by the improvement in the means of communication which is effected by large-scale industry and brings the workers of different localities into closer contact. Nothing more is needed to centralize the manifold local contests, which are all of the same type, into a national contest, a class struggle. Every class struggle is a political struggle."

"This organization of the proletarians to form a class and therewith to form a political party is perpetually being disintegrated by competition among the workers themselves. Yet it is incessantly reformed, becoming stronger, firmer, mightier. Profiting by dissensions among the bourgeoisie, it compels legislative recognition of some of the specifically working-class interests."

"Finally, when the class war is about to be fought to a finish, disintegration of the ruling class and the old order of society becomes so active, so acute, that a small part of the ruling class breaks away to make common cause with the revolutionary class. ... Just as in former days part of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now part of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat. Especially does this happen in the case of some of the bourgeois ideologists, who have achieved a theoretical understanding of the historical movement as a whole."

"For the proletariat, nothing is left of the social conditions that prevailed in the old society. The proletarian has no property; his relationship to wife and children is utterly different from the family relationships of bourgeois life; modern industrial

labour, the modern enslavement by capital ... have despoiled him of his national characteristics. Law, morality, and religion have become for him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which bourgeois interests lurk in ambush.

"All classes that have hitherto won to power, have tried to safeguard their newly acquired position by subjecting society-at-large to the conditions by which they themselves gained their possessions. But the only way in which proletarians can get control of the productive forces of society is by making an end of their own previous method of acquisition, and there with of all the extant methods of acquisition. Proletarians have nothing of their own to safeguard; it is their business to destroy all pre-existent private proprietary securities and private proprietary safeguards.

"All earlier movements have been movements of minorities or movements in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is an independent movement of the overwhelming majority in the interest of that majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of extant society, cannot raise itself, cannot stand erect upon its feet, without disrupting the whole superstructure comprising the strata which make up that society."

"The communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against extant social and political conditions.

"In all these movements, the communists bring the property question to the fore, regarding it as fundamental, no matter what phase of development it may happen to be in.

"Communists scorn to hide their views and aims. They openly declare that their purposes can only be achieved by the forcible overthrow of the whole extant social order. Let the ruling classes tremble at the prospect of a communist revolution. Proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

"Proletarians of all lands, unite!"

In these terse and mighty paragraphs from the first, second, and fourth sections, the revolutionary soul of the *Communist Manifesto* is speaking to us.

If we ignore the third section, which, in its criticism of non-Marxian theories and movements, could naturally apply only to these down to the year 1847, the *Communist Manifesto* contains everything the proletariat needs in the matter of elementary information, of serious scientific preparation for the practical demands of the class struggle.

The concrete course of evolution—the development of the capitalist method of production, of the bourgeoisie, of the proletariat, of the modern class struggle, and of the socialist movement—has fully confirmed the accuracy of this abstract and anticipatory sketch of all the phases of that evolution.

Eighty years of active life have shown that the *Communist Manifesto* is no mere paper charter embodying a theoretical erudition out of touch with the world, but that it gives expression to the inexorable law of evolution, and that in it the very heart of history is pulsating.

## **Chapter 04: The Trial, Part 1**

### **The Gallic Cock**

Marx's *Introduction to a Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right*, published in the "Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher" in the year 1843, closed with the prophetic words: "When all the internal conditions have been fulfilled, the day of the German

uprising will be heralded by the crowing of the Gallic cock.”

Towards the end of the forties, the “internal conditions” had, in the case of France, been so far fulfilled that the Gallic cock could, by its crowing, give the signal for a revolution.

From 1845 onwards, the economic difficulties in which the French workers and petty bourgeois were involved, had been continually increasing. The potato disease and a failure of other crops had led to scarcity and to a rise in the prices of the necessaries of life, and the consequent hardships seemed to be intensified by the shameless way in which the upper ten thousand were celebrating orgies of extravagance. The general unrest was increased by a great industrial and commercial crisis, beginning in England, and soon extending to the Continent. “Foreshadowed in the autumn of 1845 by the widespread failure of railway speculators, postponed during the year 1846 by a number of incidental factors (such as the imminence of the repeal of the Corn Laws), it was finally inaugurated in 1847 by the bankruptcy of a number of important mercantile houses in London, by the insolvency of the agricultural banks, and by the closing down of factories in the English industrial regions. ... In Paris, an additional outcome of the industrial crisis was that a number of manufacturers and wholesale traders, being unable in existing circumstances to do any more business in foreign markets, were forced back into the home market. They set up great establishments of their own, and the competition of these ruined large numbers of grocers and other shopkeepers. Hence there were many business failures among this section of the Parisian bourgeoisie, and that accounts for its revolutionary attitude in February.” (Marx.)

At this juncture, therefore, the bourgeoisie was keenly interested in effecting the overthrow of the financial aristocracy; but it dreaded the masses, whose support was needed to down the financiers. It knew how much underground work had been going on throughout the days of the bourgeois monarchy, for it had itself furthered many of these subterranean machinations. It was inclined to overestimate the strength and the political maturity of the working class, and was afraid lest, in the event of a revolutionary change of government, the reins might slip out of its hands. It therefore endeavoured, in the first instance, to bring about a change of government without calling in the aid of the masses.

It opened an electoral campaign in the hope of securing a parliamentary majority. Since July 1847, it had held all over France a number of noisy festivals of reform, public dinners where, between courses, the chances of a “dry revolution” were discussed. The proletariat had no interest in this typically bourgeois way of carrying on a political struggle. On the other hand, the government that was run by the financial aristocracy, whose aim it necessarily was to counteract the endeavours of the opposition, had a poor hand to play. Guizot and the majority in the Chambers adopted an uncompromising attitude, and bluntly refused to lower the property qualification, to increase the number of parliamentary seats, and to inaugurate other reforms that were demanded. This stubbornness fanned the flames of discontent. Louis Philippe tried to arrest the spread of the conflagration by forming a liberal ministry, but the endeavour came too late. In a trice, the fire of revolution had burst through the roof, and the Gallic cock was crowing its signal to an attentive world.

When the revolution broke out, Marx and Engels were taken by surprise. From a distance, they had been unable to recognize the speed and the intensity of recent developments, or to allow for the factors which proved decisive at the last moment. Even in Paris, where Engels had been on a visit in January 1848, the attitude of the workers in general and that of the Communist League in particular was calculated to



encourage scepticism as to the possibilities of an upheaval. On January 14th, Engels wrote to Marx: "The League is in a bad way here. Never have I seen such general drowsiness, never have these fellows been so hopelessly divided by petty jealousies. Weitlingery and Proudhonistry are the final expression of these blockheads' vital relations, and there is nothing to be made of them. Some are typical Straubinger, elderly journeymen; but others are budding petty bourgeois. A class which lives, immigrant Irish fashion, by undercutting the French in the matter of wages, is utterly hopeless. I shall make one more effort, but if that fails I shall abandon this kind of propaganda." Among the better known leaders, only Flocon, a petty-bourgeois democrat, favoured the communist cause; but even he was afraid that the open unfurling of the communist banner would do more harm than good as far as the spread of revolutionary ideas was concerned. When Engels returned to Brussels on January 31st, he was greatly discouraged.

Three weeks later, the revolution began. There were street risings in Paris; the workers took the initiative, manned the barricades, held their own against a murderous fire for two days, overthrew the Guizot ministry, burned the throne in front of the July Column in the Place de la Bastille, and drove Louis Philippe and his ministers out of the country. On February 24th, a provisional government was appointed; and, under the pressure of the masses, though reluctantly, a republic was proclaimed. Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, Flocon, and Albert (a working man), were among the members of the provisional government, which on March 1st summoned Marx to Paris in a letter signed by Flocon.

At the first news of the outbreak of the revolution, the central committee of the Communist League in London had hastened to transfer its powers to the Brussels group. But, as Engels tells us, the news of this decision only reached Brussels after a state of siege had been declared in that city, and when the soldiers were taking extreme measures to suppress meetings and check the activities of political organizations. Above all it was difficult for foreigners to assemble. Furthermore, for days Marx, Engels, and the rest of them, had been eager to set out for Paris. It was decided therefore to dissolve the central committee, and to entrust full powers to Marx, who was instructed to get a new committee together as soon as he reached Paris. Hardly had this resolution been passed, in Marx's own dwelling, when the police made a raid, arrested him and his wife, kept them in the lock-up for the night, and deported them next day. They went at once to Paris.

In Paris, the revolution had roused to activity the whole general staff of socialist sectarians and miracle workers. Louis Blanc was endeavouring to secure the adoption of the red flag as national emblem, and the establishment of national workshops. Proudhon, while condemning any idea of State-socialist experiments, was demanding "the organization of credit and speculation." Bakunin was continually advocating further risings, so that Caussidière, the barricade prefect, exclaimed in despair: "What a man! The first day, he is wonderful; the second day, he ought to be shot!" Others who, though their heads were stuffed full of theories and programmes, had no schemes for practical application, clamoured for the help of the State in the realization of the revolutionary idea. Yet others (as Leroux wrote to Cabet) were inquiring how it might be possible to found a republic that would be free from socialist taint. Meanwhile, in the first delirium of success, trees of liberty were being jubilantly set up in the boulevards, while everybody was singing the *Marseillaise*, joining in processions, and letting off fireworks.

The foreign workers in Paris, thrown out of employment and hard put to it for a subsistence, gave ready ear to Herwegh's foolish proposal that they should form

themselves into legions to fight on behalf of liberty in their respective countries. The government adopted the scheme, even as it had accepted the plan of establishing national workshops. Just as, in the latter case, the authorities hoped that the failure of the workshops would discredit Louis Blanc with the masses; so, in the matter of the legions, they hoped that, by supplying funds to the legionaries, they would free Paris of a number of inconvenient foreigners at comparatively little cost. Herwegh's inflammable temperament made him lay especial stress on the formation of a German legion. Once again (as after the publication of his *Gedichte eines Lebendigen*) he had become the hero of the hour, old and young flocked to him, took up arms, and clamoured for marching orders. Among the youngest of his volunteers was Wilhelm Liebknecht, now twenty-two years old. A member of the German Workers' Society of Zurich, he had hastened to Paris to take part in the fighting.

Marx reached Paris on March 4th. As luck would have it, Engels was out of funds, and could not join his friend until March 25th. On March 6th, Marx already appeared in the political arena. At a huge meeting, he fell foul of Herwegh's operabouffe scheme, subjecting it to a cold and biting critical analysis. To lead a legion to Germany would mean, he said, an invitation to the Prussian reactionaries to crush the revolution. The legions would not have an earthly chance against the armed forces of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. Heroism would be of no avail. If the legions did any service, it would only be to the French bourgeoisie, which would be freed from the nightmare caused by the presence of revolutionary elements from all over the world. In fact, the idea of founding the legions was the outcome of bourgeois inspiration; and Herwegh, in this matter, was only a catspaw of the bourgeoisie. Carried away by his zeal and by the impetus of his own arguments, Marx ignored the shouts of those who taunted him with cowardice and expressed their indignation at the lapse into demagoguery to which he was always inclined at such moments. Nevertheless, the meeting could not withstand his obstinate insistence, and the prompt victory of the revolution in Vienna and Berlin made any thought of a revolutionary invasion of Germany and Austria out of date. None the less, Herwegh led a troop of workers to Germany. The little force was cut to pieces in the course of the Baden rising, thus showing the accuracy of Marx's forecast.

In fulfilment of his commission, Marx set to work without delay at the formation of a new central committee for the Communist League. It consisted of Marx, Engels, Wolff, and the members of the London central committee, who had also made their way to Paris. Thereupon, a manifesto drafted by Marx was issued, comprising the "Demands of the Communist Party in Germany," in seventeen points: a declaration that Germany was a one and undivided republic; payment of parliamentary deputies; a general arming of the population; nationalization of the royal and seignorial estates, the railways, the canals, the steamships, the mines, etc.; the taking over of mortgages by the State; a restriction of the right of inheritance; the introduction of steeply graduated taxation of incomes and the abolition of taxes levied upon the necessities of life; the establishment of national workshops; free education; etc. The focus of political activity was a newly founded communist club, whose chief aim it was, aided by Flocon, to send a number of German revolutionists across the frontier, that they might foster the German revolution, lead it, and gain political control of it. Wolff went to Breslau, Schapper to Nassau, and Stephan Born to Berlin.

The upshot of this manoeuvre was, of course, to deprive the Parisian movement of its most capable and trustworthy members. The few that were left behind could not possibly cope with the multiplicity of tasks waiting to be performed, of problems that pressed for solution. With the best will in the world, those who remained could not do more than lay down general directives and formulate outlooks. As Engels puts

it, from the moment when the causes which had made a secret society necessary ceased to be operative, the secret society ceased to have any significance.

While in France evolution was pursuing its inevitable course, while the revolution was working out its essential nature as a mere restratification within the bourgeoisie, Marx and Engels had their gaze directed towards Rhineland, the seat of large-scale industry and the great bourgeoisie, the place where, as indicated in the *Communist Manifesto*, the revolution must assume its ripest form and bear its best fruit.

In the beginning of April, the two left Paris, and hastened to Germany.

### **The “Neue Rheinische Zeitung”**

The flames of the revolution, sweeping across South Germany and Austria, had also reached Prussia.

In Baden, Wurtemberg, and Bavaria, the revolution had singed the faces of countless bigwigs; in Vienna, the crumbling edifice of the Holy Alliance had gone up in smoke; in Berlin, a revolutionary storm had raged in March.

To begin with, Frederick William IV had imagined that the revolution would come to a respectful halt before reaching Prussia, and he had therefore seen no need for bestirring himself in the way of granting concessions and inaugurating civil liberties. He had summoned the United Diet in order that this body might vote him the money he needed—money which Rothschild refused to supply without the sanction of the estates. This, he thought, would be sufficient tribute to the spirit of the age.

The liberal and democratic bourgeois opposition had used brave words to begin with; but had beat a retreat on perceiving that in Paris, as the outcome of the February revolution, manual workers and socialists were sharing in the powers of government. Evolution, however, had continued its march, leaving the bourgeois opposition behind. Taking action in default of the bourgeoisie, workers and petty bourgeois had set free the forces of a new age.

The bourgeoisie contemplated this new development with alarm. Its gaze was anxiously fixed upon the threatening gestures with which the French proletariat, in the name of the revolution, was voicing its social demands. Especially alarming, especially damping to bourgeois revolutionary enthusiasm, was the fact that in France the very form of government which the bourgeoisie wished to set up in Germany had now been overthrown, and had been overthrown by men who appeared to be the enemies of property, order, religion, and all bourgeois political and social ideals. The bourgeoisie, terrified at the possibilities of the future, sought refuge in the arms of the nobility and the monarchy. The compromise that ensued, decided the fate of the German revolution.

It decided also the fate of the German republic. In the enthusiasm of the first successes in March, when bold illusions were rife, the radical leaders of the bourgeoisie had regarded as self-evident the establishment of a republic. This was to be the outcome of the revolution. The assertion roused an approving echo in the widest circles.

But when the fumes of intoxication had evaporated, when the revolutionary honeymoon was waning, there was a change of scene. The philistines demanded “the close of the revolution”; the authorities declared that tranquillity was the first of civil duties; the bourgeoisie raised a clamour against “foreigners” and “disturbers of the peace.” Revolution had become a crime; republic was tantamount to “robbery, murder, and a Russian invasion.” Jung, writing from Cologne, had already told Marx about

this change of mood; and when in April Bakunin passed through Cologne, he noticed that the bourgeoisie was “despairingly rejecting the republic.” Dronke wrote from Frankfort that any one who declared himself a communist was in danger of being stoned. Marx and Engels, therefore, were under no illusions as to the nature of the political atmosphere which awaited them in Germany. Nevertheless they carried out their intention. “In the circumstances of the time,” wrote Engels later, “we could have no doubt that the decisive struggle had begun, that it must be fought to an issue during a long revolutionary period, which would be marked by ups and downs, but could end in no other way than in the ultimate victory of the proletariat.” Engels went to Barmen, Marx to Cologne. Their design was to revive the “*Rheinische Zeitung*,” as an organ in which to fly the banner of the revolution in the sense of the *Communist Manifesto*. This notion harmonized with other democratic and communist plans for the foundation of a great daily newspaper. It was far from easy to overcome the obstacles which resulted from the multiplicity of schemes. Even when these hindrances had been surmounted, a supply of funds for the enterprise was hard to obtain. Bourgeois in comfortable circumstances would not hear a word of any discussion of the revolutionary problem, and kept their pockets tightly buttoned. Engels, who still cherished vivid memories of the communist movement in the Wuppertal, and had hoped great things from these enthusiasts of a few years back, was greatly disheartened by the actualities he encountered. “The people here,” he wrote to Marx, “shun any discussion of social problems like the plague; they call it ‘agitation.’ If a single copy of our seventeen points were to be circulated here, our chances would be utterly ruined. The bourgeois mood is really contemptible. ... I can’t get a stiver out of my governor. He actually regards the ‘*Kölnische Zeitung*’ as a firebrand, and he would rather shoot a thousand bullets at us than present us with a thousand thalers.”

In the end, however, it was possible to shark up the requisite number of shareholders, so that the paper was founded, although upon a very inadequate financial basis. On June 1, 1848, it began publication in Cologne as the “*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.” The red flag of the revolution was hoisted.

In addition to Marx and Engels, the staff consisted of the brothers Wilhelm and Ferdinand Wolff, Ernst Dronke, Georg Weerth, Ferdinand Freiligrath, and Heinrich Bürgers. Marx’s special topic was to be German politics, but he also functioned as editor-in-chief, wielding his powers with the sovereign confidence and clear-headedness of a highly gifted dictator. In actual fact, he had no journalistic talent, wrote laboriously, and took a long time over the composition of his articles, touching them up again and again. The ease and fluency with which Engels could at any time commit his thoughts to paper in a form ready for the press, always aroused Marx’s envy and admiration. As a compensation, however, he had a sure insight, which could not be troubled or diverted by any stress of feeling; an imperturbable judgment, whatever the confusions and vicissitudes of the hour; and an inviolable mastery of the situation. Engels, of more accommodating temperament, one whose comprehensive understanding and imaginative sympathies made him a born journalist, being in addition a good linguist, kept the foreign press under observation, and was especially interested in French and British affairs. Freiligrath contributed impassioned lays of revolution and freedom, whose tones resounded throughout Germany. The other members of the staff fitted so harmoniously into the team that the “*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*,” from the first number to the last, gave an impression of perfect unity. Thus in all respects it was a model revolutionary newspaper.

But in June 1848, when the “*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*” began publication, the revolution was wholly lost as regards the proletariat, and already half lost as regards

the bourgeoisie. Those who had lacked courage for the fight which might have saved the revolution, had now anchored their hopes upon the right to talk, the right to turn phrases-upon parliament. They were firmly convinced that German unity and German liberties were to be established in a legal, orderly, and moderate fashion, at Frankfort, in St. Paul's Church. Any doubts on this head were unpatriotic; any further talk of revolution and barricades was criminal.

It may well be supposed that the burghers of the good city of Cologne were aghast when they read the opening number of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." Their lamblike piety was subjected to pitiless mockery; their prudence was stigmatized as selfish cowardice; their political hope, the National Assembly, was ridiculed as a "talking shop," and as a "council of old women." Half the shareholders hastened to withdraw their support; and there were fierce disputes in the democratic party, whose organ the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" was supposed to be.

But the editors were not to be intimidated, and could not be induced to modify their tone. In issue after issue, they continued their unmerciful onslaughts on the government, the National Assembly, the reaction, and the policy of compromise. Then came the June days in Paris. Whereas the French workers failed to grasp the significance of this blood bath, and whereas the German workers took practically no notice of it, Marx made it the occasion for a biting and incisive analysis of the civil war, which drew nearer and ever nearer in Germany likewise. Unreservedly espousing the cause of the June fighters, he wrote:

"The Executive Committee, the last official vestige of the February revolution, has vanished like a mist-wraith. Lamartine's fireballs have transformed themselves into Cavaignac's war-rockets.

"That fraternity of the two opposing classes (one of which exploits the other), this fraternity which in February was in-scribed in huge letters upon all the façades of Paris, upon all the prisons and all the barracks—its true and unsophisticated and prosaic expression is civil war, civil war in its most terrible form, the war between capital and labour. On the evening of June 25th, this fraternity was flaming from all the windows of Paris when the Paris of the bourgeoisie was illuminated while the Paris of the proletariat was burning and bleeding and lamenting.

"Fraternity lasted just so long as the interests of the bourgeoisie could fraternize with the interests of the proletariat." "The February revolution was a decorous revolution, a revolution made by general acclaim, because the oppositions which in it exploded against the monarchy were undeveloped, and slumbered harmoniously side by side; because the social struggle which formed its real background had as yet won only an airy existence, the existence of a phrase or a word. The June revolution is an indecorous, a detestable revolution, because in its substance has taken the place of phrase, because the establishment of the republic disclosed the head of the monster when it removed the sparkling guise of the crown.

"'Order' was Guizot's watchword. 'Order reigns in Warsaw,' said Sebastiani, the Guizotin, when the Poles were crushed by the Russians. 'Order!' shouts Cavaignac, the brutal echo of the French National Assembly and the republican bourgeoisie. 'Order!' rattles his grape-shot, as it mows down the proletariat.

"Not one of the countless revolutions made by the French bourgeoisie since 1789 was an attack upon order, for they left untouched the dominion of class, the slavery of the workers, bourgeois order—while changing again and again the political form of this dominion and this slavery. But June laid hands upon bourgeois order. Woe, therefore, to June!"

This article, appearing on June 29th, aroused intense indignation among the members of the democratic party. Wrath flamed up against the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," and especially against Marx. The "Kreuzzeitung" demanded that the authorities should take action against this "Chimborazo impudence," and the Ministry for Justice instructed the public prosecutor to intervene.

Unaffrighted, the journal continued its campaign. Now the second half of the shareholders cut off supplies, but the members of the editorial staff renounced their salaries, that the paper might be able to carry on. They drew their belts tighter. Marx sacrificed the remainder of his little property. "Stick to the guns!" was the defiant watchword. The task of the democratic press, said these stalwarts, was to continue fighting for the revolution side by side with the proletariat until victory over the reaction had been achieved.

### **In the Democratic Party**

While the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," under the aegis of the democratic party, was forging the steel of the revolution, those members of the Communist League who had found their way to Cologne were busily at work. They felt that their revolutionary past made it necessary for them to serve the revolutionary present, and to do so in the front rank. Their activities were mainly devoted to organization and to oral propaganda.

The Communist League was in poor case at the time when the revolution broke out in Germany. Passing through Cologne on his way from Paris to Breslau, Wilhelm Wolff reported that in Cologne the league was "vegetating." From Berlin came tidings that the league was in a bad way, that the group there had "about twenty members, who hold together, but without any sort of form." In Breslau there was "no organization." No less unsatisfactory were the reports from other towns and provinces. Dronke was delighted when, on May 5th, he was able to say that he had founded a commune in Coblenz, enrolling four members; that in Frankfort he had won over "two very efficient persons, with hopes of others"; but he added that there was no prospect of setting the league afoot in Hanau and Kassel; and that in Mainz, the condition of the league was "completely anarchical."

Thus the organization was like a ship which has sprung a leak, and in which all hands must man the pumps. Schapper and Mall had joined Marx in Cologne, and, with this city as headquarters, had begun to found workers' societies throughout Rhineland and Westphalia, hoping to organize these important provinces successfully. They had a twofold aim: to establish platforms for revolutionary activity; and to win readers for the "Rheinische." In the Wuppertal, too, Engels was busied upon similar work.

These doings could not fail to attract the attention of the authorities. Although there were eight thousand men stationed in Cologne, the government did not think the garrison large enough to maintain order. Trusty reinforcements were drafted into Rhineland from the eastern provinces. In view of the general lethargy, however, and of the widespread reluctance to take up arms, there could be no question of a local uprising on the Rhine. Marx and Engels were strongly opposed to hotheaded insurrectionism, which could only play into the enemy's hands. None the less, since there was likelihood of a coup d'état, they did not hide their views as to what the people ought to do in that case.

The practical counterpart to these theoretical disquisitions was that a great open-air meeting was held in Cologne, and that at this meeting Heinrich Bürgers voiced the policy of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." A resolution proposed by Engels

and sent to the National Assembly in Berlin demanded that that body, in the event of an attempt to dissolve or suppress it, should do its duty by open resistance, even if the authorities should attempt to stop its sittings by armed force.

A second public meeting, even more largely attended, held in a field near Wörringen-on-the-Rhine, gave expression to like sentiments. It was a noteworthy demonstration in another respect, for it was attended by Ferdinand Lassalle, a young man of twenty-three, as leader of a delegation from Düsseldorf. In that town, Lassalle was an active member of the democratic party. He had sent news items and articles to the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," and had in this way kept in close touch with its editorial board. Now he saw Engels in the flesh for the first time. Marx, who had forfeited his civil standing as a Prussian subject and was in danger of deportation, was not present, although he had been the moving spirit. He did not wish to give the authorities a pretext.

Soon, however, there were disturbances, which gave occasion for the military to intervene. Schapper, Moll, and Hermann Becker (a young barrister, and in later days mayor of Cologne), were arrested. A state of siege was declared, and the publication of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" was prohibited. Engels, Wilhelm Wolff, and Dronke, who had been especially active in the movement, knew that if arrested they would have to serve long terms of imprisonment, and they therefore kept out of the way. Wolff went to the Palatinate. Engels hurried to Barmen to destroy his correspondence there, and then, after a violent scene with his father, fled with Dronke to Brussels. Here both men were arrested, and were escorted over the French frontier. After a brief stay in Paris, Engels went on to Switzerland.

Marx stayed in Cologne, and continued to publish the "Neue Rheinische" in defiance of the order of suppression, collaborating with Lassalle, who had taken part in the Cologne congress of the democratic party at which Marx was likewise one of the delegates. Their aim was to induce the congress to adopt the revolutionary line advocated by Marx. The latter's aspect and demeanour on this occasion have been described by Carl Schurz, then nineteen years of age, present at the congress in the company of Gottfried Kinkel. "Marx was then a man of thirty, and was already the recognized chief of a socialist school. He was sturdily built, with a broad forehead, raven-black hair, a huge beard, and dark, sparkling eyes, so that he attracted general attention. I had been told that he was a man of great erudition, and since I knew very little of his social and economic discoveries and theories, I was eager to hear the words of wisdom that would, I supposed, fall from the lips of so celebrated a man. I was greatly disappointed. What Marx said was (unquestionably) weighty, logical, and clear. But never have I seen any one whose manner was more insufferably arrogant. He would not give a moment's consideration to any opinion that differed from his own. He treated with open contempt every one who contradicted him. Arguments that were not to his taste were answered, either by mordant sarcasms upon the speaker's lamentable ignorance, or else by casting suspicion upon the motives of his adversary. I shall never forget the scornful tone in which he uttered the word 'bourgeois,' as if he were spewing it out of his mouth; and he stigmatized as 'bourgeois,' by which he meant to imply the embodiment of profound moral degradation, every one who ventured to contradict him. It is not surprising that Marx's proposals were rejected; that those whose feelings he had wounded by his offensive manner were inclined to vote in favour of everything which ran counter to his wishes; and that, far from winning new adherents, he repelled many who might have been inclined to support him."

The portrait is unflattering, but may well have been fairly accurate, for it harmonizes with other personal descriptions of Marx. Two years later, Lieutenant Techow portrayed him in almost identical words.

There is no use blaming a man for his character. All we are entitled to infer from these descriptions is that Marx, despite his thirty years, his extensive achievements, and his reputation as a man of learning and a politician, was still what he had been in youth, one fighting to secure recognition, one doubtful as to his prestige. His arrogance, his self-conceit, his dogmatism and disputatiousness and irritability, must reveal themselves to every one who understands human nature as masks for a lack of self-confidence, under stress of which he was perpetually trying to avert the danger of exposure. He could not listen quietly to an opponent, because he was afraid that his opponent might get the better of him if allowed to continue. He had to shout down every hostile opinion because he was haunted by spectral doubts lest this opinion should gain adherents and leave him unsupported. He tried to discredit his adversaries because he hoped that personal onslaughts would shake the validity of opposing arguments. He could not tolerate rivals because he was perpetually tortured with the dread lest it should become apparent in one way or another that not he, but his rival, was the ablest of the able, the most efficient of the efficient, the most revolutionary of the revolutionists.

This domineering behaviour was animated by the unconscious conviction that he would be able to overawe the timid among his opponents. When he made fun of the opinions of others, he was trying to fortify the sense of his own superiority. When he crowned himself with anticipatory laurels, he did so in the belief that this would ensure his triumph, and entitle him to wear the laurel crown.

Only one person would Marx allow to express opinions—Engels. The sole reason for his tolerance in this quarter was that he could rely on being able to use Engels' remarkable talents for his own purposes as a dictator, without Engels expecting any return, or thanks, or grant of equality. As long as a collaborator was a willing servant, he could work on the best of terms with Marx. But when this collaborator expressed an opinion of his own, or claimed the right to assert his own will against that of Marx, the fat was in the fire. Marx was a typical authoritarian.

These dictatorial ways of his were a perennial distress to every one who came within the spell of his fascinating personality. No one suffered more than Marx himself. He could not breathe freely except in situations where the load of ambition transformed into anxiety had been lifted, and where the sense of inferiority masquerading as superiority was in abeyance. When this happened, he was transformed. He became unpretentious, gentle, tender, cordial, self-sacrificing, and kind.

Such amiability, of course, could not suffice him for the performance of the colossal tasks to which his life had been devoted. One who was to work for the whole of mankind, to look forward through the centuries, and to win a world, must be a man whose flanks were incessantly bloodied by the spurs of a superhuman stimulus.

### **Collapse of the Revolution**

Step by step, the counter-revolution had gained ground, and had gathered its forces. But the reactionaries still hesitated to strike the decisive blow. At length the happenings in Vienna showed them that they were strong enough to crush the revolution.

In the end of August, Marx had visited Vienna, to counsel the revolutionary members of the bourgeoisie, and to recruit the workers on behalf of a united front



against the reaction. His attempts were unsuccessful, and the second congress of the democrats, held in Berlin, was of no avail. Vienna was left to its fate. In the October days, the soldiers got possession of the town, despite a vigorous defence. On November 9th, Robert Blum had to face a firing squad.

On the evening of this memorable day, the democrats of Cologne held a great public meeting. While it was in progress, Marx entered the hall, and read a telegram to those present: "In accordance with the March law, Robert Blum has been shot in Vienna." A yell of wrath from the assembly was the answer, a cry which echoed throughout Germany.

But the authorities in Berlin knew that bayonets are stronger than cries and tears. Leaving sentiment to the petty bourgeois and the workers, they relied on force. The dress rehearsal in Vienna was followed by the public performance, the coup d'état. The newly appointed Brandenburg ministry, which replaced the hesitant Pfuël ministry, suspended the constitution, dispersed the National Assembly, disarmed the militia, and declared a state of siege. No one moved a finger to resist. Never had a revolution a more pitiful end.

At the last moment, indeed, the National Assembly, just before dispersing under the pressure of Wrangel's grenadier guards, had—as a protest against expulsion, and in lieu of genuine heroism—decided on a general refusal to pay taxes.

This was a thrust in the air, but the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" tried to turn it to account. It issued an appeal to all citizens, urging them to organize against the authorities. Upon this instigation, the democratic circle committee issued a proclamation drafted by Marx, Schapper, and Schneider, advocating the preparation of armed resistance. Any attempt to levy taxes was "to be countered by every kind of resistance"; further, the Landsturm must be organized everywhere to repel the foe; impecunious persons were to be "supplied with arms and ammunition at the cost of the community, or by voluntary contributions"; if the authorities should refuse to carry out the decision of the National Assembly, committees of public safety were to be nominated. Of course this proclamation was not worth the paper on which it was printed. The cowardice of the members of the National Assembly, their discouraging example, and their innumerable exhortations on behalf of law and order, had had the due effect. The masses remained incorrigibly obedient and respectful at a time when disobedience and disrespect were their only hope. The upshot was that the counter-revolution was successful all along the line.

The only concrete result of the activities of the Rhenish revolutionists was that Lassalle was arrested in Düsseldorf; and that Marx, as editor-in-chief of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," Engels as his associate, and Korff as publisher of the paper, were prosecuted for advocating armed resistance to the military and civil authorities. On February 8, 1849, the case was heard before a Cologne jury. Marx made a brilliant speech in defence. His first point was a protest against the attempt to punish him under laws which the government had long since torn up by its coup d'état. He went on to show how the belief that society rests upon law, itself rests upon a legal fiction. In reality, law rests on society, and the Code Napoleon becomes a scrap of paper as soon as it ceases to correspond to social relations. To conclude, he passionately advocated the right of the people to revolt when its elected representatives have failed to carry out their mandates. "If the National Assembly does not fulfil its mandate, it has ceased to exist. Then the people enters on the stage in its own person, and sets to work with its own plenipotentiary powers. If the throne makes a counter-revolution, the people has the right to answer with a revolution." This speech, which ranks in revolutionary literature as a classical example of a speech for the defence,

had a powerful effect. The court, which two days earlier had acquitted Marx of a charge of libel, acquitted him on the present count likewise. The foreman of the jury, in the name of his colleagues, thanked the accused for his interesting and instructive speech.

Three months later, Lassalle's case came up for trial in Düsseldorf. Here, too, the accused was acquitted. Lassalle had prepared a speech for the defence, a speech which has also become famous. It had been printed in advance, and the judicial authorities, having got wind of the matter, decided to sit in camera. Consequently, Lassalle refrained from delivering the oration.

Invigorated by his trial, Marx continued his campaign in the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." During the six months of its existence, this journal had done an immense amount of work, contributing in unexampled fashion to the arousing and clarifying of people's minds. Not content to denounce the futility of the parliamentary proceedings in Berlin and Frankfurt, to criticize the Camphausen-Hanseemann ministry unsparingly, to make mock of the backwardness and cowardice of the petty bourgeoisie in political matters, and to expose the reactionaries pitilessly as the advocates of a "policy of conciliation—the Rheinische" had advocated a revolutionary war against Russia, had ardently espoused the cause of Poland, had supported the war to annex Schleswig-Holstein as a national one, had protested against the truce of Malmö, had discussed the Vienna affair, and had voiced its heartfelt sympathy with the Hungarian revolution. Subsequently it had criticized Bakunin's democratic panslavism, had published Wilhelm Wolff's articles on the Silesian millions, and had begun the publication of Marx's Brussels lectures on *Wage Labour and Capital*, in order to demonstrate the economic conditions "which form the material foundation of contemporary class struggles and national wars."

There was one weak spot in the multifarious and extensive programme of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." The paper gave very inadequate information regarding the labour movement during the revolution. Not to say that there was practically no revolutionary activity in the labour movement at that time. No doubt, even in the large towns, the workers were still undeveloped politically. They followed in the wake of the liberal and democratic chatterers of the petty bourgeoisie, or were hangers-on behind the crowd of half-hearted revolutionary spouters, speculators, and confusionists—the scum which had risen to the top in these troublous times. Still, there were plenty of workers prepared to support the revolution. Writing to Marx from Berlin, Stephan Born said: "The proletariat is revolutionary through and through. Everywhere I am organizing its dispersed forces into a concentrated strength. Here I am, so to say, at the head of the labour movement. ... In June will appear, under my editorship, the first number of a labour journal, 'Das Volk.' I know plenty of people, and have good hopes of success." Born did actually succeed in establishing a "Workers' Brotherhood" of considerable size. This body inaugurated strikes, founded trade unions and productive cooperatives, and made a fair amount of noise in the world, so that its influence extended far beyond Berlin, to Leipzig, to Dresden, and eastward of the Elbe.

The "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" had restricted its campaign of agitation to the left-wing bourgeois democracy, in the belief that room for the development of a purely proletarian revolutionary programme could only be secured by preliminary political struggles on the part of bourgeois elements. It was thought that the strength of the workers was not yet great enough to affect the issue. But the more the hopes based upon these tactics were frustrated by the cowardice and treachery of the bourgeoisie, the more was the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" forced into the working-class camp. A

movement in this latter direction became absolutely essential after the decay of the democratic organization in Rhineland, and after the complete failure of the democrats to cope with the revolutionary situation.

On April 15, 1849, Marx, Wilhelm Wolff, Schapper, and Hermann Becker announced their resignation from the democratic circle committee: "We consider that the extant organization of the democratic societies includes so many heterogeneous elements that the adoption of appropriate tactics is impossible. Our opinion is that there ought to be a closer union with working-class societies, since these are comprised of homogeneous elements."

Simultaneously the Cologne Workers' Society seceded from the Union of Rhenish Democratic Societies. The seceders' plan was to summon all the workers' societies of the Rhine province to a congress, called for May 6th, and to enter into communication with the "Workers' Brotherhood," which had summoned a congress of all the German workers' societies in Leipzig.

To provide an economic basis for this tactical move, in the middle of April Marx set out on a tour in the hope of securing funds. The "Rheinische's" finances were exhausted, Marx's own property had been all used up, and the shareholders had withdrawn their money. Thus the position of the newspaper was desperate. Before Marx got back, a mortal blow had been struck from another quarter, a blow directed against both the journal and its editor-in-chief.

On May 18th, the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" published the following announcement: "A little while ago, the local authorities received instructions from Berlin to declare a state of siege once more in Cologne. The intention was to use the powers of martial law for the suppression of the 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung,' but unexpected difficulties were encountered. Thereupon His Majesty's government applied to the local magistrates, in order to achieve the same end by means of arbitrary arrests. Here there was a check owing to the legal scruples of the magistrates, just as there had twice been a check before owing to the good sense of the Rhenish juries. The authorities, therefore, had, as a last resource, to avail themselves of their police powers. On May 16th, the following order was served upon our editor-in-chief, Karl Marx: 'In its recent issues, the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" has published more and more definite incitations to contempt of the existing government, to the forcible overthrow of that government, and to the establishment of a socialist republic. Consequently, the hospitality [!] which he has so scandalously abused is withdrawn from the editor-in-chief, Dr. Karl Marx; and in as much as he has not secured permission for further residence in these States, he is instructed to quit them within twenty four hours. Should he fail to comply with this demand voluntarily, he is to be forcibly deported.'"

Thus it was that the last number of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" was published on May 19, 1849. It was printed in red ink, and was headed by Freiligrath's famous poem "Not an Open Thrust in Open Fight." A sum of fifteen hundred thalers borrowed from a certain Herr Henze, together with the money received from subscriptions, from the sale of the presses, and so on, was devoted to the payment of the newspaper's liabilities to compositors, machinists, paper merchant, bookkeepers, correspondents, and other members of the staff. Frau Marx sold what remained of their possessions, including some old family plate, and with their three little children she and her husband went abroad to face a life of poverty.

All was lost!

### **Flight into Poverty**

For Marx, Cologne had been the first stage in his revolutionary career.

The period of preparation and clarification which introduced him to political life, had been followed by a period of trial. His theoretical acquirements, his practical efficiency, his personal courage—all had been put to the test. The test had been successfully withstood.

He had followed the line of the revolutionary class struggle with pitiless clarity and unambiguity. He had faced and surmounted obstacles with skill, energy, and endurance. Undismayed, and at great personal cost, he had defied all dangers and inconveniences.

He had preferred an honourable defeat to laodicean compromise.

It was part of the man's spiritual makeup that (willy-nilly, and unconsciously for the most part) his behaviour should have increased every difficulty, complicated every conflict, annihilated every possibility of peaceful understanding.

That was why he was now compelled to strain his forces to the uttermost, to make illimitable sacrifices for the cause, to attempt the incredible.

Only thus could he acquire the titanic intellectual stature and develop the unprecedented qualities needed for the work which he perceived to be his historic mission.

Beyond question, as a man and a champion, he had made good in Cologne.

Whether and to what extent the ideas embodied in the *Communist Manifesto* would prove practical politics, would be made manifest to inquirers of a later day. The settlement of this account, the drafting of this political inventory, was not a matter of immediate concern. What was of immediate concern was direct revolutionary action.

But when, immediately after his expulsion from Rhineland, Marx went with Engels to Frankfort, it became obvious that the National Assembly in Frankfort was not the place for such action. In this council of German pusillanimity he found overwhelming confirmation of what he had once written in the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung": "There is no lack of good will, certainly; what is lacking is courage!"

There was still a faint hope that in South Germany, where the struggle for a constitution had developed into a general insurrection, the cause of the revolution might still be saved. Marx and Engels hastened thither; but when they came to Mannheim and Karlsruhe, they found that the revolution there had got into the hands of a few philistines run mad, had taken the form of lynch law, and had already come to naught. In Karlsruhe, the petty bourgeois had chased the grand duke away and had seized power. Then, terrified at their own courage, they perpetrated one imbecility after another, and were only too pleased in the end when Lorenz Brentano, the pinch-beck dictator, reestablished law and order, and inculcated a renewed respect for authority. In the Palatinate there had been a mellow kind of revolution. There, wine had played a more important part than gunpowder, and the intoxication of liberty had found expression in bibulous exploits which were excused as manifestations of enthusiasm for the revolution.

Marx saw that there was nothing to be done here. His next thought was, Paris. In Kaiserslautern, he happened upon the deputy d'Ester of Cologne, a prominent member of the democratic central committee. D'Ester supplied him with a mandate to represent the democratic party in conversations with the social democratic Left of the French National Assembly in Paris. On his way thither, through Frankfort, he

fell into the hands of the Hessian soldiery, who regarded him as one of the local insurrectionists. After two days' arrest, however, he was set at liberty, and went hotfoot to Paris.

Engels had returned to Kaiserslautern, where he watched the vinous revolution for a while. When the Prussian forces arrived, he became adjutant to Lieutenant Willich, who was leading a troop of Palatine volunteers. But in the Palatinate the insurrection was speedily suppressed, just as it had been in Baden. Some of the rebels found their way into the casemates of the fortress of Rastatt, while others were lucky enough to escape across the Swiss frontier. Engels was one of those who reached neutral territory. In Berne, he met Stephan Born; and in Geneva he had his first encounter with Wilhelm Liebknecht. From Vevey he wrote to Marx. The latter had reached Paris safely. When he arrived there, with his family, he was penniless, and he found to his dismay that the French capital was in the full swing of reaction. The Legislative Assembly, which had met on May 28, 1849, was under the control of a monarchical majority. The bourgeois republicans had lost heavily at the polls, retaining no more than 50 seats out of 750. The left opposition, the social democrats, and the radical petty bourgeois, had 200 seats. They were known as the Mountain, and were regarded as the inheritors of the revolutionary tradition. It was with them that Marx was to get into touch.

Ledru-Rollin was the parliamentary leader of this fraction. His followers comprised the stratum of shopkeepers, petty traders, victuallers, and small masters, who had collapsed so ignominiously after the February revolution. The large capitalists had speedily mopped up their scanty possessions, their poor savings, and large numbers of them had gone bankrupt. This had opened their eyes to the significance of the June days, and they had gone over to the opposition. Wishing to regain popularity, they had, under Ledru-Rollin's leadership, made overtures to the workers, joined in banquets of reconciliation, drafted a united programme, set up electoral committees and appointed candidates—in a word, they had entered into a formal alliance. As Marx put the matter, "the revolutionary point of the socialist demands of the proletariat was blunted, and these demands were given a democratic gloss. Conversely, in the case of the democratic demands of the petty bourgeoisie, the purely political form was effaced, and they were made to seem as socialistic as possible." The political amalgam thus constituted was given the name of "social democracy"; and its peculiar characteristics were manifested in parliament, inasmuch as these social democrats demanded democratic and republican institutions, not in order to abolish the two extremes of capital and wage labour, but in order to combine them into a harmony. Their aim was to remodel society democratically, to effect a social reform within the confines of the petty-bourgeois system. An attack made by Ledru-Rollin on Louis Bonaparte because the latter had infringed the liberties of another nation by his military invasion of Italy, gave occasion for widespread demonstrations, which were suppressed by the army.

A fierce persecution of all liberal elements followed. Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, and others, fled to London. Nor was Marx allowed to stay in Paris; and, being absolutely without funds, he had to leave his family behind. In his wife's diary, occurs the entry: "We spent a month in Paris, and then our visit was cut short. One morning a police sergeant whose acquaintance we had already made came to inform us that Karl 'et sa dame' must quit Paris within twenty-four hours. The authorities were kind enough to say that we might, if we pleased, take up our residence at Vannes in Morbihan. Of course we had no taste for exile in such a place, and I got together my few poor possessions in order to seek a safer port in London. Karl had hastened thither before us." There was need for haste in the matter of finding a new home,

seeing that the writer was expecting the birth of her fourth child within a few weeks.

### **The “Neue Rheinische Revue”**

At that time, England was the chief haven of refuge for political exiles. Its hospitality was extended to revolutionists from all lands—from France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Russia. Here refugees could find safe harbourage. Thus England earned the honourable title of “Mother of the Exiles,” at this period when the forces of reaction were triumphant throughout the continent of Europe.

The Marx family was poverty-stricken on arrival in London, where they settled in a furnished room in Camberwell. Marx still had a small fragment of landed property in Treves, and the sale of this supplied a pittance on which they were able to live for the first few months. But it was essential to find some permanent means of livelihood.

It seemed to Marx self-evident that his future occupation would be, pen in hand, to serve the cause of the revolution. His first thought, therefore, was to found a periodical which should aim at concentrating all the forces of the revolution, should undertake a critical study of the mistakes made during the recent revolutionary period, and should help to excogitate a more successful plan of campaign for the future. He regarded it as absolutely certain that within a few months the social revolution would resume its course. As of old, the spark would come from France, and would set the world aflame.

In a letter to Engels, Marx sketched his plan. He proposed to edit from London a politico-economic monthly, the “Neue Rheinische Revue,” each number of which was to contain about eighty pages. Funds for this undertaking were to be obtained by founding a joint-stock company. The “Revue” would be printed in Hamburg, and from that city its distribution was to take place. The purpose being “to exert a continuous and permanent influence on public opinion,” the periodical was to be issued more frequently as time went on. Indeed, “as soon as circumstances make it possible for me to return to Germany,” the monthly “Revue” was to become a daily newspaper.

Engels, who was eager to revive the fires of the revolution, made no objection. He was still in Switzerland, but determined to rejoin Marx in London. To avoid the catchpools in France and Belgium, he went by sailing ship from Genoa to London, where he arrived in August.

The “Neue Rheinische Revue,” however, was ill-starred, just as the “Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,” Marx’s first venture of the kind, had been. There was a serious lack both of funds and of copy. It is doubtful whether many shares were subscribed, and certainly Marx and Engels had to supply almost the whole of the literary materials. The first issue had been planned for January 1, 1850, but the manuscripts for this number did not reach Hamburg until February.

Marx had penned a dear sighted and exhaustive study of the French February revolution, and this was published in three issues of the “Revue,” under the title *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich* [Class Struggles in France]. Engels wrote a long account of the constitutional campaign in Germany and the risings in Baden and the Palatinate. This also ran for three numbers. In addition, Engels contributed an extensive essay on the *Peasant War in Germany*, which occupied almost the whole of a double number. From him, too, came a short essay on the Ten Hours Bill in England.

In all, there were four single numbers of the “Revue,” and finally a double number in November. During a period which had ceased to be revolutionary, there was no

scope for a revolutionary periodical, and no chance of a long life. People did not wish to listen to the voice of a critic or a counsellor. They had had enough of revolution, had gone back to work, were on the look out for chances of making money, desired order and tranquillity. The bourgeois, ashamed of their passing revolutionary enthusiasm, were busied in their counting-houses, banks, and factories, devoting themselves to the lucrative occupation of upbuilding capitalism. The petty bourgeois thanked God that they had escaped with nothing worse than a drubbing. The workers, grumbling, exhausted, but resigned on the whole, put their necks back under the yoke of victorious capital. Thus it was that the articles in the "Revue," admirable though they were as literary exercises, aroused no echoes. They were theories with no possibility of practical application; revolutionary thought in a world devoid of revolutionary reality.

Marx had come to the conclusion "that the commercial crisis of 1847 had been the real mother of the February and March revolution." It was inevitable, therefore, that, when the crisis came to an end in the middle of 1848, the forces of the revolution should decline. But Marx was too near to the events to see this clearly, and in the beginning of 1850 he was still counting upon the likelihood of a speedy revival of the revolution. As late as April 1851, even the Prussian government opined that "during the next four weeks a red revolution will break out in France, and will spread to Germany." But Marx was taken aback when the news of great discoveries of gold in California reached Europe. In the second issue of the "Revue" he alluded to the enormous importance of this discovery, and to the beginning of a period of flourishing trade. By the summer of 1850, had come the crushing conviction that the prospect of a revolution in Europe had been indefinitely postponed. In the closing number of the "Revue" he wrote: "There can be no talk of a real revolution in such a time as this, when general prosperity prevails, when the productive forces of bourgeois society are flourishing as luxuriantly as is possible within the framework of bourgeois conditions. Such a revolution can only take place in periods when these two factors, the modern forces of production and the bourgeois forms of production, are in antagonism each to the other."

Californian gold had saved European capital. This was a fact which made all manifestos inoperative, all proclamations vain, all revolutionary hopes futile.

It was a rock, moreover, upon which the ship of the "Neue Rheinische Revue" was wrecked. There was nothing left but to wind up the affair.

### **Split in the Communist League**

Not all revolutionists, however, shared the conviction that the revolution had been indefinitely postponed. At any rate, many revolutionists failed to recognize this at the date when Marx had begun to advocate the liquidation of the revolution. Those who were still hopeful, could not understand Marx; they became suspicious of him; they regarded him as a renegade, and openly opposed him.

It was certainly difficult for persons who lacked Marx's and Engels' theoretical insight to understand so sudden a change in outlooks and tactics. For, until very recently, Marx had made no secret of his opinion that the revolution was dose at hand.

In the end of 1849 and the beginning of 1850, the Communist League had been reconstructed, with London as centre. One of the original members of the central committee, Moll, had fallen in the skirmish on the Murg; but Schapper and Bauer were still in the land of the living. Willich, who had led the Badenese volunteers with Engels as his adjutant, was a new member of the central committee. In March

1850, this committee issued to the League an address penned by Marx, describing the political situation, and specifying what ought to be the behaviour of the working class in the expected revolution.

“The revolution is imminent. It may be brought about by an independent rising of the French proletariat, or by an attack on the part of the Holy Alliance directed against the revolutionary Babel.”

“The relationship of the revolutionary labour party to the petty-bourgeois democracy is as follows: it joins forces with the petty-bourgeois democracy against the fraction whose over-throw it aims at effecting; but it opposes both the one and the other in matters it wishes to establish on its own account.”

“Whereas the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to an end as speedily as possible while satisfying their own claims, it is our interest and our aim to make the revolution permanent, until all the more or less possessing classes have been deprived of power, until the proletariat has achieved the conquest of the powers of State, and until the association of the proletarians, not in one country alone, but in all the leading countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition between the proletarians of these various countries has ceased to exist, and until at least the most important productive forces have been concentrated in the hands of proletarians. It cannot be our concern to palliate class oppositions, for we wish to abolish classes; it cannot be our concern to improve extant society, for we wish to found a new one.”

“From the first moment of victory, those whom we shall have to regard with suspicion will not be the members of the conquered reactionary party, but those who belong to the party with which we have been allied, those who will try to exploit our joint victory on their own account alone.”

With this address, based on the belief that a revolution was imminent, Bauer was sent to Cologne, and secured there an abundance of adherents. Out of former members of the League and former members of the Workers' Brotherhood founded by Stephan Born, there was constituted a new organization which began “to play a leading part” in the workers' societies, peasants' societies, and gymnastic societies. When emissaries from Switzerland (dispatched at this time by a “central bureau of the German emigrants” organized by Struve, Sigel, Schurz, and others) attempted to recruit German workers, they found it necessary to report that “all the utilizable forces are already in the hands of the League.”

But the summer of 1850 came and went, and there had been no revolution. The economic conditions of the day had favoured a luxuriant development of the German bourgeoisie, which had been able to take advantage of the financial difficulties of the government in order to secure political advancement. The petty bourgeoisie had retired from the political stage. The stormy waves of the revolution had by now become mere ripples, plashing gently on the sands of Prussia.

That was why, in the course of the summer of 1850, Marx abandoned his hopes of a second revolution. But he could find few to follow him in this change of mood. The international refugees in London, the main supporters of the Communist League, were impatiently expecting the revival of the revolution. They were impoverished, they were homesick, they were tired of passivity, they longed for battle and vengeance. Since nothing but a revolution could help them, they believed in a revolution. Their wishes and hopes coloured their picture of the political situation; their affects falsified the logic of history. Thus their revolutionary appetites were whetted, and, sharp-set, they were ready to sit down at the revolutionary board long after



everything had been eaten. "The forcible defeat of a revolution," wrote Marx subsequently, with reference to this period, "leaves in the minds of those who have been participators, and especially of those who have been uprooted from home and cast into exile, a condition of shock thanks to which even efficient personalities become, so to say, mentally incapable for a shorter or longer time. They cannot adapt themselves to the course of history; they are unwilling to see that the form of the movement has changed. That is why they wish to engage in conspiratorial activities, to play at revolution-mongering, in a way which is compromising both to themselves and to the cause they have espoused."

We can readily understand that such men as Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, Mazzini, Kossuth, Ruge, Willich, etc.—whose whole revolutionary past had been devoted to inaugurating revolutionary outbreaks and conspiracies, or who, being communists on emotional rather than rational grounds, were inaccessible to argument were prone to regard Marx's change of front as the expression of heresy, poltroonery, or treason. This mingling of romanticism and morality, of sentimentalism and blindness towards historical reality, poisoned the discussions in the Communist League, with the result that argument degenerated into personal abuse, and Willich actually challenged Marx to a duel. The unhappy outcome of all this was that on September 1, 1850, the Communist League split up. On Marx's side were Engels, Bauer, Eccarius, Pfänder, and Conrad Schramm. In the opposing party were Willich, Schapper (Marx's old companion-in-arms), Lehmann, and Fränkel. The proposal for separation came from Marx, and was supported by him in the following terms: "The minority has a dogmatic outlook instead of a critical one, an idealist outlook instead of a materialist one. It makes mere will the motive force of the revolution, instead of actual relations. Whereas we say to the workers: 'You will have to go through fifteen or twenty or fifty years of civil wars and international wars, not only in order to change extant conditions, but also in order to change yourselves and to render yourselves fit for political dominion'; you, on the other hand, say to the workers: 'We must attain to power at once, or else we may just as well go to sleep.' Whereas we draw the German workers' attention to the undeveloped condition of the German proletariat, you grossly flatter the national sentiment and the class prejudices of the German handicraftsmen, which is of course far more popular. Just as the democrats have sanctified the word 'people,' so you sanctify the word 'proletariat.' Like the democrats, you subordinate revolutionary development to revolutionary phrasemaking."

The Communist Workers' Educational Society in London was almost united in support of the minority. Marx and his followers therefore withdrew from it. But Great Windmill Street, where it had its headquarters, continued for a long time to play a considerable part in the discussions of Marx and Engels, and in the letters they exchanged; for Marx watched all the doings of the society with close attention and interest, kept himself informed as to what was going on, and passed on the news to Engels, who had quitted London, being once more at work as book-keeper in his father's Manchester factory. But what Marx had to say about his sometime associates was full of bitterness. He was especially mortified that the revolutionary champions from abroad, like Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, Mazzini, etc., and the Chartist leaders, like Harney, Ernest Jones, and Feargus O'Connor, should be in the opposing camp as representatives of the revolution. Although he had voluntarily withdrawn from the society, he conducted himself as if he had been expelled from it.

The confined circumstances in which these impoverished refugees had to live, and the heated political atmosphere which surrounded them, made their circle (as Engels said) "a school of tittle-tattle and back-biting ... an institute in which every one who does not break away from it perforce becomes a fool, a donkey, and a

common rascal.” Marx, therefore, came to lead a more and more isolated life. Writing to Engels, he declared that this was congenial to him. “I like the public, authentic isolation in which we two, you and I, now find ourselves.. It harmonizes very well with our position and our principles. The system of mutual concessions, of half-measures tolerated from complaisance, and the need for shouldering before the public one’s share (as a member of the party) of responsibility for all the absurdities of these donkeys—are things over and done with.” Engels rejoined: “We have at length once more—the first time for so long—the chance of showing that we do not want popularity, do not require the support of any party in any country; and that our position is totally independent of such rubbish. Henceforward we are responsible to ourselves alone; and when the moment comes in which these gentry have need of us, we shall be able to dictate our own conditions. Till then, at any rate, we can have tranquillity. No doubt, also, a measure of loneliness...”

Thus the result of the disputes in the Communist League was, as far as Marx was concerned, that he cut himself off completely from communal work, reduced his sphere of activity to the smallest possible radius, and became completely isolated. His only contacts were with Engels, who was settled in Manchester, and a small number of devoted friends, or rather pupils and disciples. He was king in his own country, but a king with scarcely any subjects. This retreat into isolation might have ended tragically, had it not also been a retreat to labour.

His first task was to save the Communist League for the Continent. With this end in view, the central committee was transferred to Cologne. Heinrich Bürgers, Hermann Becker, Ferdinand Freiligrath, and the physician Roland Daniels, took over the leadership. Marx had sent instructions that “citizen L. of Düsseldorf” was also to be on the committee; but Roeser, a cigar-maker by trade, wrote to say that the instructions had been disregarded, “because we have had this same citizen **Lassalle** under close observation here, and have discovered that he continues to cherish aristocratic principles, and is less concerned than he ought to be for the general welfare of the workers.”

In Cologne, the central committee did good work for six months. Then the police took action, and made a large number of arrests. An important criminal trial followed.

The trial of the communists in Cologne represents the concluding chapter, not only of the history of the Communist League, but also of the practical revolutionary phase in the life of Karl Marx.

### **The Trial of the Communists in Cologne**

After the suppression of the rising in Baden, Prince William of Prussia, the “cartridge prince,” recalled from England by the reaction, had “reorganized” the Badenese army. He had become the brain and the arm of the reaction, for the king, still terrified by his memories of the dreadful days of the revolution, did not venture, as yet, to come into the open as champion of the counterrevolution. Prince William did everything he could to “reorganize,” not only the army, but also the constitution, the administration, the law courts, public opinion, as they were before the March days. He intervened in affairs of State by writing a memorial upon the revision of the constitution which the king had been forced to grant; and in like manner he arbitrarily interfered with the course of justice when the law courts failed to, deal with revolutionists as harshly as he wished.

Among the insurgents taken prisoner by the Prussians in the skirmish on the Murg, was the poet Gottfried Kinkel, who had sought as musketeer under the

command of Willich, and had been wounded in the head by a shot, though not severely. Tried by a court martial composed of Prussian officers, he was condemned to lifelong imprisonment in a fortress. Prince William considered the sentence too lenient, and demanded that Kinkel should be sentenced to death. In this matter, however, he was opposed, not only by the ministry, but also by public opinion, for the general view was that the sentence of lifelong imprisonment was excessive. In the end, however, the judgment of the court martial was confirmed, except that the king, following the advice of the ministry, changed the imprisonment in a fortress into ordinary imprisonment.

This was not, as it seemed, an intensification of the punishment, but an alleviation. There were two kinds of imprisonment in a fortress: "Festungshaft" (detention in a fortress), the usual punishment for gentlemen offenders; and "Festungsbaustrafe" (punishment in a fortress by work on the fortifications, etc.), one of the most detestable barbarities in the military code. It was the latter to which Kinkel had been condemned. The public, however, did not understand the difference between the two, and regarded the king's commutation of the sentence as a reactionary measure. There was a lively agitation, in which the bourgeoisie took part, expressing loud indignation. The general anger was increased when Kinkel, in prison, was put to forced labour and was refused the privileges usually accorded to political offenders. The movement on his behalf became a popular one, a sort of Kinkel cult. Amid the rumpus, people overlooked the fate of the numberless victims of the March rising who had not the advantage of being poets and members of the cultured classes; they forgot, too, that before the courts Kinkel had cut a poor figure.

In the "Revue," Marx and Engels had taken a strong line against him. Too strong, perhaps, for Kinkel had not betrayed the cause of freedom, but, being of an emotional temperament, had merely let his tongue run away with him. Besides, there could be no question but that he had fought on behalf of liberty, and was now, in prison, bearing the brunt of the counterrevolution. For these reasons, the article in the "Revue" aroused fierce wrath in the bourgeois camp, and considerable discontent even in revolutionary circles. The end of the Kinkel affair was that the prisoner, aided in especial by his friend Carl Schurz, escaped from Spandau prison, fled to London, and got in touch there with the section of the Communist League controlled by Willich and Schapper.

As far as Marx and his friends were concerned, the Kinkel affair had a further consequence. The king, angered by the prisoner's escape, determined to take vengeance on the bourgeoisie by relentless persecution of the liberal opposition. To begin with, however, the object of attack was to remain concealed, and public attention was to be diverted by sharp measures against the communists. On November 11, 1850, the king wrote to his minister, von Manteuffel, as follows: "Dear Manteuffel: I have just read the report on Kinkel's escape. This has put into my head an idea which I will not class among the brightest. Namely, whether Stieber would not be the best person to disentangle the web of the conspiracy on behalf of liberty, and to provide the Prussian public with the long and rightly desired spectacle of discovered and (above all) punished conspiracy. Push on, therefore, with Stieber's appointment, and let him try his hand. I think the idea is fruitful, and I lay great stress upon its prompt realization. ... Frederick William."

This same Stieber was a discredited tool of the police, a man whom Hinkeldey, chief superintendent of the Berlin police, had now, much against his will, to make chief of the political police. Thus was Stieber enabled to try his hand at a campaign on behalf of the throne, the altar, the maintenance of law and order.

In Haupt, a German refugee in London and a member of the Communist League, he found a traitor to give him his first inside knowledge. Then, among his numerous spies and agents, he discovered two who could do him yeoman's service by their cunning and unscrupulousness. One of these was a sometime cigar-maker in Dresden, Krause by name, who had served various terms of imprisonment, and was now living in London under the alias of Charles de Fleury, reputed to be a city merchant, and actually a spy on the communist movement. The other, Hirsch, who had been a commercial clerk in Hamburg, and was likewise a recidivist, worked under Fleury in London as provocative agent. To get the requisite materials for their chief, they had to break open desks, commit burglaries, steal papers, make false declarations, construct pseudo-conspiracies, forge documents, commit perjury, undertake bribery and corruption, induce people to bear false witness—in a word, practise all the arts proper to the trade of police spies.

Yet it was not until a year had elapsed since Frederick William had written the letter just quoted, not until November 1851, that it became possible to arrest the tailor Nothjung in Leipzig. In the raid on his house, the only things of importance discovered were: a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*, which could be bought at any book-seller's; the rules and regulations of the Communist League; two publications of the League; and a few private addresses. This list of addresses enabled the police to follow up Nothjung's arrest by arresting in Cologne: Bürgers the journalist, Roeser the cigar-maker, Dr. Hermann Becker; three medical practitioners, Dr. Roland Daniels, Dr. Abraham Jacoby, and Dr. Klein; a chemist named Otto, a clerk named Erhard, the tailor Lessner, and another workingman named Reiff. Ferdinand Freiligrath had removed to London, and thus escaped arrest. By these arrests, Stieber had laid the foundation for the "long and rightly desired spectacle" which, in accordance with the king's wish, was now to be staged. All that was needed was to furbish up evidence of the conspiracy that was to be discovered and punished.

There was absolutely nothing of a serious character with which to charge the accused. They were members of a secret organization, but this was not prohibited by Rhenish law. Furthermore, the aim of the secret organization was to carry on a perfectly legal political movement, the Marxist trend being distinguished in this matter from the trend of Willich and Schapper, who were inclined to conspiratorial machinations. "Since the collapse of the revolution of 1848," writes Marx, "the German labour movement had continued to exist only in the form of theoretical propaganda, restricted to a narrow circle, and propaganda as to whose practical innocuousness the Prussian government was under no illusions for a moment. ... Some of the secret societies did directly aim at overthrowing the extant State power. This was justified in France, where the proletariat had been conquered by the bourgeoisie, and where an attack upon the existing government coincided with an attack on the bourgeoisie. Another section of the secret societies aimed at forming the proletariat into a party, without concerning themselves about the extant governments. This was necessary in such countries as Germany, where the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were jointly subordinate to their semifeudal governments, so that a victorious onslaught upon the existing governments would not break the power of the bourgeoisie or of the so-called middle classes, but would necessarily help these to power. No doubt here, likewise, the members of the proletarian party would participate anew in a revolution against the status quo; but it was not their business to prepare the way for this revolution."

But the police paid no heed to such distinctions. They needed a conspiracy, a sensational prosecution, a State trial; and they turned their knowledge of the split in the Communist League, their personal acquaintance with members of this body, and the documents they had seized, to account in order to create an appropriate

atmosphere for the drama they wished to stage. If they could not find what they wanted, they were prepared to invent it. Still, luck was against them. Despite all their domiciliary visits, interceptions of letters, widespread inquiries, and imprisonment of the accused for months pending trial, they could not discover materials for the sensational affair they hoped to manufacture. Month after month, they had to postpone bringing the case into court. Their search for evidence to connect the accused with a conspiracy, a plan for assassination, or a scheme of insurrection, had been fruitless.

At length, in October 1852, Stieber thought he had collected enough to begin the trial. But the course of the affair was unprosperous. Every he of the prosecution was disclosed, every falsification of the minions of the law was revealed, every move of Stieber and his spies was successfully countered. Marx and his friends in London were doing their utmost in the hope of transforming the trial from a blow directed against the communist movement into a tremendous defeat of the police, the judicial authorities, and the government. Although the police, the postal service, and the press had joined forces against his work of enlightenment, he was able to attain his end. Frau Marx wrote in a private letter: "My husband has to work all day and far on into the night, for the proofs of falsification have to be elaborated here in London. Every document has to be written six or eight times over, and then sent to Germany by various routes, by way of Frankfort, Paris, etc., for all letters directed to my husband, and all letters sent hence to Cologne, are opened and intercepted. The whole thing has now become a struggle between the police on the one hand, and my husband on the other, seeing that everything, even the conduct of the defence, is thrown upon his shoulders. ... We have a regular office established here. Two or three of us write; others run messages; others scrape pennies together, so that the writers can keep themselves alive, and can furnish proofs of the scandalous behaviour of the official world."

When Stieber, as desperate as a trapped fox, saw that his cause was practically lost, he played his last trump, producing as evidence of the conspiratorial activities of the accused the minute book of the Communist League. But it speedily became apparent that this exhibit was a forgery. It was recorded in the minutes that the meetings of the "Marx Party" in London had always occurred on Thursdays, whereas since January 1852 they had been held on Wednesdays; it reported the meetings as having been held at the old headquarters, whereas, since the same date, they had been transferred to new headquarters; it showed that the minutes were signed by H. Liebknecht, whereas Liebknecht (who, by the way, did not sign the minutes at all) was called Wilhelm. Marx showed that the provocative agent Hirsch had for six or eight months, week after week, been concocting this minute book in the room and under the eyes of his chief Fleury in London. "In the room above Fleury was living the Prussian police lieutenant Greif, who kept watch on Fleury and inspired his activities. Greif spent part of every day at the Prussian embassy, where he himself was supervised and supplied with inspiration. Thus the Prussian embassy was the original hothouse in which the forged minute book ripened."

The case for the prosecution collapsed. When Stieber, amid a flood of subterfuges, falsehoods, and perjuries, had admitted that the alleged minute book was a mere notebook, the public prosecutor ceased to claim that the document had evidential value. Nevertheless, it was essential that the accused should be found guilty, not only because such were the king's wishes, but also because (as, during the prosecution, Hinkeldey wrote to the embassy in London) "the whole existence of the political police hangs upon the issue of this trial." In the end, the guilt of the accused was considered to be proved because they had secretly diffused the principles of the

*Communist Manifesto*, principles that endangered the State. For this crime—which was not a crime at all, seeing that every one who wished could acquaint himself with the contents of a document which had been openly printed and sold—the accused received savage sentences. Nothjung, Bürgers, and Roeser were condemned to six years' imprisonment in a fortress; Reiff, Otto, and Becker, to five years; Lessner, to three years. The others, all of whom had been in prison for eighteen months pending trial, were acquitted. The result of this sentence was “to dispel for ever the superstitious faith in trial by jury, a faith which still flourished in Rhenish Prussia. People realized that trial by jury is trial by a court of the privileged classes, a court established in order to bridge over the gaps in the law by the breadth of the bourgeois conscience.”

Marx elaborated the materials relating to the trial into a booklet, which was published in Switzerland. The whole edition was seized on the German frontier. Then the work was reissued in the United States, where it attracted considerable attention, and caused much distress to some of the refugees, who had removed across the Atlantic since the arrests had taken place. Especially does this remark apply to Willich. He had for a considerable time been in close personal touch with Fleury, and had received money from that spy. On reaching America, Willich had entered the United States service. In order to cover up the dubious part he had played in the affair, he published diatribes against Marx in American journals, and Marx answered these in a little essay entitled *Der Ritter vom edelmütigen Bewusstsein* [The Knight of the Magnanimous Spirit]. One of the results of the trial of the communists in Cologne, a trial which had intensified the mutual enmities of the refugees, was the final break-up of the Communist League.

Marx withdrew from public propaganda, and buried himself in scientific study.

## **Chapter 05: The Trial, Part 2**

### ***Klassenkämpfe In Frankreich***

Marx had been put to the test as revolutionary champion. He had withstood the test. Maybe in his zeal, in the heat of battle, he had erred on the side of passion rather than on that of moderation, had been too impetuous rather than unduly cautious. But he had never blenched in the decisive hour; had never lost sight of the goal or been wanting in impetus; had never for a moment been lacking in readiness to leap into the breach. As a man, he had been tried, and had not been found wanting.

But what of the cause he had been fighting for? Could that resist the test of criticism?

Marx now devoted himself to answering this question—not once, but again and again. He set to work with the relentless, the thoroughness, the incisiveness, that were his leading characteristics.

With the scalpel of an anatomist, he dissected history, and demonstrated the result.

His first critical examination, his first attempt “to explain a section of history, by means of the materialist method of interpretation, as an expression of the extant economic situation,” took the form of an analysis of the February revolution in the year 1848. It was entitled *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich* [Class Struggles in France].

Here are some of the results of his inquiry.

“In the reign of Louis Philippe, what ruled in France was not the bourgeoisie as a whole, but a section thereof, the so-called financial aristocracy, consisting of bankers,

stock-exchange magnates, railway kings, mine owners, ironmasters, and some of the great landed proprietors. They occupied the throne; they dictated the laws that were passed by the Chambers; they appointed the office holders, ranging from the ministers of State down to the minor employees in the Tobacco Office.”

“The industrial bourgeoisie was part of the official opposition, and only represented in the Chambers as a minority. Its oppositional attitude became intensified in proportion as the power of the financial aristocracy grew, and in proportion as (after the risings of 1832, 1834, and 1839 had been drowned in blood) it believed its own dominion over the workers to be assured.”

“The petty bourgeoisie in all its gradations, and the peasant class, were completely excluded from political power. Finally, in the official opposition or altogether outside the ‘pays légal’ [the king, his ministers, the deputies, and the 200,000 electors], were the ideological representatives and spokesmen of the aforesaid classes, their professors, lawyers, doctors, etc., in a word, their so-called men of talent.”

“It was to the direct interest of the ruling and legislating section of the bourgeoisie (ruling and legislating through the Chambers) that the State should run into debt. The deficit was for these gentry the material substratum of their speculative activities and the main source of their enrichment. Every year there was a new deficit, and every four or five years there was a new loan. Each new loan gave the financial aristocracy fresh opportunities for diddling a State artificially kept insolvent, and therefore compelled to deal with the bankers on very unfavourable terms.”

“The sections of the French bourgeoisie that were excluded from power raised a clamour about corruption. ... Then came worldwide economic happenings to hasten the outbreak of general discontent, to ripen disaffection into revolt. These were: the potato disease, a failure of other crops, and a general commercial and industrial crisis.”

“The provisional government, climbing to power from the February barricades, necessarily represented in its composition the various parties which had shared in the victory.”

“The February republic had first of all to complete the dominion of the bourgeoisie, by allowing all the other possessing classes to enter the charmed circle of political power, and to take their places in it side by side with the financial aristocracy.”

“The proletariat, which had imposed a republic on the provisional government (and, through the provisional government, on the whole of France), at once came to the front as an independent political party, but thereby summoned the whole of bourgeois France into the lists against it. What it had conquered was a field on which it could fight for its revolutionary emancipation, but by no means that emancipation itself.” “By the establishment of universal [manhood] suffrage, the nominal owners who form the great majority of the French, the peasants that is to say, had been made the arbiters of the destiny of France.”

“By accepting the bills of exchange which the old bourgeois society had drawn on the State, the provisional government had ruined itself. It had become the harassed debtor of bourgeois society, instead of confronting that society as a menacing creditor, as one to whom the revolutionary indebtedness of several years had become payable.”

“The emancipation of the workers, even as a mere phrase, was now an intolerable danger to the new republic, for it was a perpetual protest against the establishment of credit, which rests upon the undisturbed and unqualified recognition of the extant economic class relations. The workers, therefore, must be reduced to

impotence.”

“Only in the name of the republic could the fight against the proletariat be undertaken.”

“In the National Assembly, all France sat in judgment on the Parisian proletariat. Promptly abandoning the socialist illusions of the February revolution, the Assembly proclaimed the bourgeois republic, pure and simple. Forthwith it excluded Louis Blanc and Albert, the proletarian representatives, from the executive committees it now proceeded to appoint; it rejected the proposal to establish a labour office as a special department of the government; and it greeted with vociferous applause Trélat’s statement, ‘the only matter with which we are concerned is to bring labour back to its old conditions.’”

“The workers had no other option than between starvation and rebellion. Their answer took the form of the insurrection of June 22nd, the first pitched battle between the two classes into which modern society is severed. It was a struggle for the maintenance or the destruction of the bourgeois order. The veil hiding the true visage of the republic had been torn.”

“Fraternity had lasted just so long as the interest of the bourgeoisie had been able to fraternize with the interest of the proletariat.”

“Cavaignac did not signify the dictatorship of the sword over bourgeois society; he signified the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie exercised by means of the sword.”

“The constitution did not sanction a social revolution, it sanctioned the momentary victory of the old society over the revolution.”

“December 10, 1848, was the day of the peasants’ insurrection. The French peasants’ February began on December 10th. The symbol which expressed their entry into the revolutionary movement—clumsily astute, knavishly simple, clownishly sublime, a calculated superstition, an emotional burlesque, a brilliantly stupid anachronism, a practical joke on the part of universal history, an undecipherable hieroglyph for civilized understandings—this symbol bore unmistakably the physiognomy of the class which represents barbarism within the confines of civilization. The republic had announced itself to the peasants by sending a tax collector; the peasants announced themselves to the republic by sending the emperor. Napoleon was the only man who had fully represented the interests and the fancies of the peasant class newly created in 1789.”

“With the formation of the Legislative National Assembly, was completed the manifestation of the constitutional republic, that is to say of the republican form of State in which the dominion of the bourgeoisie is embodied.”

“With the official restoration of the financial aristocracy, it was inevitable that the French people would ere long be face to face once more with a February 24th.”

“So rapidly had circumstances been ripened by the course of the revolution, that the reformers of all shades of opinion, including those who represented the most modest demands of the middle classes, had to group themselves round the banner of the extreme revolutionary party, round the red flag.”

“The proletariat is grouping itself more and more round revolutionary socialism, round communism. This socialism is the declaration that the revolution is permanent, that the class dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary transition to the abolition of class distinctions in general, to the abolition of all the productive relations on which class distinctions depend, to the abolition of all the social relations which express these productive relations, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas which



proceed from these social relations.”

“The proletariat did not allow itself to be provoked into riots, for it was engaged in making a revolution. ... Despite all endeavours, the socialist candidates were victorious. Even the army voted for the June insurgents against their own war minister Lahitte. The Party of Order was as if thunderstruck. ... The election of March 10, 1850! It was the reversal of June 1848. Those who had massacred and transported the June insurgents returned to the National Assembly, but with bowed heads, in the train of the transportees, and with the latter’s principles on their lips. It was the reversal of June 13, 1849. The Mountain, which had been proscribed by the National Assembly, returned to the National Assembly, but as the advance trumpeter of the revolution, no longer as its commander. It was the reversal of December 10th. Napoleon had been discomfited with the discomfiture of his minister Lahitte.”

“March 10th was a revolution. Behind the votes lay paving stones.”

“A new revolution is only possible as the sequel to a new crisis. But the one is as certain as the other.”

Those who, when they refer to *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, speak of Marx’s brilliant style, of the force of his descriptions, of his mastery of satire, of the splendid way in which he exhibits the movements of universal history, and of the boldness with which he discovers the hidden interconnexions of events, are in the right of it. But this praise, since it is restricted to formal merits, overlooks the material importance of the book.

What gives *Klassenkämpfe* special significance, as Engels pointed out, is the fact that here for the first time is clear expression given to the formula which was subsequently to become the general formula of the class struggle as pursued by all parties, of all socialistic trends, and in all countries. This formula is the appropriation of the means of production by the proletariat, the abolition of the wage system and of capital and of their mutual relations. Therewith, to quote Engels, was formulated the demand by which “modern working-class socialism is sharply distinguished, not only from all the various shades of feudalist, bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., socialism, but also from vague utopian ideas as to a community of goods and from the elementary but spontaneously developed forms of working-class communism. When, subsequently, Marx extended the formula to include appropriation of the means of exchange as well, this extension, which is an obvious corollary to the *Communist Manifesto*, signified nothing more than an expansion of the main proposition.”

In matters of detail, the book is not free from errors. When he wrote it, Marx was still unduly influenced by impressions derived from earlier revolutions; was still, as Engels puts it, “under the spell of prior historical experiences.”

The fundamental tint of the revolutions from 1789 to 1830 shows through in all Marx’s deductions. He is here and there because, despite the depth of his insight, his grasp of economic causes is still defective. Owing to a lack of sufficient statistical information, trustworthy reports, exhaustive politico-economic study, he arrives at the erroneous conclusion that the social revolution, as the last decisive struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in Europe, will necessarily follow hard upon the revolutionary upheaval of 1848.

Writing in 1895, Engels said that history had shown this assumption to be an illusion. “It has made clear to us that in those days the condition of economic development on the Continent was far from being ripe for the abolition of capitalist production; it has proved this by the economic revolution which since 1848 has affected the whole Continent, has involved large-scale industry in France, Austria, Hungary,

and Poland; has recently begun seriously to influence Russia; and has made of Germany an industrial country of the first rank. All this has occurred upon a capitalist foundation far wider than that which existed in the year 1848. Now, it is this industrial revolution which has everywhere for the first time clarified class relations; has done away with a number of intermediate conditions which had persisted as vestiges of the manufacturing period, and in eastern Europe even as vestiges of the guild system; has created a true bourgeoisie and a true urban proletariat; and has pushed these two classes into the foreground of social evolution. Thanks to this, however, the struggle between these two great classes, which in 1848 existed outside England in Paris alone and a few great industrial centres, has now been diffused throughout Europe, and has attained an intensity which was still quite unthinkable in 1848.”

These defects notwithstanding, *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich* is a fine piece of critical and analytical history penned in the light of historical materialism. It is a brilliant draft for the completer study of the same period, for Marx’s masterpiece, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*.

### ***Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte***

The coup d’état of Louis Napoleon was a logical sequel to the February revolution. The imperial crown was nothing more than a piece of theatrical “property,” a symbol added under stress of a dynastic megalomaniac urge. Marx, who had already drawn attention to the part played by the bizarre in French history, thanks to which “in France, the simplest man acquires the most complicated significance,” now went on to show “that the class war in France created circumstances and relations that enabled a grotesque mediocrity to strut about in a hero’s garb.”

The coup d’état had already set a number of pens to work, justifying it, condemning it, or explaining it. Marx refers to some of them.

“Among books which, almost simultaneously with mine, discussed Louis Bonaparte’s coup d’état, only two are worth mentioning, Victor Hugo’s *Napoléon le petit*; and Proudhon’s *Coup d’état*.”

He goes on to say:

“Victor Hugo confines himself to a scathing and brilliantly worded polemic against the man personally responsible for the coup d’état. For him, the incident resembles a thunderclap in a clear sky. He can see nothing but the arbitrary act of an isolated individual. Hugo fails to realize that he makes this individual seem great instead of small by ascribing to him a capacity for personal initiative without parallel in history. Proudhon, on the other hand, tries to show that the coup d’état was the outcome of an antecedent historical development. But in his case an exposition of the coup d’état becomes transformed into a historical apology for the hero who effected it.”

In contrast with these writers, Marx, with the aid of the materialist interpretation of history, gives his readers an insight into the nature of the various interests which led to the coup d’état, exposing their operation so clearly that not even the slightest detail can retain its ideological mask. Louis Bonaparte and his policy are unsparingly dissected.

This book, full of profound thought and keen vision, and written in a brilliant style, was composed at a time when Marx was in danger of succumbing to the hardships of a refugee’s life. The family of six or seven persons was packed into two small rooms, not knowing from day to day whether they would get food on the next. Clothing and shoes had been pawned. “Marx had to keep the house, for lack of a coat to go

out in, and had no meat for dinner, as the butcher had refused further credit." He was ill, and could see no hope of better days. Engels was only a clerk in his father's Manchester house; and the other refugees were all as poor as church mice.

At this juncture, Marx had a letter from his old friend Weydemeyer. During the revolution of 1848, Weydemeyer had published a revolutionary periodical in Germany. Then, subject to police persecutions and weary of a hunted life, he had emigrated to America. Now he wrote that he was about to issue a new periodical, and would like Marx to send him paid contributions. Week by week, down to the middle of February 1852, Marx dispatched articles dealing with the history of the coup d'état.

Then, instead of the eagerly expected fees, came news that the whole plan of the periodical had come to grief. These unhappy tidings arrived at a moment when Marx's little daughter Francisca had just died, and when Frau Marx, impecunious as usual, was forced to borrow from her neighbours the sum needed for funeral expenses.

Soon, however, more cheerful intelligence came from New York. Weydemeyer wrote that he would be able to issue the periodical after all, though as a monthly instead of a weekly. A comrade, a tailor by trade, who had saved forty dollars, was prepared to devote the whole sum to the venture. To this nameless Maecenas we owe it that Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* was able to appear in the second issue of "*Die Revolution*"—a periodical whose existence was brief. But several hundred extra copies of the second number were printed, found their way to Germany, and were circulated there.

In the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx revised the opinion put forward in the *Class Struggles* that a social revolution was to be expected in connexion with the movement of 1848. Since writing the earlier work, he had been engaged in profounder economic studies (carried on in London), had seen further into the mechanism of the processes of history, and had come to conclusions whose elaboration threw light on the victory of the usurper Louis Bonaparte. The "adventurer from foreign parts" had risen to the front, step by step, climbing on the shoulders of "the tatterdemalion proletariat, that vague, dissolute, down-at-heels and out-at-elbows rabble which the French denote by the composite name of la Bohème"; upon their shoulders, and upon the backs of the conservative peasants, whom petty proprietorship had "transformed into troglodytes"; and upon the bayonets of a drunken soldiery, whom he had bribed with brandy and sausages. What had been the upshot?

"The French bourgeoisie rose in revolt against the rule of the working proletariat; with the result that it has brought the slum proletariat into power, the loafers and tatterdemalions. ... The bourgeoisie kept France breathless in alarm by talking about the menace of Red Anarchy; on December 4th, Bonaparte gave it a taste of the future it had prophesied when he had the most respectable burghers of the Boulevard Montmartre and the Boulevard des Italiens shot, while they sat at their windows, by the soldiers of the army of order, who had been made half drunk to keep up their enthusiasm. The bourgeoisie glorified the sword; now it is to be ruled by the sword. It destroyed the revolutionary press; now its own press has been destroyed. It subjected public meetings to police supervision; now its own drawing-rooms are under police supervision. It disbanded the democratic National Guard; now its own National Guard has been disbanded. It had cowed the workers by declaring a state of siege; now it is itself cowed by the same weapon. It had substituted courts martial for trial by jury; now its own juries are replaced by courts martial. It had put elementary education under the thumb of the priests; now it is to experience clerical dominion in its

turn. It had transported the workers without trial; now the bourgeois are transported without trial. It had suppressed every kind of social stir by the use of all the powers of the State; now every social stir initiated by the bourgeoisie is suppressed by all the powers of the State. In its passion for its money-bags, it had rebelled against its own statesmen and men of letters; now its statesmen and men of letters have been swept out of the way, and its money-bags are rifled when its mouth has been gagged and its pen broken." Thus was the bourgeoisie punished for all the sins it had committed against the spirit of the revolution; and the instrument of this punishment, this vengeance, was Louis Bonaparte, the chosen of the smallholders.

Nevertheless: "By the economic development of this smallholding system the relationship between the peasantry and the other classes of society has been turned upside down. Under the first Napoleon, the parcelling-out of the land encouraged free competition in the rural districts, and favoured the beginnings of great industry in the towns. The peasant class was an embodied and ubiquitous protest against the landed aristocracy, so recently overthrown. The roots, which the new system of smallholding struck deep into French soil, cut off the supply of nutriment upon which feudalism had depended. The landmarks of peasant proprietorship were the natural fortifications of the bourgeoisie against any attempt at a coup de main that might be made by the old overlords. But in the course of the nineteenth century the feudal extortioner was replaced by the urban usurer; the obligations that the feudal system had imposed upon those who were bound to the soil found their modern counterparts in the obligations to the mortgagee; aristocratic landlordism had been exchanged for bourgeois capitalism. The peasant's holding is still only the pretext whereby the capitalist is enabled to draw profit, interest, and rent from the land, while leaving the cultivator to wrest his own wages from the soil. French agricultural land is so heavily burdened with mortgages that the interest paid on them is equal to the interest on the British national debt. ... At the beginning of the century, the bourgeois system of society placed the State as sentinel in front of the newly created petty landholdings, and manured their soil with laurels. Today, that same bourgeois system has become a vampire which sucks the blood and marrow from the peasants' little farms, and throws them into the alembic of capital. The Code Napoléon is now nothing more than the warrant for distraints and forced sales. ... The result is that the interests of the peasants no longer coincide, as during the reign of the first Napoleon, with the interests of the bourgeoisie, with the interests of capital. There is now a conflict of interests. The peasants, therefore, find their natural allies and leaders in the urban proletariat, whose mission it is to subvert the bourgeois order of society."

"All 'Napoleonic ideas' (a vast expansion of bureaucracy, the rule of the priests, the preponderance of the army) are the ideas of the petty proprietors in their callow youth. When the peasants have grown old and experienced, these ideas seem nonsensical to them. In the death struggle of the system of petty proprietorship, the Napoleonic ideas have become hallucinations; the words are empty phrases; the spirits are but ghosts. Yet the parody of Empire was necessary that the mass of the French nation might be freed from the yoke of tradition, and that the opposition between the State authority and society might be displayed in all its nudity. With the progressive decay of the system of petty proprietorship, the State structure that was founded upon it collapses."

Again: "Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, spread from success to success; they vie with one another in the lustre of their stage effects; men and things seem to be set in sparkling brilliants; every day is filled with ecstasy: but they are shortlived; their climax is soon reached; on the morning after, society has to pass through a long fit of the dumps; and only when that is over can there be a

dispassionate assimilation of the achievements of the periods of storm and stress. Proletarian revolutions, on the other hand, like those of the nineteenth century, are ever self-critical; they again and again stop short in their progress; retrace their steps in order to make a fresh start; are pitilessly scornful of the half-measures, the weaknesses, the futility of their preliminary essays. It seems as if they had overthrown their adversaries only in order that these might draw renewed strength from contact with the earth and return to the battle like giants refreshed. Again and again, they shrink back appalled before the vague immensity of their own aims. But, at long last, a situation is reached whence retreat is impossible, and where the circumstances clamour in chorus: 'Hic Rhodus, hic salta! Here is the Rose; dance here!'"

### **Sufferings in Exile**

Marx and his family had reached London in the end of June 1849. They had no money, no occupation, no source of help.

The funds derived from the sale of what was left of his property in Treves were soon exhausted. The publication of the "Neue Rheinische Revue" had been a failure.

More than once Marx had considered the possibility of setting to work in conjunction with Wilhelm Wolff to supply syndicated correspondence for a few dozen American journals, correspondence in which he would discuss the problems of European politics and economics. Now, unexpectedly, there came a chance for journalistic activity. In 1848, at Cologne, Freiligrath had introduced him to Dana, the managing editor of the "New York Tribune," then visiting Europe. In 1851, when Dana asked Freiligrath, one of the German refugees in London, to send him reports on European politics, Freiligrath turned the offer over to Marx.

Marx came to an understanding with Dana. Twice every week he was to send an article dealing with European politics, and was to receive for each article a fee of two pounds. This gave him an opportunity for which he had long been eager. Now he could bring his opinions concerning political matters before a large circle of readers, and make his influence felt. Moreover, at a season of dire poverty, when he had found the "nocturnal tears and lamentations" of his wife almost unendurable, the work would provide him with an income which would at least keep the wolf from the door.

But in 1851, Marx was not yet at home in the English tongue, and he therefore had to ask Engels for help. After some hesitation, Engels agreed, sent one article after another, and in the end wrote the whole series of articles which Karl Kautsky republished in 1896 under the title *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, articles signed by Marx. From the correspondence between Marx and Engels published at a still later date by Franz Mehring, we learn that this incomparable friend was Marx's ready helper in all possible difficulties. Not only was he in unceasing correspondence with Marx upon political, literary, and personal topics; not only was he untiring in the supply of pecuniary aid; but he also unselfishly devoted his evenings, year after year, when the day's work was over, to writing the necessary articles for the "New York Tribune."

After a while, Engels, following his natural bent, concentrated upon military topics, whereas Marx discussed English politics in their interconnexion with economic conditions. Thus, in his articles on the Crimean war, he disclosed the Anglo-Russian slavery which weighed so heavily on Europe, proved from acts of parliament and blue-books that there were secret diplomatic ties between the British and the Russian cabinets, stigmatized Lord Palmerston as the purchased tool of tsarist policy, adopted a definite attitude towards panslavism, towards the Indian Mutiny, towards the Eastern question, towards the Italian war, towards the North-American civil war,

and so on.

Ryazanov has been at pains to make a careful examination of the files of the "New York Tribune" from 1852 to 1862, in order to discover the articles contributed by Marx and Engels.

The result has been rather unsatisfactory, for most of the articles were unsigned. The name of Marx does not appear in the newspaper after 1855; and many of the contributions were published as leading articles, anonymously. As Ryazanov says, to begin with, Marx and Engels wrote exclusively from a bourgeois-democratic outlook. Only by degrees did they free themselves from this influence, and consistently present a proletarian standpoint. "They recognized that the great aim they had set themselves, the freeing of the working class, was incompatible (for the very reason that it necessitated the collaboration of various nations) 'with a foreign policy which pursues criminal aims, takes advantage of national prejudices, sheds the blood and wastes the goods of the people in piratical wars.' While thus pointing out the necessary connexion between home policy and foreign policy, and while proclaiming the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie to be the leading principle in all domains and all phases of the historical evolution of bourgeois society, they urged the proletariat never to lose sight of the machinations of secret diplomacy, and to worm its way into the mysteries of international politics."

Hence the collaboration on the staff of the "Tribune" was for Marx a valuable school of mental development. But as far as material benefit was concerned, it was less lucrative than he had been led to expect. Dana was close-fisted. He committed to the wastepaper basket numberless articles for which he had no use, and for which he did not pay the author a cent. The result was that the income fell far short of anticipations. Despite the utmost industry, and despite the unfailing help of Engels, who was continually supplying him with articles, Marx was unable to make ends meet.

He and his were living in excruciating poverty. They were ever on the edge of an abyss. A letter penned by Frau Marx during this period gives a heartrending picture of their distresses.

"Dear Herr Weydemeyer: Nearly a year has passed since you and your wife gave me so friendly a reception, since you made me so cordially at home in your house, and in all that long time I have not given you any sign of life. ... Now circumstances force me to take up my pen. It is to beg you that you will as soon as possible send us any money that has come or is coming to hand from the 'Revue.' We are urgently, most urgently, in need of it. Certainly no one can reproach us for having made much fuss about what we have sacrificed and borne for years. The public has been little if at all troubled with our private affairs. In these matters my husband is extremely sensitive, and he would make any sacrifices rather than practise the arts of democratic mendicancy, like great public men. But he had certainly looked to his friends, especially those in Cologne, for energetic support of his 'Revue.' Above all, he had reason to expect such support from those who were acquainted with his sacrifices on behalf of the 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung.' Instead of this, the affair has been brought to utter ruin by neglectful and disorderly management, and it is hard to say whether the procrastination of the bookseller or the manager and acquaintances in Cologne, or the behaviour of the democracy in general, has been the most disgraceful.

"My husband is almost overwhelmed here by the pettiest cares, which press on him in so disturbing a way that all his energy, the quiet, clear, tranquil self-consciousness of his nature, have been necessary to maintain his equanimity in these daily, hourly struggles. You know, dear Herr Weydemeyer, what sacrifices my

husband made for the newspaper. He paid thousands in cash, buying it (persuaded to this step by democratic worthies) at a time when there was already very little prospect of a successful consummation. For the sake of the newspaper's political honour, and to save the civic honour of his acquaintances in Cologne, he took upon himself all the burdens ... handed over his whole income; nay, in the end he borrowed three hundred thalers to pay the rent of the new offices, to provide arrears of fees for contributors, and so on—and then he was driven out by force. You know that we had absolutely nothing left for ourselves. I went to Frankfort to pawn my silver-plate, the last thing we had; in Cologne I sold my furniture. When the unhappy epoch of the counter-revolution began, my husband went to Paris; I followed him thither with my three children. Hardly had we reached Paris than we were driven out again; I and my children were forbidden to stay there. I followed him once more across the sea. A month later, our fourth child was born. You would need to know London, and the conditions there, to understand what that meant: three children, and the birth of a fourth. Simply for rent, we had to pay forty-two thalers a month. We were able to manage for a time, out of the funds we had brought with us. But our poor resources were exhausted when the 'Revue' was first published. Agreements notwithstanding, money did not come to hand; or if it did, it was in such small sums that we were in the most terrible situation.

"Let me describe only one day of this life, as it actually was, and you will see that perhaps few other refugees have had to suffer as much. Since wet-nurses are exceedingly expensive here, I made up my mind, despite terrible pains in the breasts and the back, to nurse the baby myself. But the poor little angel drank in so much sorrow with the milk that he was continually fretting, in violent pain day and night. Since he has been in the world, he has not slept a single night through, at most two or three hours. Of late, there have been violent spasms, so that the child is continually betwixt life and death. When thus afflicted, he sucked so vigorously that my nipple became sore, and bled; often the blood streamed into his little mouth. One day I was sitting like this when our landlady suddenly appeared. In the course of the winter we had paid her more than two hundred and fifty thalers, and then it had been agreed that in future we were not to pay her but her landlord, who had put in an execution. Now she repudiated this agreement, and demanded the five pounds which we still owed her. Since we could not pay this sum instantly, two brokers came into the house, and took possession of all my belongings—bedding, clothes, everything, even the baby's cradle and the little girls' toys, so that the children wept bitterly. They threatened to take everything away in two hours. If this had happened, I should have had to lie on the floor, with my freezing children beside me, and with my aching breast. Our friend Schramm hastened forthwith to seek help. He took a cab, the horse fell down, he jumped out, and was brought back into the house bleeding, the house where I was lamenting and my poor children were trembling.

"Next day we had to leave. It was cold and rainy. My husband tried to find a lodging, but as soon as he said we had four children no one would take us in. At length a friend helped us. We paid what was owing, and I quickly sold all my beds and bedding, in order to settle accounts with the chemist, the baker, the butcher, and the milkman, who had heard that the brokers had been put in, and had hastened to send in their bills. The beds and bedding that had been sold were loaded on to a handcart at the street door—and what do you think happened then? It was late in the evening, after sunset; the English law forbids this; the landlord arrived with policemen, saying that some of his goods might be on the cart. Within five minutes, there was a crowd of two or three hundred people in front of the door, the whole mob of Chelsea. The beds had to be brought in again, and could not be sent to the purchaser

until after sunrise next morning. Now that the sale of all our possessions had enabled us to pay our debts to the last penny, I removed with my little darlings to our present address, two tiny rooms in the German Hotel, Leicester Street, Leicester Square, where they were good enough to take us in for five pounds ten a week.

“You must not imagine that I am cast down by these petty troubles. I know only too well that we are not the only ones engaged in such a struggle. I know, too, that I am among the lucky ones, am specially favoured, seeing that my dear husband, the prop of my life, is still at my side. But what really crushes me, what makes my heart bleed, is that my husband has to suffer so many paltry annoyances, that so few have come to his help, and that he, who has willingly and joyfully helped so many others, should here be left unaided. ... The one thing which my husband might certainly have expected of those who have had from him so many thoughts, so much uplifting, so extensive a support, was that they might have devoted more energy to his ‘Revue,’ might have shown more participation in it. This small thing, at least, they owed him. ... This hurts me. But my husband thinks otherwise. Never, not even in our most terrible afflictions, has he lost hope of the future, has he ceased to be cheerful; and he would be perfectly content if he could only see me cheerful, and if our dear children could play happily round their beloved mother. He does not know, dear Herr Weydemeyer, that I have written to you at such length about our situation, so please keep these lines to yourself.”

The tragedy of this life in London as a refugee began in two small rooms which Marx rented in Dean Street, in June 1850. The living room, which had to serve the turn of seven persons, was at one and the same time kitchen, study, and reception room for the numerous visits paid to him. For real study, therefore, he had to depend on the British Museum Reading Room, where for many years, day after day, he worked from morning till night.

For Engels, it became a matter of course to give Marx financial aid. Among the thousands of letters exchanged between London and Manchester, there is hardly one in which we do not find a few words or a line or two about money. Sometimes we read from Marx an outburst of despair or wrath, in which he asks his friend for speedy help. Sometimes it is Engels who, quietly and straightforwardly, pens the stereotyped phrase: “Enclosed a post office order for — pounds.” Yet at this time Engels was by no means well off. He had a moderate salary, and had frequent disputes with his father and with the other members of the firm because he wanted an increase. Besides this, there were various troubles. At one time, the cashier was short of money; at another time, the head clerk refused to sanction an advance; at another, Engels’ relatives were visiting him, and must not be allowed to know about the sending of a remittance to Marx: “My governor has been buzzing about here for a week,” writes Engels to Marx. “At length I am glad to say he has departed, so that I can send you the enclosed post office order for five pounds.” Again: “My brother is leaving tomorrow, and I shall have peace once more. I have not been alone for a moment during his stay, and it was simply impossible for me to send you the banknote before Saturday.”

From time to time, there came from London exceptionally loud cries of distress. Under date March 31, 1851, we read: “You know that on March 23rd I had to pay £31.10s. to old Bamberger, and on the 16th, £10 to the Jew Stiebel, all at the current rate of exchange. I had applied to my mother-in-law through Jenny. The answer was that Edgar had been sent off to Mexico with the rest of Jenny’s money, and I could not raise a centime. With Pieper’s aid, I paid Stiebel his £10 on March 16th. All I could do for old Bamberger, was to give him two bills of exchange. ... My mother has



positively assured me that she will protest any bill drawn on her. On April 21st, therefore, I have the worst possible to expect from old Simon Bamberger, who will be furious. At the same time, my wife has been confined. The confinement was an easy one, but she is now very ill in bed, from sentimental rather than physical reasons. Meanwhile, I have literally not a farthing in the house, though there are plenty of unpaid bills from the small shopkeepers, the butcher, the baker, and so on. You will agree that the dish is agreeably sauced, and that I am dipped up to the ears in a petty-bourgeois pickle. To crown all, I am accused of exploiting the workers, and of striving to establish a dictatorship! Quelle horreur! But that is not all. The factory owner who in Brussels sent me money on loan from Treves, wants it back again, because his iron mines are in a bad way. Tant pis pour lui. I cannot pay him his due.”

It was Engels, always Engels, who provided advice and money, without ever growing impatient, without a single refusal. In letter after letter, the remittances streamed into London, to be emptied there into the sieve of the Danaides, to vanish into the bottomless pit of a household that was not very well managed. As late as 1854, Engels was still entertaining tacit hopes of devoting himself to authorship, and of removing to London. But the conviction that if he did this he would no longer be able to give Marx material help, determined him to keep his neck under the yoke of the “detested commerce.”

In August 1851, the Marx household was once more at grips with penury. “You will realize,” wrote Marx to Weydemeyer, “that my situation is a gloomy one. It will bring my wife down to the grave if it lasts much longer. The unceasing troubles, the paltry struggles of life, are a perpetual friction. Then there is the infamous conduct of my adversaries. ... For my part, I should laugh at the scum; I should not let them disturb me in my work for a moment. But you will understand that my wife, who is ill, who has to endure the most dismal poverty from morning till night, and who is nervously upset, gets none the better because, day after day, idiotic chatterers bring her all the vapourings of the democratic cesspools.”

At Easter 1852, Marx’s little daughter, born into this poverty-stricken environment, quitted an inhospitable world. Here is what her mother writes about the matter: “Our poor little Francisca fell ill with severe bronchitis. For three days the poor child struggled with death. She suffered so terribly. When it was over, her little body rested in the small back room, and we all came into the front room. At night, we lay down on the floor. The three other children were with us, and we wept at the loss of the little angel. ... The dear child’s death happened at a time when we were in the direst need. Our German friends were unable to help us. ... Ernest Jones, who paid us a visit at this time, and had promised to help, was unable to do anything. ... In my overwhelming need, I hastened to a French refugee who lived in the neighbourhood, and had visited us not long before. At once, in the most friendly way possible, he gave me two pounds. With this sum I was able to buy the coffin in which my poor child now lies at peace. She had no cradle when she came into the world, and for a long time it was difficult to find a box for her last resting place.”

The years from 1852 onwards were for Marx, politically considered, almost “idyllic years of peace,” for he had no further conflicts or controversies with opponents, had withdrawn from political activity, and had buried himself in scientific work. Pecuniarily, however, they were no better than their predecessors. Consider two passages from the letters of 1853. “Dear Engels: I have not written to you for a long time, not even to acknowledge the receipt of the five pounds, for my time and my energies were fully engaged in an indescribable stew. On July 7th I had given a bill of exchange to Spielmann. On August 31st the fellow, after I had been to see him seven

times, declared that the bill had been lost, and so on. Thus I had been dragging along for weeks, had pawned the last thing pawnable, and had put all my creditors off until September 3rd, having fended them away since July. Since I have no resources beyond the income from the "Tribune" you will understand my situation." Again, under date October 8th: "For ten days we have been without a son in the house. I have proof, now, that Spielmann has cheated me. ... I must draw another twenty-four pounds."

Sickness, like poverty, was an unceasing guest. The dwelling was unwholesome, airless, and sunless. Marx was kept in bed for weeks by a disorder of the liver; a family trouble, he believed. Not long afterwards, he wrote to Engels: "My wife is very ill, cough and loss of weight." Another time: "My wife is ill, so is little Jenny, and Lenchen has a sort of nervous fever. I cannot send for the doctor, having no money. For the last eight or ten days I have fed the family upon bread and potatoes, but I doubt if I can raise any for today. Of course this diet was not calculated to improve matters in the present climatic conditions."

There was great anxiety about the third child, the only son, at once his pride and his hope. Little Edgar (named after Marx's brother-in-law) was remarkably talented, and took after his father in his love for learning, for books. But from earliest childhood he was sickly, lacking in vital energy, the sort of plant that might be expected to grow where light and nutriment were so inadequate. In 1855 came a new child of sorrow, little Eleanor, the sixth in the series. Known by the pet name of Tussy, she was at birth so immature, so weakly, that she was very difficult to rear. Fed exclusively on milk until she was five years old, and mainly on the same diet until she was ten, she grew plump and healthy, and was the darling of all.

A few months after Eleanor's birth, Marx had to endure the greatest affliction of his life. At the age of nine, Edgar, his dear "Musch," died in his arms after several weeks' illness. A few days later, Marx wrote to Engels: "The house is desolate and orphaned since the death of the dear child, who was its living soul. I cannot attempt to describe how we all miss him. I have been through a peck of troubles, but now for the first time I know what real unhappiness is. As luck would have it, since the funeral I have been suffering from such intense headaches that I can no longer think or see or hear. Amid all the miseries of these days, the thought of you and your friendship has kept me going, and the hope that you and I will still find it possible to do something worth doing in the world."

A year afterwards, Baroness von Westphalen died in Treves. Frau Marx had gone with her children to sit by the mother's deathbed. When all was over, there was a small heritage for Frau Marx, amounting to a few hundred thalers. Marx thereupon decided to seek a new dwelling. In the beginning of 1857, the family settled into a roomier and healthier habitation, 9 Grafton Terrace. This was a relief to them all, and Frau Marx was happy. "We have a really princely home, compared with the hovels we have lived in up to now," she wrote to a friend. "Although the whole furnishings did not cost much more than forty pounds (second-hand rubbish played a great part in them), our new parlour, to begin with, looked splendid to me. ... Its splendours did not last very long, for soon one article after another found its way to the pawnshop. Still, we have been able to enjoy our bourgeois comfort."

In this house another child was born to Marx, but did not survive. The circumstances were so dreadful, and made so terrible an impression on the father, that for several days afterwards he was almost beside himself. In letters to Engels he refers to the matter again and again. He says that the retrospect is so painful that he cannot write any details.

All who came into close contact with Marx were agreed in what they had to say about the tenderness and affection he showed where children were concerned. What could be more characteristic than this as regards the delicate mysteries of his inner life. A violent, quarrelsome, contentious man, a dictator and a swashbuckler, one at feud with all the world and continually alarmed lest he should be unable to assert his superiority—none the less, in the depths of his soul, he had vast treasures of gentleness, kindness, and capacity for self-sacrifice. But because in the unconscious he was filled with anxiety lest his gentleness and kindness might prove disadvantageous to him, he kept them under close guard, and was ashamed to display to grown-ups the beauties which he regarded as weaknesses, and would only disclose them in a region where there was no struggle with adult rivals, far from the gladiatorial combats for mastery and self-assertion in the arena we call life. With children, he could play like a child. In their company he threw aside authoritarianism as burdensome armour; was never mortified, never fretful, never concerned to maintain his prestige. Children called him, as his intimate friends called him, “Mohr”; and in the neighbourhood where he lived he was generally known as “Daddy Marx,” the man who always had a packet of sweets in his pocket.

There was one person besides Engels who did much to mitigate the unspeakable miseries of the early years of the Marx family in exile. This was the familiar spirit of the household, the faithful Helene (Lenchen) Demuth. An embodiment of unselfishness, a counterpart to Pestalozzi’s Babeli, she had entered the house of the Baroness von Westphalen at the age of eight or nine years. When Jenny married Marx, her mother sent Lenchen away with her daughter “as the best thing I can send you.” Lenchen went with the Marxes to Paris, Brussels, Cologne, and London; saw the children born and die; experienced poverty, hunger, and sorrow with the family; cared indefatigably for the children, for the friends of the house, for innumerable poverty-stricken refugees; served bread at table when everything had been pawned; nursed the sick, sewed and mended far on into the night; was the indispensable buttress of the household, the guardian angel of the family, a perennially flowing source of help. Wilhelm Liebknecht says of her: “All the same, she exercised a sort of dictatorship. To this dictatorship Marx yielded like a lamb. It has been said that no one is a hero to his valet. Certainly Marx was not a hero to Lenchen. She would have sacrificed herself on his behalf; if necessary, she would have given her life a hundred times over for him and Frau Marx and any one of the children (and she did indeed give her life for them), but Marx was not an imposing figure for her. She knew him with all his whimsies and weaknesses, and she twisted him round her finger. No matter how irritable he might be, no matter how he might storm and rage so that every one else kept away from him in terror, Lenchen would go into the lion’s den; and if he roared at her, she would give him such a rating that the lion became as tame as a lamb.” It was fitting that this devoted friend, who was united with the Marx family by a thousand spiritual bonds, should in due course, as both Frau Marx and Karl Marx had wished, find her resting place in the family tomb.

### **Associates and Friends**

Repelled by the unsavouriness of party struggles, and full of bitterness towards an environing world which he felt to be hostile, Marx had withdrawn into the solitude of scientific research.

But the life he tried to escape followed him into his study, sat beside him at his desk in the British Museum Reading Room, stood at his shoulder when he was writing, and found issue through his pen. It appeared in the vesture of the poverty which compelled him to write articles for the “New York Tribune” upon the events of the

day and upon political problems. It disclosed itself in the form of the friends and companions-in-arms who sought him out in London, asked his advice, appealed to his political interest. It displayed itself in the form of happenings on the political fighting front, happenings which constrained him to adopt a position, to pass judgments, to take measures.

Thus it came to pass that living practice could not be kept away by theoretical reflection. Nevertheless, the transition from a contemplative and critical reserve to active participation and positive collaboration was effected by slow degrees. Fundamentally, Marx was an unsocial being, and was happiest in solitude.

Despite this temperament, he entered into relations with men who at that time were playing an important part in the political life of England. Among these may be mentioned, David Urquhart, George Julian Harney, and Ernest Jones.

Urquhart was a British diplomatist, a turcophile who had made it his business in life to counteract Russian plans for world dominion, particularly in the East. According to Urquhart, Lord Palmerston, the leading figure in the British foreign policy of that day, had been bought by Russia. Urquhart hated Palmerston with a deadly hatred; and the English liberals, to whom Palmerston was the arch-enemy, were glad to avail themselves of all the materials and arguments that Urquhart could bring forward. Marx, who was likewise opposed to Palmerston and the latter's russophile policy (not as a turcophile, but as a revolutionist), had an interview with Urquhart which led to permanent relations; and he wrote articles for Urquhart's newspaper the "Free Press" (in 1866 renamed the "Diplomatic Review"), though without getting into close touch with the man. For Urquhart, whom Marx described as "a complete monomaniac," was an opponent of the Chartist movement, whereas Marx was intimate with those who formed the left wing of Chartism. Nevertheless, in the eight articles upon Lord Palmerston contributed to the "People's Paper" in 1853, articles in which Marx threw a glaring light on the underground trends of Anglo-Russo-Turkish policy in the Balkans, he made use of all the information which Urquhart had gathered together in diplomatic activities and in the study of the relevant documents. "This is a fitting occasion," wrote Marx in the sixth of these articles, "to give his due to Mr. David Urquhart, the indefatigable antagonist for twenty years of Lord Palmerston who has proved his only adversary—not one to be intimidated into silence, bribed into connivance, charmed into sutorship—while, what with cajoleries, what with seductions, Alcina Palmerston contrived to change all other foes into fools."

With Harney and Jones, Marx had closer ties than with Urquhart. These two men were leaders in the Chartist camp, were men of culture, thoroughly trustworthy, and widely popular. Harney was a journalist of proletarian origin, whilst Jones was a lawyer connected by blood with the aristocracy he despised. Both of them had the greatest respect for Marx's revolutionary personality, for his outstanding intelligence, and for his unerring consistency. Harney had done good service by publishing, in his newspaper the "Red Republican," a translation of the *Communist Manifesto* and of some of the "Rheinische Revue" articles. Jones often rendered the Marx family much-needed help in its material difficulties. But in the quarrels among the refugees, neither Harney nor Jones took Marx's side without qualification, which was what Marx demanded. Of Harney, Marx said that he had chosen for a following some of his (Marx's) personal enemies; and of Jones that "despite his energy, tenacity, and activity, he spoiled everything by charlatanry, a tactless grasping at pretexts for agitation, and a restless desire to outrun time." Since both of them made concessions to the opposing party, and showed a reserved or hesitating attitude in some of the disputes, Marx gave them a liberal taste of the gall with which, in his ebullitions of

impetuosity, he was so apt to ruin the possibilities of intimate friendship and fruitful comradeship.

Even in his relations with young Wilhelm Liebknecht, who was a daily guest in the house and a playfellow of the children, there was a period of tension and irritability, with the result that for a long time Liebknecht, most reluctantly, kept aloof. In this case the offence was that Liebknecht had not broken away from the Workers' Educational Society, but had earnestly endeavoured to mediate between the two hostile camps. His attempts failed, and it soon became plain to him that he was falling between two stools. Then, one day, he happened upon the Marx children in the street. Delighted at meeting their favourite playmate, they would give him no rest until he went home with them. They smuggled him into the house, but could not restrain their rejoicings. When Marx heard the clamour they were making, and found Liebknecht, he stretched out his hand with a cordial laugh. No further word was said about their differences.

In 1856, when the tailor Lessner, who had been one of those sentenced in the Cologne communist trial, came to London after spending four and a half years in prison, he found the Workers' Educational Society in a very poor way, but was ready to give Liebknecht active assistance in its reorganization. The Kinkel clique, which had been in control, was driven out; a working programme was drawn up; and even Marx was induced to take part in the educational activities. During the winter of 1856-1857, the society was as flourishing as ever; many of the old members rejoined; and the tactics of the ultra-radical hotspurs were abandoned. Once more the society had become a centre of serious and fruitful work. Marx delivered a course of lectures on political economy, thus resuming his role of 1850-1851. He expounded his subject, as Liebknecht tells us, in the most methodical way. He would formulate a proposition, as pithily as possible, and would then proceed to elaborate it, carefully avoiding any words or phrases which his working-class hearers might have found it difficult to understand. Then he would ask for questions. "If there were no questions, he would subject the audience to an examination, and would do it with so much skill that no gaps and no misunderstandings could be overlooked." Marx was not an orator; he lacked the faculty of speaking easily before a considerable audience. Moreover, his speech was rather thick, and he spoke with a broad Rhenish accent. When, as was inevitable from time to time, he had to deliver a set speech, he would display passionate excitement, which was an over-compensation for his dread of failure. Throughout life, in all important situations, this titan, who had made it his task to turn the world upside down, was overwhelmed with a sense of inadequacy. The weaker he felt, the more was he inclined to bluster.

The list of friends and companions with whom Marx had close association in the fifties is concluded when the names of Ferdinand Freiligrath and Wilhelm Wolff have been mentioned. When Freiligrath came to London and was courted by refugees representing various trends and belonging to various camps and faction, he categorically declared that he proposed to associate "only with Marx, and Marx's most intimate friends." He was manager of the London agency of the Genevese Banque Générale Suisse, and had a good income, being thus able to say of himself that he was lucky enough to eat the "beefsteaks of exile." He was liberal in furnishing aid to less fortunate political refugees, and the Marxes found in him a valuable supporter. Wilhelm Wolff, a close friend of Marx since the days of the "Rheinische Zeitung," was the latter's nearest intimate with the exception of Engels. He was the son of a Silesian hotel-keeper, and had inherited a small property from his father. He lived upon this in England as best he could, supplementing it by occasional paid occupation.

When he died in 1864 of a stroke, after a long illness, Marx became his heir.

### ***Herr Vogt***

For Marx the fifties, the first decade he spent on English soil, ended as they had begun, with a feud. The witch's cauldron of the refugees was boiling over once more, and was sending forth the vapours of a pestiferous brew which poisoned the political life of Europe.

In 1859 Marx became involved in a controversy which was extremely trying to his nerves. It concerned the Vogt affair, which originated as follows.

For several decades the Italian bourgeoisie had been carrying on a struggle on behalf of national independence and unity. By its unaided powers, it could not hope within any reasonable time to bring this struggle to a victorious issue. Ultimately, the liberal and democratic bourgeois had harnessed the kingdom of Sardinia to their coach as trace-horse, but this had not sufficed to pull them up the hill. Then Sardinia, which now formed the nucleus of the national consolidation, prompted by Cavour, turned to Napoleon III for armed assistance. In the treaty of Plombières, it was agreed that Sardinia and France should make common cause in a war on Austria, and that Nice and Savoy should be ceded to France in return for this help. The unification and independence of Italy were to be achieved, not by revolution, but by war.

This diplomatic and militarist move, which excluded revolutionary action on the part of the people, encountered widespread opposition in Italy and elsewhere. Mazzini, who as a refugee in London was the father of all the conspiratorial secret societies, declared the treaty to be a dynastic intrigue, which would sacrifice the interests of Italy to the imperialist lusts of Napoleon. In actual fact, Napoleon III was less concerned about the liberation of Italy from Austria than about the expansion of the French sphere of influence. The war was designed, not so much to drive Austria out of Italy, as to keep Austria away from the Balkans, where Russia wished to carry out her imperialist plans undisturbed. Thus, for those who, as revolutionists, were opposed to the policy of Russia and of France, but could not favour the maintenance of Austrian dominion in Italy—and for those who were simultaneously concerned about Italian interests and German interests—it was extremely difficult to choose a political line.

Some regarded the Italian war as only a pretext behind which French Bonapartism and Russian tsarism were joining hands against Germany, which would be impotent without Austria's help. A victory of France in Italy, they said, would mean for Germany the loss of the left bank of the Rhine, as the outcome of a Franco-German war which would immediately follow. They therefore advocated common action on the part of Prussia and Austria, to attack Napoleon. Any one who wished to defend the Rhine must stand beside Austria for the defence of the Po. Other onlookers were filled with enthusiasm on behalf of the liberal and nationalist aspirations of the Italians, who must be supported whatever happened. They declared that Prussian action in favour of Austria would result in strengthening the counter-revolution, and would be a crime directed against historical evolution. In petty-bourgeois circles, however, Napoleon had supporters and defenders, who urgently desired his success should Prussia join forces with Austria. In Napoleon's own view, nothing could be more dangerous to his schemes than active intervention of Prussia on the side of Austria, and consequently, through his press agents, he carried on a vigorous propaganda in favour of Prussian neutrality.

In German nationalist circles yet another view prevailed, and found considerable support. Those of this way of thinking were anti-Austrian on the ground that if Austria were weakened or defeated, Prussia would be strengthened. Thus the unification of Germany under Prussian hegemony would be brought nearer to realization. Lassalle espoused this view, and advocated it vigorously in his pamphlet *Der italienische Krieg und die Aufgabe Preussens* [The Italian War and Prussia's Tasks]. The German nation, he said, was as keenly interested in the overthrow of Austrian despotism as in the success of the Italian movement for unification, seeing that Austria was the focus of reaction. Should Napoleon make war on Prussia, the whole nation would rise like one man. Now, however, the favourable moment had come for Prussia, not only to be neutral towards Austria, but also to do in the north what Napoleon was doing in the south. "If Napoleon alters the map of Europe in the south in accordance with the principle of nationalities, let us do the same thing in the north. If Napoleon frees Italy, let us take Schleswig-Holstein."

Much the same view was advocated by the Swiss professor Karl Vogt. In a letter to Engels, Marx sketched Vogt's political programme in the following words: "Germany gives up her possessions outside the German frontier. She does not support Austria. The French despotism is transitory, the Austrian is permanent. Allow both the despots to let blood (a certain predilection for Bonaparte is manifest). Germany, armed neutrality. Of a revolutionary movement in Germany there cannot be, as Vogt has learned 'from trustworthy sources,' any thought during our lifetime. Consequently, as soon as Austria has been ruined by Bonaparte, they will spontaneously begin an all-German moderate national-liberal development in the fatherland, and Vogt will perhaps become Prussian court-fool to boot."

Marx adopted a very different standpoint from Lassalle and Vogt. Being passionately opposed both to Bonaparte and to tsarism, he considered the war to be the issue of a Franco-Russian alliance. In an article in the "People's Press," Jones' newspaper, he let himself go against both Lassalle and Vogt. In a letter to Engels, he wrote: "Lassalle's pamphlet is an enormous blunder. ... As regards the 'governments,' obviously, from all standpoints, were it only in the interests of the existence of Germany, we must demand of them that they should not remain neutral, but, as you rightly say, should be patriotic. Yet a revolutionary point can be given to the affair simply enough, by throwing *even more* emphasis on the opposition to Russia than on that to Boustrapa [Napoleon III]. This is what Lassalle ought to have done, as contrasted with the anti-French clamour of the '*Neue Preussische Zeitung*.' This, too, is the point where, in practice during the continuance of the war, the German governments will act treasonably, and where we can seize them by the collar."

Meanwhile, Engels had incorporated his own and Marx's views in a booklet entitled *Po und Rhein*, which, through Lassalle's instrumentality, was published in April 1859 by Franz Duncker of Berlin.

At about this date, Marx was privately informed by Karl Blind, the Badenese refugee, that Vogt was in Napoleon's pay, had received large sums of money, had attempted to bribe a journalist, and so on. In conversation, Marx made no secret of the matter; and at length it found its way into the German newspaper "*Das Volk*," published in London, to which Marx was an occasional contributor.

Vogt answered with a flood of invectives, and started in the German press a furious campaign against the "band of ruffians," and its "ringleader, Karl Marx."

As chance would have it, in a Manchester printing house, shortly afterwards, Liebknecht came across a leaflet written by Blind, containing the latter's revelations about Vogt. Liebknecht sent a proof of the leaflet to the "Augsburger Allgemeine

Zeitung," of which he was correspondent. The substance of the leaflet was published in that journal and attracted widespread attention. Vogt swore by all the gods that he was the victim of a disgraceful calumny, and brought a libel action against the newspaper.

The upshot was very unsatisfactory. Blind, when called as a witness, wilted. No other proof of the accusation was forthcoming. In the end, the charge was dismissed on technical, not factual grounds. Although Vogt had not won his case legally, he had secured a moral victory, of which he made the most before the public. As a further complication, Blind now wrote to the papers declaring Liebknecht's story about the leaflet to be a "malicious invention." Vogt published the shorthand report of the proceedings at the trial, a report which told very much in his favour. The general impression produced was that Marx and his friends had circulated a base calumny. Thereupon Marx lost patience. Returning to the charge, he attacked Vogt with all the weapons at his command. He sought out witnesses; made careful investigations, explored old correspondence; sharked up materials from every quarter of the world; picked Vogt's articles to pieces, and showed that they were made up of catchwords and commonplaces lifted from Bonapartist pamphlets; opened all the sluices of his wit, his scorn, his pitiless satire, in order to make Vogt appear ludicrous and contemptible. In the course of a year, he compiled a volume of two hundred pages, entitled *Herr Vogt*. It was published in London, but had so small a circulation that it was without any notable influence on public opinion. The book was killed by the silence of the press. Only the few who had a special interest in the matter read it. Others were repelled by its bulk, its overweighting with detail, and its prolixity. Vogt had triumphed. The artillery directed against him had missed fire. His shield was untarnished.

But eleven years later, during the Commune of Paris, the archives of the Napoleonic government were rifled in the Tuileries. There was found, signed by Vogt, a receipt for 40,000 francs, paid over to this man of honour in August 1859, out of the Bonapartist secret-service fund.

Not a word about this revelation found its way into the ordinary press.

Nevertheless, Marx had been justified.

### **Condemned to Permanent Expatriation**

In the year 1861, Prince William of Prussia came to the throne, and an amnesty was declared.

It was an extremely ungracious amnesty, half-hearted, reluctant, petty; "the scurviest which has been granted since 1849 in any country (Austria not excepted)," as Marx wrote bitterly to Engels. The refugees of 1848-1849 were graciously permitted to return, but not unconditionally. They had to make an "official" application for the king's clemency, whereupon His Majesty would be guided "by a report from Our Military justice department."

In this matter, Marx came worse off than most of the German refugees. It was not merely that the conditional amnesty was no good to him, since he was unwilling to demean himself by suing King William's favour. Furthermore, he was no longer a Prussian subject, and had only a refusal to expect should he apply for reinstatement. As an actual fact, when Lassalle made zealous efforts to secure naturalization papers for Marx, his applications were refused on the ground that Marx was "of republican, or at least non-royalist sentiment."



Since Marx was unable to recover his status as a Prussian subject, he was, in effect, condemned to permanent expatriation. For him, however, expatriation implied the lack of a means of livelihood, economic insecurity, incessant poverty.

At the time when the amnesty was declared, his financial embarrassments had again become extreme, notwithstanding the unceasing help of Engels and the frequent contributions to his expenses made by Lassalle. The editor of the "New York Tribune" had cut down the space allotted to him, and had for several weeks stopped publishing his contributions at all. Urgent debts were accumulating. "I do not know how on earth I shall get on," he wrote to Engels. "Taxes, school expenses, rent, the grocer, the butcher, and God and the Devil alone know what others, will wait no longer." Besides, Marx was ailing, his chronic liver trouble having lighted up again. Frau Marx had just recovered from an attack of smallpox, and this had cost a lot of money. The children had been taken care of by Liebknecht, while Marx and Lenchen ran the house alone. Once more everything possible had been pawned, and they were in dire need.

Then Marx made up his mind to go to Holland, and to ask an uncle who lived there for help that would save his family from utter ruin. Engels encouraged him to this undertaking, so with borrowed funds and a false passport he made his "raid into the land of my maternal forefathers, tobacco, and cheese."

This time, fortune smiled. His uncle Philips in Rotterdam forked out £160, which would have enabled Marx to pay most of his debts. But, now that he had money in his pocket, he had no fancy for returning home immediately. Instead, he went to visit his mother at Treves, and she, since "there was no talk of ready cash," was complaisant enough to tear up his earlier notes of hand. From Treves he made his way to Berlin, where he stayed as Lassalle's guest. He got in touch with various friends, clinked glasses with Köppen, had himself photographed, made arrangements for contributing to a Viennese newspaper, attended (in the press gallery) a sitting of the Lower House, which seemed to him "an extraordinary mixture of office and schoolroom," and talked over with Lassalle the plans for founding a great newspaper. His general impression of Berlin, where "an impudent and frivolous tone prevailed," was unfavourable. On the way home, he caroused with old acquaintances, both in Elberfeld and in Cologne, and finally got back to London after two months' absence.

Ere long he was on the rocks again. Within a month of his return he wrote to Engels saying that the money he had brought back with him was already finished. Since applications to his mother produced "only affectionate phrases, but no cash," Engels had to come to his help once more. From a visit to Manchester, Marx brought back some money with him. There followed the usual remittances by letter. But in November he was in trouble once more: "With the last money you sent me I paid the school fees, so that I might not have to pay two terms' fees in January. The butcher and the grocer have forced me to give them notes of hand. Although I do not know how I shall pay these notes when they fall due, I could not refuse without bringing the house down about my ears. I am in debt to the landlord, also to the greengrocer, the baker, the newspaper man, the milkman, and the whole mob I had appeased with instalments when I came back from Manchester; also to the tailor, having had to get the necessary winter clothing on tick. All I can expect to receive at the end of the month will be £30 at most, for these infernal devils of the press are only printing part of my articles. ... What I have to pay (including interest to pawnbrokers) amounts to about £100. It is extraordinary how, when one has no regular income, and when there is a perpetual burden of unpaid debts, the old poverty persistently recurs, despite continual dribbles of help."

The “dribbles of help” that came in from Engels amounted to a very large sum in the course of the year. But Engels was only a salaried employee, kept on short commons by his father, and with no share in the profits of the factory. Writing to Marx in February 1862, he said: “This year I have spent more than my income. We are seriously affected by the crisis, have no orders, and shall have to begin working half time next week. I shall have to pay the £50 to Dronke in a month, and during the next few weeks a year’s rent for my house falls due. This morning, Sarah (be damned to her) stole the money out of my coat pocket. ... I am now living almost entirely at Mary’s, to keep down expenses as much as possible; unfortunately, I cannot get on without a house of my own, or otherwise I should remove to her place altogether.” The more Engels denied himself, and the more he sent to his friend, the more hopeless became the condition of the Marx household, whose shiftlessness seemed irreparable.

“It is sickening to have to write to you in this way once more,” said Marx apologetically in a letter under date June 18, 1862. “Yet what can I do but pour my miseries into your ears again? My wife says to me every day that she wishes she were with the children in the grave, and I really cannot take it amiss of her, for the humiliations, torments, and horrors of our situation are indescribable. As you know, the fifty pounds went to the payment of debts, but did not suffice to settle half of them. Two pounds for gas. The pitiful sum from Vienna will not come in before the end of July, and will be damned little, for the dogs are not printing as much as even one article a week now. Then I have had to meet fresh expenses since the beginning of May. I will say nothing about the really desperate situation in London, to be without a centime for seven weeks, since this sort of thing is chronic. Still, you will know from your own experience that there are always current expenses which have to be paid in cash. As far as that was concerned, we got on for a time by pawning again the things we had taken out of pawn in the end of April. For some weeks, however, that source has been so utterly exhausted that last week my wife made a vain attempt to dispose of some of my books. I am all the more sorry for the poor children seeing that we are so short in this season of exhibitions, when their acquaintances are amusing themselves, and when their one terror is that any one should visit them and see the nakedness of our poverty.” In another letter he writes: “With Jenny it has gone so far that she feels all the pressure and filthiness of our circumstances, and this, I believe, is one of the main causes of her bodily troubles (Apropos! Allen ordered wine for her yesterday, and I should be awfully glad if you could send a few bottles.) Without telling us, she went to Mrs. Young, to see if she could get an engagement at the theatre.”

In July 1862, Lassalle spent several weeks in London. Marx, wishing to return his hospitality, had invited him to stay in the house. “To be able to keep up appearances before him,” wrote Marx to Engels, “my wife had had to pawn practically every thing that was not nailed down.” Lassalle made the best of things, but was, in the end, profoundly moved when he became aware of the abysses that had been laboriously and exiguously hidden out of sight. “He realized from my dejected aspect that the crisis which he had long known to be impending was about to culminate in a catastrophe. He questioned me. When I told him how things were, he said he could lend me fifteen pounds up to January 1, 1863; and that I could draw upon him to any amount.” Marx wished to avail himself of this offer forthwith, and tried to secure four hundred thalers, but Lassalle wanted Engels’ guarantee, and Engels, through Freiligrath’s instrumentality, had the amount covered in Berlin. A few days later came another urgent appeal to Engels: “Eccarius has lost three children one after another from scarlet fever. They are in terrible straits. Beat up a trifle amongst our friends, and send it to him.” Six days later: “Since you have just sent money to

Eccarius, as well as paying the large sum for the Lassalle bill of exchange, you must be 'stony' yourself. Still, I have to beg you to send me a trifle by Monday, for I have to buy coal, and also food. The grocer has refused me credit for three weeks past, and until I have paid the pig off I must buy of him for cash, if I do not want him to sue me." And so on, letter after letter, week after week.

Thus Engels was incessantly dipping his hand into his pocket. Sometimes, when he took stock of his payments, he realized that they were far greater than he could afford, and that he was living beyond his means; but he never refused help. When his father died, and his position in the firm had consequently improved, so that he had a larger income, he was able to hand over more considerable sums without pinching himself unduly. Nevertheless, since Marx's claims on his generosity continually increased, there was a strain on both sides. In the end, just as towards the close of 1862 there had been a breach between Marx and Lassalle "for financial reasons," so, early in 1863, there was grave risk of a sudden end to the friendship between Engels and Marx. The trouble came from Marx's side.

In the beginning of January 1863, occurred the death of Engels' friend Mary Burns, an Irish working-class girl with whom he had been living in a free union. Her loss was a bitter grief to him, and on January 7th he wrote to Marx: "Dear Mohr: Mary is dead. Yesterday evening she went to bed early. When Lizzy went up to bed towards midnight, she was dead already. Quite suddenly. Heart disease, or a stroke. I did not hear of it till this morning; on Monday evening she was perfectly well. I simply cannot tell you how I feel about it. The poor girl loved me with all her heart."

To this letter so moving in its simplicity, to this letter in which his friend's tears could be read between the lines, Marx wrote the following almost incredible answer: "Dear Engels: The news of Mary's death has both astonished and dismayed me. She was extremely good-natured, witty, and much attached to you. The devil knows that there is nothing but trouble now in our circles. I myself can no longer tell whether I am on my head or my heels. My attempts to raise some money in France and Germany have failed, and it is only to be expected that £15 would not hold off the avalanche more than a week or two. Apart from the fact that no one will give us credit any more, except the butcher and the baker (and they only to the end of this week), I am harried for school expenses, for rent, and by the whole pack. The few of them to whom I have paid a little on account, have pouched it in a twinkling, to fall upon me with redoubled violence. Furthermore, the children have no clothes or shoes in which to go out. In a word, there is hell to pay. ... We shall hardly be able to keep going for another fortnight. It is abominably selfish of me to retail all these horrors to you at such a moment. But the remedy is homoeopathic. One evil will help to cancel the other."

Although Engels was familiar with Marx's cynicism, and with his friend's inclination to make a parade of coldness, he was thunderstruck by this letter. He had not expected an outburst of sentiment, but he had not been prepared for an answer couched in such terms. It was five days before he replied, writing: "You will find it natural enough that on this occasion my own trouble and your frosty attitude towards it have made it impossible for me to write to you sooner. All my friends, including acquaintances among the philistines, have on this occasion, which indeed touches me shrewdly, shown more sympathy and friendship than I could have anticipated. To you it seemed a suitable moment for the display of the superiority of your frigid way of thinking. So be it!"

This call to order, so delicate, so magnanimous, brought Marx to his senses. The crust of ice in which his heart was wrapped, speedily melted, and within a few days

he answered ruefully: "It was very wrong of me to write you that letter, and I repented it as soon as it was posted. My wife and children will confirm me when I say that on receipt of your letter I was as deeply moved as by the death of one of my own nearest and dearest. But when I wrote to you in the evening, I had been driven desperate by the state of affairs at home. The brokers were in; I had a summons from the butcher; we had neither fire nor food; and little Jenny was ill in bed. In such circumstances, I can, generally speaking, only help myself out by cynicism."

Engels knew his friend so well that he could not but be aware of the weakness, the desperate anxiety, that were masked by this cynicism. Though he was still profoundly shaken by the loss of his companion, he thanked Marx for replying so frankly, and went on to say: "I felt that when I buried her, I buried with her the last fragment of my youth. Your letter came before the funeral. I must tell you that I could not get the letter out of my head for a whole week, could not forget it. Never mind, your last letter has made up for it, and I am glad that in losing Mary I have not at the same time lost my oldest and best friend."

As if nothing had happened, Engels promptly turned to consider what he could do to straighten out the hopelessly disordered finances of the Marx household. After casting this way and that for means of raising money, he ventured upon "the bold coup" of borrowing a hundred pounds on account of the firm, without consulting his partners. Speedy aid was essential. Marx had announced that he contemplated the desperate step of going through the bankruptcy court, breaking up his home, getting the children placed elsewhere, dismissing Lenchen Demuth, and going with his wife into cheap lodgings. "I cannot bear to look on while you carry out your plan," wrote Engels. "Still, you will understand that after my exceptional efforts I am absolutely cleaned out, and that therefore you will not be able to count on anything from me before June 30th."

In the Marx family, after all the agitations, conflicts, and conjugal disputes, there now prevailed the greatest possible delight at the happy turn of events. But only two months later, Dronke had to help them out with £50, to which, with Engels' assistance, he added an additional £200 in July. At odd times in between, Engels continued to send small remittances. When, in December 1863, old Frau Marx died in Treves, Engels had to supply a further £10 in order that Marx, who had just been very ill with boils and was still in extremely poor health, could go to the funeral. No man ever had a better friend than Marx had in Engels. Never a reproach, never a refusal, never an evasion. To the last of these letters, clamouring for money and draining his purse to the dregs, he answered, referring to Marx's handwriting (which no one could read so well as he): "I was damned glad to see your crabbed old fist once more."

### **Lassalle**

Whereas for the bourgeoisie, the fifties, the years of the counter-revolution, were a period characterized by a tremendous economic impetus, for the proletariat they were a period of limitless exploitation, which the workers were powerless to resist. Towards the end of the decade, however, from 1857 onwards, there came a crisis which arrested the victorious advance of the capitalist economy. Marx had staked all his revolutionary hopes on the prospect of this crisis, and he was bubbling over with cheerful anticipation when the wave of bankruptcies, failures, arrest of production, and difficulty in making ends meet, spread across the Atlantic from America to England, and ultimately overwhelmed the continent of Europe. "Although the crisis in America has a very unpleasant effect on our own purse," wrote Frau Marx to

Comrade Schramm in Jersey, "you can imagine how delighted Mohr is. His old capacity for work has come back, with the old freshness and cheerfulness which have been in abeyance for years. ... In the daytime, Karl works for daily bread, and at night to finish his *Ökonomie*. Now, when this book is so greatly needed, one may hope that it will find a publisher."

As things turned out, the crisis had not the result anticipated by Marx. It did not restore the revolutionary enthusiasm of the workers. The proletariat had been too much disheartened by the counter-revolution after 1848; and the stimulating effects of the economic catastrophe, terrible as it was, were insufficient. Still, and this was a gain anyhow, the workers were scared out of their paralysis, were induced to think things over, and were spurred into political activity. That had brought Lassalle into contact with Marx once more. What Lassalle had said in 1852, namely that "during this apparent stillness of death the genuine German labour party will be born," seemed likely, now, to find confirmation.

Down to 1855, in numerous letters, Lassalle had tried to get into closer touch with Marx, working for a vigorous exchange of ideas. Again and again, with all possible respect, and with assurances of the most friendly sentiments, he had sent Marx information concerning the political situation in Germany; concerning his own views, experiences, and projects; concerning his literary undertakings, and the like. He was never tired of saying how much he admired Marx's historical erudition, penetrating insight into economic categories, and revolutionary impetus. He had written enthusiastic letters to Frau Marx; had gone out of his way to secure information for Marx from diplomatic sources; had found a publisher for one of Marx's books; had sent money (a whole two hundred thalers in the New Year of 1855); had found Marx openings in the press; had been exuberant in proofs of friendship. Yet always Marx had kept him at a distance, had been coldly uncivil, had been provocative in the assumption of superiority. Often he left Lassalle's letters unanswered; and when he did answer them, it was distantly, irritably, and with an obvious lack of interest. He rarely tried to mask his contempt by introducing a few cordial words.

Almost all Lassalle's letters begin with a complaint because Marx does not write. "Why don't you write to me? Why do you never let me hear direct from you? I learn from others that you have been through a very bad time, but that now things are a little better. I was sorry to learn of your troubles, for you are among the very few for whom I really have a weakness, and whom I would often be glad to see helped rather than myself" (1851). Again: "At length I have a line or two from you, a real Christmas present. It was so long since I had heard from you that I had positively begun to wonder" (1852). And so on, in subsequent years.

Marx never gave any frank explanation of his coldness towards this man. Lassalle was not in any way to his taste. Our minds tend to react with sympathy towards those from whom we expect advancement and profit, and with antipathy towards those from whom we expect danger and loss. It is fairly obvious that Marx must have regarded Lassalle as a dangerous rival in the field where both men were at work, the field of political theory, the labour movement, and the revolution. Since Lassalle was not a second Engels, was not willing to put himself entirely into Marx's hands, but strode forward independently towards his own goal as hero of the European revolution, Marx was naturally confirmed in this sentiment of hostility. That was why his letters to Lassalle were so sparse, so laconic, and so cold.

Lassalle's energies were fully engaged in other concerns and other tasks. He successfully wound up Countess Hatzfeld's divorce proceedings, which had occupied much of his time for years; wrote an extremely able book on Heraclitus, which

brought him considerable renown in the world of learning; made a journey to Egypt, Constantinople, Smyrna, and the Balkans; and, "as the last of the Mohicans in revolutionary Rhineland," was able ultimately, after considerable difficulties, and after humbugging the authorities by the pretence that he needed specialist treatment for an affection of the eyes, to achieve a removal to Berlin. On April 26, 1857, he wrote cordially to Marx: "You are not exiled, but I! You are living in the same city with numbers of the old companions-in-arms; whereas I, these many years, have been living so much alone, quite cut off from them all. ... That is really very trying. If we leave out of account the working class, whose heart and sensibilities are not merely as healthy and fresh as of old, but have greatly developed since those days—among the so-called cultured people there still prevails, and more than ever, the same timidity, the same anxiety, the same tendency to skulk in the corner, as of old. In the long run it becomes an urgent need to refresh oneself among those who are of the same way of thinking as oneself and have enjoyed the same sort of education. I have been feeling this need for a long, long time; so keenly that I am almost prepared to swear it will drive me to London next year—I have long wished to come thither, that I may see old associates once more."

Lassalle's visit to London did not mend matters between the two men. Their correspondence did not become more regular or more fruitful. When Lassalle sent Marx a copy of his *Heraclitus*, the unfortunate fact that Marx had to pay excess postage to the amount of two shillings, at a time when this sum was almost the last he possessed, ensured a bad reception for the book. Despite its colossal erudition, Marx could not admire it, but could only make fun of it. Writing to Engels, Marx said that Lassalle moved to and fro "in his philosophical spangle-bedecked State with all the grace of a rough fellow who has for the first time put on a well-fitting suit." His thanks to Lassalle for the gift were expressed in two lines, "curtly and coolly." Lassalle was wounded, but hid the smart, and made no moan of mortified vanity. Instead, he persisted in wooing the friendship of his suspicious rival. He offered to find a publisher for the forthcoming work on economics, and brought pressure to bear on his own publisher Franz Duncker, until the latter agreed to issue the book, and to pay Marx a fee far higher than was customary. Marx took all these manifestations of friendship as a matter of course, tendering no thanks for them, but regarding them as a perfectly natural tribute to his own abilities. He was almost a year behind time in the delivery of the manuscript, and offered no excuses to Lassalle for this delay, which had put Lassalle in Duncker's bad graces. Then, when Duncker delayed publication for a few months, Marx loaded the innocent Lassalle with reproaches. He considered that Lassalle was working against him behind the scenes, and thus stripped the last veils which had hidden the jealousy with which his own soul was poisoned. Lassalle, however, merely wrote good-naturedly to Duncker: "Marx is the Marat of our revolution. No web of treason can be spun betwixt heaven and earth, but Marx will have foreseen its spinning. Indeed, he will foresee many a web which no one has ever thought of spinning. Well, one must take the rough with the smooth."

In the year 1859, in connexion with the Italian war, there was an open conflict between Marx and Engels on one side and Lassalle on the other. Lassalle was always ready to learn from his friends; but always brought forward material considerations in support of his opinion; and, having done so, with due modesty he would ask for an admission that he had been right. All he could get from Marx was blunt contradiction, malevolent suspicion, uncomradely behaviour! While we cannot but admire Lassalle for his courage and confidence, it is painful to contemplate Marx in the role of one who defends a case in a way calculated to lose it. At any rate, the course of the Italian movement rewarded Lassalle for the fine humanity of his attitude by proving

him to have been right in his judgment.

The Vogt affair led to another controversy between Marx and Lassalle, a fierce and bitter one this time. To Lassalle, Blind seemed an infamous liar, who had scattered accusations without having any evidence to substantiate them, and had then backed down. Liebknecht, for him, was a ne'er-do-well who, though professing to be a revolutionist, contributed to reactionary journals; and Marx was a man who had been rashly eager to attack, and then, when his accusations had proved untenable, had not been honest enough to withdraw them frankly. In long letters full of "sincerest and most heartfelt friendship," he put his views before Marx. What did Marx do? Not only did he shower vulgar abuse on Lassalle in his letters to Engels; but he hunted up the "most abominable, most odious inventions," flinging them as charges against Lassalle—on whom he wished to revenge himself because he had not succeeded in extorting from him as much money as he wanted. A man must have great magnanimity to maintain his composure in face of such behaviour. Lassalle did more, quietly explaining that the charges were malicious calumnies, and continuing his correspondence with Marx as if nothing had happened. He wrote long letters discussing important political topics; supported Marx in the action for libel which the latter brought against the "Nationalzeitung"; provided funds for the publication of the book against Vogt; and in all possible ways showed himself a true friend.

Thus by the beginning of the sixties, the two men were on sufficiently friendly terms for Marx to stay with Lassalle when he visited Berlin.

At this time Lassalle's mind was full of great schemes. Being extremely ambitious, he was on the look-out for some field which would open exceptional possibilities. His close ties with Countess Hatzfeld, who since her divorce had regained control of her extensive possessions, provided him with abundant means for these far-reaching enterprises. Lassalle's first desire was to found a great daily newspaper in Berlin. He had broken away from the bourgeois democrats, and aimed at establishing the labour movement upon a broader foundation, of which he would be one of the main buttresses. This new movement was to be a trump in his political game, and was to be played with a sensational gesture. When Marx was in Berlin, Lassalle talked over with him the question of the proposed daily newspaper. "It would, no doubt, be opportune," wrote Marx to Engels after returning to London, "if next year we could issue a newspaper in Berlin, much as I detest the place. With the aid of Lassalle and others we could get together twenty or thirty thousand thalers. But hic jacet. Lassalle made me a direct proposal. At the same time he confided to me that he must act with me as editor-in-chief. 'What about Engels?' I enquired. 'Well, if three are not too many, Engels can join us as one of the chief editors. But you two must not have more votes in the matter than I, for if you had I should always be outvoted.' As reasons why he must have an equal voice in the chief-editorship he alleged: first, that in the general view he was more closely connected with the bourgeois party, and could therefore more readily secure funds; secondly, that in this venture he would sacrifice his 'theoretical studies and theoretical repose,' and must get something out of it in return. Lassalle, being blinded by the prestige he has secured in certain learned circles by his *Heraclitus*, and which toadies ascribed to him because he has a good cellar and a good cook, is naturally unaware that as far as the general public is concerned he is a discredited man. Then we have to remember his disputatiousness, the way in which he is 'still entangled in speculative concepts' (the fellow actually dreams of writing a new Hegelian philosophy multiplied to the second power), his infection with old-school French liberalism, his overbearing pen, his obtrusiveness, his tactlessness, and so on. Lassalle might be of service as a member of the staff, under strict discipline. Otherwise, he would only make us all ridiculous. But, as will

be obvious to you, the position was an embarrassing one, in view of his extremely friendly attitude towards me. It was hard to know what to say. I was vague, therefore, and said that I could decide nothing until I had consulted you and Lupus [Wilhelm Wolff].”

An essential preliminary to Marx’s proposed removal to Berlin was that he should once more be naturalized as a Prussian subject. Lassalle had undertaken to pull the necessary strings. He ran from pillar to post, interviewed ministers of State, sent in petition after petition, had a question asked in the Landtag, and displayed the utmost zeal—at the very time when, in letters to Engels, Marx was writing of him with contempt and mockery. When Lassalle published his work in two volumes, *System der erworbenen Rechte* [System of Acquired Rights], Marx fobbed it off with a few casual observations, although he knew that Lassalle was eagerly awaiting a detailed criticism from his pen. “I am really very much annoyed at your way of reading my book,” wrote Lassalle, in justified ill-humour. “If I write such a book, it is done with my best blood and all my nervous energy, au fond, and, in the last resort, only for a very few persons. ... Surely of these few, anyhow, I may expect that a work which is the outcome of so much self-martyrdom shall at least be read in the precise order and evolution of the thoughts in which it was written by the author.” In detailed letters, Lassalle endeavoured to answer Marx’s objections, and to correct his misunderstandings, but it was all love’s labour lost. Marx ignored the “schoolboy theme.”

In 1862, Lassalle at length came to London, and, under very distressing conditions, was a guest in Marx’s house. Since Lassalle had the airs of a grand seigneur, Marx felt that the poverty of his own household was shown up in a ludicrous light. His vanity was touched; he conceived himself forced into an inferior position; and he gave vent to his feelings in outbursts of spleen. “Lassalle,” he wrote to Engels, “is now posing, not only as the greatest of scholars, the profoundest of thinkers, the most brilliant of investigators, etc., but also as a Don Juan and a revolutionary Cardinal Richelieu. He confided to me and my wife in the utmost confidence that he advised Garibaldi not to attack Rome but ... also that he had recently been to see Mazzini, who had approved and ‘admired’ his plan. He presented himself to these people as ‘representative of the German revolutionary working class,’ and declared to them (this is literally true!) that he (Lassalle) ‘by his pamphlet on the Italian war had prevented Prussia’s intervention,’ and, in fact, ‘had guided the history of the last three years.’” In another letter Marx wrote: “Lassalle also informed me that he would perhaps found a newspaper when he got home in September. I told him that for good fees I would supply his paper with English correspondence, without undertaking any responsibility or political partnership, seeing that politically we were agreed as to nothing except certain distant goals.”

The newspaper scheme fizzled out. But Lassalle entered the political arena, and placed himself at the head of the labour movement, which he had conjured up out of the ground by loud and fiery appeals. He expounded his labour programme to the manual workers of Oranienburg, a suburb of Berlin. To the Leipzig workers, who had applied to him through Vahlteich, Dammer, and Fritzsche, he sent his *Offenes Antwortschreiben* [Open Answer]. He secured publicity by his speech on the constitution; and by a propagandist tour, which resembled a triumphal procession. When he founded the General Union of German Workers, he provided the working class of his native land with its first political organization, its first contact with the vanguard of the class struggle.

Marx’s attitude towards these multifarious activities, which implied nothing less than the awakening and mobilization of the proletariat for the tasks of the social



revolution, was one of chill reserve and scarcely concealed enmity. He looked upon Lassalle as a successful rival, who threatened to outdo him; as "the fellow who obviously believes himself to be the man who will enter into our heritage." Marx did not show the smallest readiness to recognize at least Lassalle's good intentions; did not make the slightest endeavour to do justice to Lassalle's activity; did not manifest a trace of glad recognition of the historical fact that a breach had at length been made in the political passivity and indifference of the German proletariat. Instead, in his letters to Engels, Marx continued to display envy, malice, and all uncharitableness towards the person and the doings of Lassalle. "This fellow"; "this boomster"; "this future dictator of the workers"; "these commonplaces"; "these borrowed phrases" "this monumental arrogance"; "this ridiculous assumption of learning and preposterous sense of self-importance" "this botched work of a schoolboy, who is in a hurry to parade himself as a learned man and an independent investigator"—such are the tones in which Marx passes judgment. "Since the beginning of this year, I have not been able to bring myself to write to him. It would be a waste of time to criticize his stuff. Besides, he appropriates every word as a 'discovery' of his own. But it would be absurd to rub his nose in his plagiaries, for I will have no truck with our own things after he has smeared them all over. Nor will it do to recognize these pufferies and exhibitions of tactlessness. He would hasten to turn that to account. All that remains, therefore, is to wait until his anger breaks out at last. Then I shall have a fine answer ready: that he always remarks 'this is not communism,' and so on." Engels sounded the same note: "The stories about Lassalle, and the scandal they are making in Germany, are beginning to become disagreeable. It is certainly time that you finished your book. ... It is disastrous that the man should get a position for himself in this way."

That was the sore point! Lassalle was making a position for himself. A criminal undertaking, which could only be answered with enmity, battle, and annihilation! Marx, who throughout life was feverishly striving for the highest possible achievement, for success, and for recognition, was made blind and crazy by hatred for his rival. No longer could he think of the joint mission, of the great historical task, of the revolutionary aim. He could think of nothing but priority, the right of the first-born, the triumph of uniqueness, the glory of the originator, the dictatorship of the victor. This hysteria of the struggle for power found expression in venomous outbreaks.

Who can doubt that Marx breathed more freely when Lassalle was killed in a duel? There is no word of regret, no indication of a sense of loss, in the heartless and frivolous words he wrote to Engels when the news came. "It is hard to believe that so noisy, so stirring, so pushful a man should be as dead as a doornail, and have to hold his tongue altogether." Nothing but profound hostility could make any one speak in this way of a companion-in-arms.

At a later date, when hatred had been mitigated by time, and when no further rivalry was possible, Marx was able to appraise Lassalle and his work in a more concrete way, though not less critically. Writing to Schweitzer, Lassalle's successor in the General Union of German Workers, under date October 13, 1868, Marx said: "As regards the Lassallist Union, it was founded during a period of reaction. When the labour movement had been slumbering in Germany for fifteen years, Lassalle wakened it once more, and this was his imperishable service. But he made great mistakes. He was unduly influenced by the immediate circumstances of the time. He made a small starting-point (his opposition to a dwarf like Schulze-Delitzsch) into the central feature of his agitation (State-help versus self-help). ... For him, the State transformed itself into the Prussian State. Thus he was compelled to make concessions to the Prussian monarchy, the Prussian reaction, and even the clericals. With

the demand for State-help on behalf of associations, he combined the Chartist demand for universal suffrage. He overlooked the difference between German and English conditions. Also, from the very start—like every one who believes that he has in his pocket a panacea for the sufferings of the masses—he gave a religious sectarian character to his agitation. ... Furthermore, being the founder of a sect, he repudiated all natural connexion with the earlier movements. He fell into the same mistake as Proudhon, in that he did not seek his concrete foundation in the actual elements of the class movement, but wished to prescribe its course to the class movement in accordance with a doctrinaire prescription of his own.”

Marx’s judgment of Lassalle’s mission, which is substantially just in this respect: that Lassalle was not in fact a historical materialist, and did not ground his theory upon a fundamental knowledge of economics, became a one-sided and erroneous judgment in this respect: that it was coloured with personal animus. And it became utterly fallacious in this respect: that it contained no syllable about the enormously important fact that Lassalle (for whatever reason and with whatever programme) had actually appeared in history, and, at this particular epoch, had conjured up the labour movement out of the ground. It is of minor importance how much in Lassalle’s theory and in his method of agitation may have been sound or unsound, how much he may have borrowed from Buchez, taken over from Malthus, understood in Ricardo, or misunderstood in Marx. The decisive thing was that he succeeded in marshalling the proletariat in a politically independent formation upon the battlefield of history. Mehring rightly points out that at a later date, when the proletarian movement began to develop in the United States, Engels, writing to Sorge anent the criterion of achievement in a particular historical situation, said: “The first great step when, in any country, the movement makes its appearance, is the constitution of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long only as it is a separate labour party.” That was the sense in which Lassalle acted; and in that sense, Lassalle’s achievement was a historical deed of supreme importance.

Man of transcendent genius though he was, Marx’s insight failed him when his emotions were profoundly stirred by the appearance of a formidable rival. He forfeited his revolutionary infallibility as soon as nervous anxiety for the maintenance of his personal prestige marred his devotion to the material advancement of the cause.

Marx was not a team worker. He was not a man of comradely spirit, not one of those whose powers are intensified by the sense of living community with others. He was not a rank-and-file fighter.

He could only create as first in the field; could only fight as generalissimo; could only conquer when assigned the heroic role. He was a lonely eagle upon an icebound crag.

## **Chapter 06: Achievement, Part 1**

### **Foundation of the International**

The international exhibition held in London during the year 1862 was a rendezvous at which worldwide capitalism was given an opportunity of publicly demonstrating its wealth and its achievements.

Before the astonished eyes of the international bourgeoisie, the lords of commerce, the magnates of finance, and the kings of industry, puffed up with the pride of success, displayed the tremendous results of capitalist economic development. Not only did they exhibit their machines, raw materials, methods of production, technical discoveries, and statistical tables; but they also assembled at this centre of progress

their technicians, masters of works, and manual operatives, whose zeal was to be stimulated by the spectacle, that they might be spurred on to fit themselves for the tasks of the day and to make themselves more efficient for the purposes of capitalist production. In Prussia and other parts of Germany, the sending of working-class delegates to London was the outcome of private enterprise; but from France delegates were dispatched under official auspices and with government support. Proudhon was an enemy of the Bonapartist regime, and Louis Napoleon wishing to undermine his influence with the proletariat was not content to extend an amnesty to numerous workers who had been imprisoned in connexion with strikes or for infringing the draconian laws against combination; but was also active in promoting the dispatch of a working-class delegation to the London exhibition. A special electoral bureau was installed, two hundred delegates were chosen, the cost of sending them was defrayed from public funds and by subscriptions; and in order that the activities of the delegation might be freely reported at public meetings of the workers, the relevant passages in the laws which forbade such meetings were tacitly suspended.

It was inevitable that the French and German delegations, in their visit to London, should come into contact with British trade unionists, should become acquainted with the economic and political influence of the British unions, and thus derive agitational impetus for their work in their own lands. The British trade unions had a direct interest in promoting such contacts, for the British workers, whenever the class war entered upon an active phase, were seriously injured by the blackleg competition of foreign workers whom the capitalists used to ship across the Channel on such occasions. They hoped, by enlightening their continental brethren, and by promoting the organization of these, to put an end to strike-breaking of this kind. During the exhibition, therefore, they did everything they could to encourage an international exchange of ideas among the workers, being especially interested in the Parisian delegates.

Since 1860, the trade-union movement had in England been advancing with rapid strides, especially in London. Not only were wider and ever wider circles of the workers being organized, but the organized British workers were modifying their attitude towards the problem of political action. Whereas hitherto it had been a principle of the trade unions to ignore politics, parliamentarism and elections, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters, and the Ladies Shoemakers' Society, under the leadership respectively of William Allan, Robert Applegarth, and George Odger, were now beginning to interest themselves in political problems and political action. A working-class newspaper, the "Beehive," edited by George Potter, favoured this change of policy by its advocacy. Eccarius, a tailor from Thuringia, who had been a member of the Federation of the Just and then of the Communist League, and had for a long time been Marx's right-hand man, did his utmost to promote the expansion of the organizational field, with the design of founding an international working-class organization. It was to him, in especial, that the formation of effective ties between British trade unionism and the foreign labour delegations to the exhibition was due.

It is probable, however, that the interest of the French and German labour delegates would soon have cooled, had not the general political situation on the Continent helped to fan the flames. The paralysing reaction of the fifties was now spent. Capitalism, for the purposes of its own development, needed freer and more mobile working-class elements, and for this reason it had been necessary to mitigate the pressure of tsarist, Bonapartist, and Bismarckian policy. The flowers of liberty were blossoming once more. Lassalle, in his letters to Marx, had referred to the new vital impetus that was manifesting itself everywhere in the proletariat. In Italy and Hungary, the

movements for national independence had become active once more, diffusing a stimulant influence.

The Polish rising of 1863 opened a new ventilating shaft for the accumulated energies of the movement on behalf of freedom. "This much is certain," wrote Marx to Engels under date February 13, 1863 "that the era of revolution has at length been reopened in Europe. The general posture of affairs is good. But the cheerful deceptions and the almost childlike enthusiasm with which we acclaimed the revolution before February 1848, are over and done with. Old comrades have passed away, others have backslidden or been corrupted, and, as yet at least, there is no sign of any new growth. Moreover, we know now how great a part stupidity plays in revolutions, and how they are exploited by rotters. One may hope that this time the lava will flow from east to west, and not in the opposite direction." When, in the course of the Polish rising, Prussian soldiers were used against the revolution, this was, according to Marx, "a combination which compels us to raise our voices." The Workers' Educational Society certainly ought to issue a manifesto. "You must," wrote Marx to Engels, "write the military portion—that which concerns Germany's military and political interest in the re-establishment of Poland. I will write the diplomatic portion."

The Polish rising speedily collapsed, but the idea mooted by Marx took due effect. The representatives of the London workers sent the Parisian workers a manifesto they had drafted in favour of the Poles, and asked their French comrades to take joint action. Thereupon the Parisian workers sent a delegation to London, headed by Tolain, who had been labour candidate at the recent elections in Paris. This delegation participated at a meeting held in St. James' Hall in honour of the Poles. At this meeting a committee of British workers was appointed, to send a fraternal address to the Parisian workers and to arrange for a subsequent meeting. The second meeting was held at St. Martin's Hall on September 28, 1864, having been summoned by Odger, chairman of the London Trades Council, and Cremer, secretary of the Building Workers' Union. Reporting to Engels, Marx said: "A certain Le Lubez was sent to me, to ask if I would come on behalf of the German workers, would find a German worker to speak at the meeting, and so on. I suggested Eccarius, who did splendidly, and I assisted as a lay figure on the platform. I knew that on this occasion real forces were present, both from London and from Paris, and I therefore decided to waive my usual rule, which is to refuse all such invitations.

"At the meeting, which was packed out (for manifestly there is now a revival of the working classes), Major Wolff (Thurn and Taxis, Garibaldi's adjutant) represented the London Union of Italian Workers. It was decided to found an International Workingmen's Association, whose General Council is to sit in London, acting as intermediary for the workers' societies in Germany, Italy, France, and England. In 1865, a general working-class congress is to be summoned in Belgium. At the meeting, a provisional committee was appointed, Odger, Cremer, and many others, in part sometime Chartists, sometime Owenists, etc., for England; Major Wolff, Fontana, and other Italians, for Italy; Le Lubez, etc., for France; Eccarius and myself, for Germany. The committee was empowered to co-opt as many members as it likes.

"So far, so good. I attended the first sitting of the committee. A sub-committee (of which I am a member) was appointed to draft a declaration of principles and provisional rules. Being indisposed, I was unable to attend the sitting of the subcommittee and the subsequent meeting of the General Council. At these two meetings, in my absence, this was what happened:

"Major Wolff handed in a rules and constitution (statutes) translated from those of the Italian workingmen's associations (which have a central organization, but are, as appeared later, essentially associated mutual aid societies); this he thought was suitable for use by our new association. I saw the thing later. It was obviously botched up by Mazzini, and you will know without my telling you in what sort of spirit and what kind of phraseology the essential question, the labour problem, was treated. Also the problems of nationality were dragged in by the ears. In addition, a sometime Owenist, Weston, an amiable and worthy man, submitted a programme of unspeakable length and full of unutterable confusion.

"At the next meeting of the General Council, the subcommittee was instructed to remodel Weston's programme and Wolff's rules and regulations. Wolff departed to attend the congress of the Italian Workingmen's Association at Naples, and to ask this body to affiliate to the London central association.

"Another meeting of the sub-committee, which I again failed to attend, having been notified too late. To this was presented a 'declaration of principles' and an elaboration of Wolff's rules and regulations drafted by Le Lubez, which was adopted by the sub-committee to lay before the General Council. The General Council met on October 18th. Since Eccarius had written to warn me that there was danger in delay, I turned up, and was truly terrified to hear the good Le Lubez read out a horribly worded, badly written, and utterly raw foreword, which professed to be a declaration of principles. Mazzini peeped through it all, crusted over with vague rags of French socialism. Substantially, the Italian rules and regulations were adopted. Whatever their faults may be, they have a quite remarkable aim, that of establishing a sort of central government (of course with Mazzini in the background) of the European working classes. I played the part of moderate opposition; and, after lengthy discussions, Eccarius proposed that the subcommittee should subject the whole thing to 're-editing.' The 'principles' contained in Le Lubez's declaration were, however, accepted.

"Two days later, on October 20th, there was a meeting in my house, attended by Cremer for the British, Fontana (Italian), and Le Lubez—Weston could not come. I had not as yet had the papers (Wolff's and Le Lubez's) in my hands, and therefore had been unable to prepare anything; but I had made up my mind that if I could prevent it not a line of the thing should be left. To gain time, I proposed that before 'editing' the foreword, we should 'discuss' the propositions. This was agreed. It was one in the morning before the first of forty propositions was adopted. Cremer said (at my instigation): 'We have nothing to put before the General Council, which is to meet on October 25th. We must postpone it until November 1st. The sub-committee can meet on October 27th, and try to come to a definite conclusion.' This proposal was accepted, and the 'papers' were 'left' for me to look through.

"I saw that it was impossible to make anything out of the document. In order to justify the very remarkable way in which I intended to re-edit the already 'voted principles, I wrote an Address to the Working Classes (which was not in the original plan); a sort of retrospect of what had happened to the working classes since 1845. Under the pretext that all factual matters were contained in this Address, and that we need not say the same things thrice over, I modified the introduction, cut out the declaration of principles, and finally reduced the four and twenty propositions to ten. In so far as international politics are mentioned in the Address, I refer to countries and not to nationalities; and I denounce Russia, not the minor States. My proposals were all adopted by the sub-committee. Only one thing, I had to pledge myself to insert in the preamble to the rules two phrases about 'duty' and 'right'; also about truth, morality, and justice—but they are all so placed that they cannot do any harm.

"At the sitting of the General Council, my Address, etc., were adopted with great enthusiasm (unanimously). The discussions about printing, and so on, will take place next Tuesday. Le Lubez has a copy of the Address for translation into French, and Fontana one for translation into Italian (and there is a weekly, the 'Beehive,' edited by the trade unionist Potter, a sort of 'Moniteur'). I myself am to translate the thing into German.

"It was very difficult to arrange matters so that our views should appear in a form which would make them acceptable to the present standpoint of the labour movement. The same people will in a few weeks be holding joint meetings with Bright and Cobden on behalf of an extension of the suffrage. It will be some time before the reawakened movement will permit of the old boldness of speech. We must be strong in the substance, but moderate in the form."

So much for Marx's report to Engels. Enough to add that the chairman of the provisional General Council was Odger, and its vice-chairman Eccarius. It was to have its headquarters in London. That is all the noteworthy information that can be given as to the founding of the International Workingmen's Association.

Summarizing the matter, it may be said that the objective conditions requisite for the foundation of the International were furnished by the general situation; that the subjective stimulus proceeded from the trade unions; and that the intellectual leadership and the furnishing of a political objective came from Marx.

### **The Inaugural Address**

The Address, Preamble, and Provisional Rules of the International Workingmen's Association is extant in the original English text that was adopted by the Association, but Marx's German version of this original has not come down to us.

The first version published in German was the work of J. B. von Schweitzer, Lassalle's successor in the General Union of German Workers. It appeared in 1864, in the second and third issues of the "Sozialdemokrat," the organ of the union.

In 1866, J. T. Becker, who had fled to Switzerland after the rising in the Palatinate and Baden, and had settled down in the Swiss republic, published another German version of the Address in the "Vorboten," issued in Geneva as the central organ of the German-speaking group of the International.

Two years later still, Wilhelm Eichhoff, in *Die Internationale Arbeiterassociation*, a book published in Berlin, gave yet another translation of the Inaugural Address, described as "as faithful a rendering as possible." Since these translations differed in certain respects, containing errors as well as conflicting interpretations, Karl Kautsky subsequently published an authorized translation, made by Luise Kautsky under his supervision.

In the preface to this translation Kautsky points out that in Marxist literature the Inaugural Address has a significance, as far as exposition of programme is concerned, second only to that of the *Communist Manifesto*. But though the two documents agree in fundamentals, the Inaugural Address has a very different visage from the *Communist Manifesto*.

When the *Communist Manifesto* made its way into the world with all the splendour of a mounted pursuivant, Marx was addressing himself to a choice group of working-class intellectuals, who were to form a propagandist society of persons carefully trained in matters of theory, persons who, in the forthcoming revolution, would seize the leadership, and would conduct the movement forward towards its goal. In the interim, seventeen years had passed away. The hopes of revolution had not been

fulfilled. The revolutionary outburst of 1848 had been followed by a widespread reaction, and by a formidable development of capitalism. The bourgeoisie had made common cause with the vestiges of the feudal powers, and the two had constituted a firm front. Against these united forces, no headway could be made by a small group of tried and trusty revolutionists backed up only by a blind following of the masses. What was needed now was a spontaneous mass movement of those who were thoroughly well informed regarding methods and aims. The Inaugural Address was designed to provide such a mass movement with practical objectives and immediate tasks. Thus it substituted concrete demonstrations for enthusiastic impetus, and provided a soberly drawn map of the nearest sections of the route for a splendidly conceived historical perspective.

The Address begins with a drastic and overwhelmingly powerful but concise statement of the contrasts characteristic of capitalist evolution: exuberant wealth among the possessing classes, and terrible poverty among the non-possessing. "The total import and export trade of England had grown in 1863 to £443,955,000, an astonishing sum, about three times the trade of the comparatively recent epoch of 1843. ... From 1842 to 1852, the taxable income of the country increased by six per cent; in the eight years from 1853 to 1861, it has increased from the basis taken in 1853 twenty per cent. ... 'This intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power,' adds Mr. Gladstone, 'is entirely confined to classes of property.'" That was one side of the medal. Here was the obverse: "The House of Lords caused an inquiry to be made into, and a report to be published upon, transportation and penal servitude. Out came the murder in the bulky blue-book of 1863, and proved it was by official facts and figures, that the worst of the convicted criminals, the penal serfs of England and Scotland, toiled much less and fared far better than the agricultural labourers of England and Scotland. But this was not all. When, consequently upon the Civil War in America, the operatives of Lancashire and Cheshire were thrown upon the streets, the same House of Lords sent to the manufacturing districts a physician commissioned to investigate into the smallest possible amount of carbon and nitrogen, to be administered in the cheapest and plainest form, which, on an average, might just suffice to 'avert starvation diseases.' ... He found ... that quantity pretty nearly to agree with the scanty nourishment to which the pressure of extreme distress had actually reduced the cotton operatives ... and ... that the silk weavers, the needlewomen, the kid glovers, the stocking weavers, and so forth, received, on an average, not even the distress pittance of the cotton operatives, not even the amount of carbon and nitrogen 'just sufficient to avert starvation diseases.' ... As regards the examined families of the agricultural population, it appeared that more than a fifth were with less than the estimated sufficiency of carbonaceous food, that more than one-third were with less than the estimated sufficiency of nitrogenous food ... The agricultural population of England [the richest division in the United Kingdom was considerably the worst fed; but even the agricultural wretches of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Somersetshire fare better than great numbers of skilled indoor operatives of the East of London." Such was the picture in England, the exemplary land of capitalism—a horrible contrast between superfluity and starvation. But "with local colours changed, and on a scale somewhat contracted, the English facts reproduced themselves in all the industrious and progressive countries of the Continent. In all of them there has taken place, since 1848, an unheard-of development of industry, and an undreamed-of expansion of imports and exports. In all of them 'the augmentation of wealth and power entirely confined to classes of property' was truly 'intoxicating' ... Everywhere the great mass of the working classes were sinking down to a lower depth, at the same rate at least that those above them were rising in the social scale. In all

countries of Europe it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind, and only denied by those whose interest it is to hedge other people in a fool's paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, no new colonies, no emigration, no opening of markets, no free trade, nor all these things put together, will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses; but that, on the present false base, every fresh development of the productive powers of labour must tend to deepen social contrasts and point social antagonisms."

Having given this demonstration of the economic and social situation, the Address turns to consider the political situation. "After the failure of the revolutions of 1848, all party organizations and party journals of the working classes were, on the Continent, crushed by the iron hand of force; the most advanced sons of labour fled in despair to the transatlantic republic; and the short-lived dreams of emancipation vanished before an epoch of industrial fever, moral marasm, and political reaction. The defeat of the continental working classes, partly owed to the diplomacy of the English government, acting then as now in fraternal solidarity with the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, soon spread its contagious effects to this side of the Channel. While the rout of their continental brethren unmanned the English working classes, and broke their faith in their own cause, it restored to the landlord and the money-lord their somewhat shaken confidence. They insolently withdrew concessions already advertised. The discoveries of new gold lands led to an immense exodus leaving an irreparable void in the ranks of the British proletariat. Others of its formerly active members were caught by the temporary bribe of greater work and wages, and turned into 'political blacks.' All the efforts made at keeping up, or remodelling, the Chartist movement failed signally, the press organs of the working class died one by one of the apathy of the masses, and, in point of fact, never before seemed the English working class so thoroughly reconciled to a state of political nullity."

Only two great happenings had lightened the darkness of this gloomy period, the introduction of the Ten Hours Bill after a thirty years' struggle, fought with most admirable perseverance, a struggle in which the English working classes had turned to account a temporary feud between the landlords and the money-lords; while the other redeeming feature had been the foundation of the co-operative movement by a few bold innovators, the Rochdale pioneers. "The Ten Hours Bill was not only a great practical success, it was the victory of a principle. ... But there was in store a still greater victory of the political economy of labour over the political economy of property. We speak of the co-operative movement, especially the co-operative factories." The great value of the co-operative movement was that it did not represent the outcome of a casual favourable turn in the parliamentary situation, but was the expression of a deliberate, spontaneous, and fully conscious attempt to overthrow the capitalist system. Herein is disclosed the fact that "like slave labour, like serf labour, hired labour is but a transitory and inferior form, destined to disappear before associated labour plying its toil with a willing hand, a ready mind, and a joyous heart."

Experience has indeed shown that "however excellent in principle, and however useful in practice, co-operative labour, if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even perceptibly to lighten the burden of their miseries. ... To save the industrious masses, co-operative labour ought to be developed to national dimensions, and, consequently, to be fostered by national means. ... To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes. They seem to have comprehended this, for in England, Germany, Italy, and France, there have taken place simultaneous revivals, and simultaneous efforts



are being made at the political reorganization of the workingmen's party. One element of success they possess—numbers; but numbers weigh only in the balance if united by combination and led by knowledge. Past experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts.”

After referring to the war against Negro slavery in the United States, to the Russian conquest of Caucasia, and to the suppression of the Polish rising by Russian armies, the Address goes on to say that these things “have taught the working class the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations. The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes.”

The fundamental ideas of the Address are reiterated in the Preamble to the Provisional Rules, in a more concentrated form. Here we read “that the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means, not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all ‘class rule.’ That the economical subjection of the man of labour to the monopolizer of the means of labour, that is, the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence; that the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means; that all efforts aiming at that concrete end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries; that the emancipation of labour is neither a local, nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries.”

These important considerations once more give plain expression to the meaning and the aims of the International. Although the Inaugural Address lays so much stress upon the Ten Hours Bill and the co-operative movement as immediate aims of the working class, this nowise implies that the document represents a trend in favour of renouncing revolution and returning to reformist methods. Nothing could have been further from the author's mind than the idea of regarding an opportunist endeavour to fulfil immediately practical demands as a panacea for the miseries of the proletariat. The aim of the Address was, rather, to make the workers aware of the need for international cohesion, and to do this by laying strong emphasis upon concrete practical interests; seeing that the comparatively abstract argumentation of the *Communist Manifesto* had been practically without influence upon the intelligence and the will of the proletariat. Incitement of the workers of England, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain to join forces in a living solidarity; the enlisting of Chartists, Owenists, Proudhonists, Blanquists, Mazzinists, and Lassallists by a programme which would not offend or exclude any of them—these were the fundamental motifs and aims of the Address. Both in form and content, it was admirably designed to achieve its end.

### **The Tower of Babel**

Since the International did not absorb into its own structure the working-class organizations of the various countries, but left them intact as independent structures, it soon comprised a motley mosaic of groups, trends, schools, and camps; and it had to conduct its affairs in a multiplicity of languages, as at the Tower of Babel after the confusion of tongues.

Not only had the labour movement in every country its own specific national imprint; but further, in every country, there existed conflicting types of organization and movement. In England, for instance, there were still to be found considerable vestiges of Owenist utopism, which had degenerated into freethinking sectarianism. There were also the relics of the Chartist movement, which had now fallen into hopeless decay. Among the trade unionists, although collectivist ideas were gaining ground, individualist notions were still dominant, so that there was a strange mish-mash of doctrine. Worst of all, as the Webbs point out in their *History of Trade Unionism*, the leaders of the movement were unaware that they were trying to combine incompatibles. The majority of the British trade unionists, moreover, like the Christian socialists led by Kingsley and Maurice, would not hear a word of political activity on the part of the workers. Nor were things any better in France. There, Fourierists and Cabetists continued to enjoy a popularity that was long overripe. Louis Blanc's scheme for national workshops had still numerous supporters; and Blanqui's futile policy of extemporized insurrectionism had not ceased to attract persons with a fondness for action in season and out of season. But among all the programmes that competed for popular support, Proudhon's scheme for getting rid of capitalist society, and liberating every one peacefully, by means of a people's bank secured the strongest support. In Germany, the utopian ideas of Weitling were still flourishing amid the moribund traditions of the petty-bourgeois radicalism of 1848. But in the foreground here, far more imposing than all the rest, stood the General Union of German Workers, enjoying widespread popularity which had been artificially inflated by Lassalle's skill as an agitator. Since Lassalle's death, however, its influence had begun to decline, owing to the civil war between those who adhered to the masculine trend under Schweitzer and those who adhered to the feminine trend under Countess Hatzfeld. In Italy, the nationalist-mystical republicanism of Mazzini was closely akin to the revolutionary anarchism of Bakunin. Switzerland, finally, was the happy hunting-ground of cantonal particularisms.

Not that most of the groups and organizations just mentioned belonged as yet to the International. But it was to be foreseen that when they did join the International the result would be a mad confusion of ideas, a chaos of conflicts and the development of socialism into a monstrosity.

Marx recognized these dangerous possibilities, and therefore made it his business to ensure that the opposing outlooks should not forthwith find expression in the publicity of a congress, but that their discussion should be restricted, to begin with, within the narrow limits of a more or less confidential conference.

He was aided by the fact that the progress of the International, at first, was anything but rapid. Indeed, the beginnings were on a very small scale. After considerable hesitation, a few trade unions in which propaganda work had been carried on for a considerable time had decided to adhere. For the rest, the organization contained only individual members, who were grouped in sections. Even in this respect, the growth of the membership lagged behind expectations. The first to join, other than English, were the members of the Italian Workingmen's Club in London. Then came three German workers' societies, among them the Communist Workers' Educational

Society. A working-class society for the support of Polish refugees also affiliated. In Switzerland a few sections were formed. In Germany, although fifty thousand copies of the Address were circulated, there was no more than a feeble response. After the lapse of a year, the growth of the International had still been so inadequate that its voice could not have been expected, at a congress, to produce the desired political effect. On Marx's initiative, therefore, the General Council decided that the congress planned for Brussels in 1865 should be replaced by a conference in London.

The London Conference was held from September 25 to 29, 1865. British labour was represented by Odger, Cremer, Howell, Wheeler, Dell, and Weston. From France came Tolain, Limousin, Varlin, Fribourg, Schily, and Clarion; from Brussels, César de Paepe, a qualified medical man, working as a compositor. Switzerland had sent J. P. Becker for the German-speaking and Dupleix for the French-speaking section. Besides this, the continental workers were represented by delegates from the respective national societies in London: Germany, by Lessner and Schapper; Italy by Major Wolff; Poland by Bobczynski. Finally, the following were present as corresponding members of the General Council: Marx for Germany, Jung for Switzerland, and Dupont for France. Eccarius reinforced the German representatives, being present as vice-chairman of the General Council.

The general secretary of the International, Cremer, reporting for England, said that as yet only a very small part of the trade unions had been won over to support the International. There was, however, he said, good reason to hope that, in view of the recently opened campaign on behalf of an extension of the suffrage (a campaign which the International would energetically support), a considerable accession of membership would be secured. The reports from France were little more encouraging, and the wrangling between the French delegates gave sufficient explanation for the failure of the International in that country. In Switzerland, on the other hand, thanks to the indefatigable and able recruiting work that had been carried on by Becker, a number of large working-class organizations had come into being, but this result was less encouraging than it might otherwise have been because Becker was so obviously nothing more than a reformist. The same tendency towards reformism, fostered in especial by the Proudhonist trend of so many of the French, and complicated by the general confusion of ideas, was manifest throughout the discussions. No matter whether the topic of debate was the Polish question, the religious problem, or the desirability of speedily holding a general congress—irreconcilable opinions were voiced, incompatible principles were advocated with violence on both sides, and a situation developed which represented the very opposite of international harmony.

### **Conflicts, Crises, Struggles**

The development of the International Workingmen's Association proceeded along lines which soon made Marx "for practical purposes the head of the concern."

This involved for him a tremendous expenditure of energy and time, which were eaten up by meetings, correspondence, and negotiations. His days ere long proved too short, and he had to steal time from the night. During these years, he was engaged in writing *Capital*, his great work on political economy. This involved extensive studies, which were perpetually being interrupted by the sittings of the General Council and its subcommittees. The newspaper articles on which he was dependent for daily bread remained unwritten, and again and again he grumbled about "the enormous waste of time," and the "frequent interruptions." Engels, likewise, whom Marx had often to call upon for help, occasionally lost patience. "The new movement," he wrote angrily, "makes me sweat abominably. It is the devil and all when,

having written the livelong day for one's business, one has to go on writing afterwards till one or two in the morning for the party and publishers and so on." Yet all the while the movement was expanding; was demanding more energy, closer supervision, keener participation; would give its directors no rest.

Worse still, from day to day the affair seemed more and more unsatisfactory, owing to the innumerable quarrels, jealousies, and faction fights with which the inner life of the International was convulsed. "I had said to myself," wrote Engels, "that a naive fraternity would not last long in the International. ... There will certainly be a lot more phases of the kind, which will cost you a great deal of time." In actual fact, brawls were unceasing. Now it was the French who were taking up the cudgels against the brain-workers, and were ready to tear one another's eyes out because of differences upon the religious problem; now the management of the Polish question gave rise to violent disputes; now embittered struggles raged round the periodical, the "Commonwealth," which had been appointed the official organ of the International, and appeared to be too much inclined to espouse a bourgeois reformist outlook; now there was a fight between Odger and Potter, the editor of the "Beehive," a fight which threatened to become a public scandal; now it became necessary to expel members who had gravely infringed the rules, or had published false reports concerning the internal affairs of the organization. So it went on, month after month. Once, when Marx returned from a journey, he wrote to Engels: "This evening I was at a sitting of the International again for the first time after three weeks. In the interim, there has been a revolution. Le Lubez and Denoual have resigned, Dupont has been appointed French secretary. Owing to the intrigues of Le Lubez and especially of Major Wolff (who is a tool of Mazzini), the Italian delegates Lama and Fontana have resigned. The pretext is that Lefort (who has also in the interim declared his intention to resign) is to retain his post as general defender of the Parisian press. The Italian Workingmen's Club has not withdrawn from the organization, but no longer has a representative on the Council. Meanwhile, through the instrumentality of Bakunin, I propose to countermine Signor Mazzini in Florence. The English Bootmakers' Union, with a membership of five thousand, has joined the International while I have been away." Engels, in his answer, expresses the hope that "the rumpus will soon come to an end." His hope was not destined to be fulfilled, for, with innumerable variations, the rumpus went on for weeks, months, years. As soon as one conflict had been mitigated or settled, two new ones would break out elsewhere.

Inasmuch as, whatever Marx may have been, he was not a peacemaker, his influence tended rather to intensify than to mitigate these frictions and quarrels. The effect he had in this respect was aggravated by the unfortunate circumstance that years of bodily indisposition had made him irritable and bitter. He had long suffered from liver trouble, to which of late an obstinate tendency to boils had been super-added, so that for many years this painful ailment was breaking out now in one part of his body and now in another, hindering his work, and often reducing him to despair. His letters to Engels are full of complaints and outbursts of wrath on this account. "I am tormented with the old evil in various and most inconvenient parts, so that it is very hard for me to sit." ... "I have spent the greater part of a week in bed because of a carbuncle." ... "To my extreme disgust, after being unable to sleep all night, I discovered this morning two more first-class boils on my chest." ... "I am working now like a dray-horse, seeing that I must make the best use of all the time available for work, and the carbuncles are still there, though they are now giving me only local trouble, and are not interfering with my brain." ... "This time it was really serious—the family did not know how serious. If it recurs as badly three or four times more, it will be all up with me. I have wasted amazingly, and am still damnably weak

not in the head but in the trunk and limbs. ... There is no question of being able to sit up. But, while lying down, I have been able, at intervals, to keep on digging away at my work.”

Engels had again and again, ever more urgently, begged Marx “to do something reasonable, that you may rid yourself of this tyranny of boils.” He asked the advice of doctors, studied medical literature, sent his friend prescriptions. Marx could not make up his mind to undergo methodical treatment. He lacked time and money, was afraid of forfeiting his earnings, and was loath to leave the movement to itself at so critical a time. But when, in the winter of 1865-1866, the boils grew continually more troublesome, Engels wrote more seriously than ever: “No one can permanently endure this chronic fight with carbuncles, without mentioning that sooner or later you may have one assuming such a form that it will send you to the devil. What will happen then to your book and your family? You know that I am ready to do anything in my power, and, in this extreme instance, even more than I would risk in other circumstances. Do be reasonable, then, oblige me and your family to this extent at least, that you will have methodical treatment. What would happen to the whole movement if anything went wrong with you? ... I can get no rest by day or by night until you have got over this trouble.”

Marx still hesitated. But at length the illness made it absolutely impossible for him to work. He had become so irritable that he did not venture to go to sittings of the General Council, finding it “barely possible to retain the storms within ‘the limits of pure reason,’ and being much more inclined to burst forth with undue violence.” He therefore decided, in March 1866, to spend a few weeks at Margate, enjoying the benefits of sea air and sea bathing.

Four weeks relaxation and change of air set him up once more. Although, after his return, he suffered in brief succession from a bad cold, from influenza, and from rheumatism, he was at any rate free from the carbuncles.

But he was not free from the material embarrassments by which, throughout that winter, he had been troubled almost as much as by the illness.

His work for the International (which was, of course, unremunerated), his expenditures upon postage, travel to meetings, minor journeys, doctor and medicines, in conjunction with the falling-off in his fees for newspaper articles, had completely upset his tottering finances. In the summer of 1865 he wrote despairingly to Engels: “For the last two months I have been living on the pawnshop, while suffering from accumulated and ever more intolerable appeals from duns. You will not be surprised at the state of my finances when you bear in mind: first, that throughout this time I have not earned a penny; and, secondly, that the mere liquidation of my debts and the furnishing of the house cost about £500. I have kept an account down to the last farthing, for it seemed incredible to me how the money was running away. Add that from Germany, where God knows what has been spread abroad, all possible antediluvian demands have been made. ... I assure you that I would rather have my thumb cut off than write this letter to you. It is crushing to be dependent for half a lifetime. The only thought which consoles me is that we are running a joint business in which I give my time to the theoretical side of the matter and to party affairs.” Engels, sympathetic as ever, and always ready to help, promptly sent £50, following this up with £15, £20, and £10. Meanwhile Jenny had fallen sick, and had to be sent for change of air to the country. Marx, going to visit her, found her still very ill; he had his portmanteau stolen, and wrote to Engels for money. The landlord had called, had talked of distraint, and of cancelling the lease. “The landlord’s visit was followed up by that of the rest of the pack, partly in person, and partly in the form of threatening letters.

I found my wife so desperately ill that I had not the courage to tell her the true state of affairs. I really don't know what to do!" Engels answered by return of post with a remittance of £1, and the assurance: "I am trying to think out ways of providing at least in instalments for the others." Then, letter after letter, £50, a Christmas present, £15, £20, and £10, and finally the funds for the visit to Margate.

To this period belongs a temptation to which a reference must be made, because it subsequently played a part in the history of the German social democracy. One day Marx received from Lothar Bucher, friend and executor of Lassalle, the offer of a well-paid position on the staff of the "Staatsanzeiger" in Berlin. In return for his salary, he was to supply a monthly report upon the movements of the money market and the commodity market. Marx, not in general scrupulous about the choice of the newspapers to which he contributed, was quick to suspect that Bismarck lurked behind the offer. At this juncture Bismarck was strongly interested in the idea of getting into political touch with the labour movement. He had tried to win over Lassalle to support his policy; had actually won over Countess Hatzfeld; and Marx (erroneously) believed that he had already got Herr von Schweitzer under his spell. After discussing the matter with Engels, Marx left the offer unanswered. Not long afterwards, Lothar Bucher entered openly into Bismarck's service, and compiled the draft of the Anti-Socialist Law. During the worst days of the persecution of the socialists in Germany, Marx published Lothar Bucher's letter. It was used by the social democrats as a weapon in their campaign against Bismarck, for they declared that he wanted to make friends with the workers when he needed them as pawns against the bourgeoisie; and treated them as enemies when he no longer had any use for them, or found them in the way of his policy.

While Bucher's letter was calculated only to increase the depressing effect of this depressing period, the advance now made by the International could not but promote a recovery of spirits. "As regards the London unions," wrote Marx to Engels, "every day we have fresh accessions, so that by degrees we are becoming a power." Engels answered with delight: "The International Association has really, in a very short time and with very little fuss, conquered a vast territory. ... At any rate you have gained something out of the time you have spent on it."

Still, this objective growth was but poor compensation for the crisis that raged within. All was going awry in the General Council; everywhere rivalry, jealousy, hostility prevailed. Cremer was fighting Eccarius. Le Lubez was intriguing against the Germans. Major Wolff was at war with Jung. The Mazzinists were arming themselves against doctrinal control by those whom they stigmatized as tyrants. In the official organ, which was dependent upon "bourgeois funds," and therefore lacked the requisite independence, political and commercial rivalries culminated in something that was little better than a dog-fight. "I have shown the utmost patience in this affair," said Marx, "hoping that the workers would make a push to carry it on themselves independently, and also because I did not wish to be a spoil-sport."

Notwithstanding these internal dissensions, the public side of the movement was successful. A huge meeting in St. Martin's Hall on behalf of the extension of the suffrage was entirely under the inspiration of the International Workingmen's Association. Writing to Engels about the franchise demonstrations in London, inaugurated, after the fall of the Russell government (in which Gladstone was the leading spirit), against the procrastinatory policy of Disraeli, Marx said: "It is really amazing compared with anything seen in England since 1844, and wholly the work of the International. ... This shows how different it is when one works behind the scenes and disappears from the public eye, as compared with the democratic manner of assuming

important airs in public and doing nothing at all.”

True that behind the scenes there was still a great deal to do. “The cursedly traditional character of all English movements, a lukewarm reformism, coquetting and compacting often enough with bourgeois radicalism, had their way, and quenched the early fire of the movement.” As J. P. Becker once wrote to Jung, there was “lacking among the English workers a spice of revolutionary salt, which might have roused them from the slumber of legalism.” Or, as Marx complained: “In France, Belgium, Switzerland (even here and there in Germany, and actually in a sporadic way in America), the society has made great and continuous progress. In England, the reform movement, which we called into life, has nearly made an end of us. That would not matter, were it not that the Geneva Congress has been summoned for the end of May [1866]. For the English, a failure of the congress would be very much to their taste. But for us! It would make us ludicrous in the sight of Europe!”

Marx was very much afraid lest the congress should be a failure, for he knew that the movement was not yet sufficiently ripened to cope adequately with such a public test. He debated the advisability of going to Paris, in order to advise the comrades there, who were urging that the congress should be held without delay, that a postponement was essential. At the same time he was well aware that the whole future of the International would be imperilled should it not be held. Engels agreed with him: “It is of minor importance whether the congress passes any good resolutions; the essential thing is that there should be no open scandal. Besides, any demonstration of the kind would be a discredit—as far as we are concerned. And before the whole of Europe? I hope it could be avoided. ... Still, I would advise you on no account to go to Paris for this reason. ... The police would take prompt action. ... The whole affair is not worth the risk. ... Better stay where you are in Margate, getting out in the fresh air as much as you can. Who knows how soon you will have need of all your strength?”

Ultimately, at the wish of the Swiss sections, the congress was postponed till the autumn of 1866. Marx did not attend it, wishing to have “no personal responsibility for its management.” This proved to have been needless discretion, for the congress was by no means a European scandal. Very much the contrary. It was an event of European importance. For six days it was the centre of interest in the political world, passing weighty resolutions, especially upon social topics and labour protection laws, concerning which Marx had penned a memorial and carefully edited the resolutions.

While Marx thus had reason to be well pleased with the Geneva Congress next year’s congress, held at Lausanne from September 2 to September 8, 1867, aroused great anxiety in his mind. At Geneva the French Proudhonists had sustained a defeat, gaining experience which led them to make better preparations for Lausanne. They flooded the Lausanne Congress with proposals and discussions, and succeeded in carrying a number of Proudhonist resolutions. Marx was at this time wholly immersed in finishing the first volume of *Capital*. Not only did that make it impossible for him to attend the congress, but he had been unable to prepare the agenda, as he had done in the case of Geneva. Commenting on the proceedings, he wrote to Engels: “At next year’s congress in Brussels, I shall make it my business to give these jackasses of Proudhonists their quietus. On this occasion, I have been extremely diplomatic, not wishing to intervene personally before my book is published, or until our organization has struck roots. Besides, in the official report of the General Council (despite all their efforts, the Parisian chatterers could not prevent our re-election), I shall give them a good lashing. Meanwhile, our society has made great strides forward. The wretched ‘Star,’ which wanted to ignore us altogether, declares in a leading

article that we are more important than the Peace Congress. Schulze-Delitzsch was unable to prevent his workers' society in Berlin from affiliating to us. The English pigdogs among the trade unionists, for whom we were too 'advanced,' are flocking to us. ... When the next revolution (which is perhaps nearer than it seems) comes, we shall have this powerful engine in our hands. Compare that with the results of the machinations of Mazzini and the rest of them during the last thirty years! And this without any funds! Despite, too, the intrigues of the Proudhonists in Paris, Mazzini in Italy, and the jealous Odger, Cremer, and Potter in London, with Schulze-Delitzsch and the Lassallists in Germany, to boot! We have good reason to be satisfied!"

But the more the International attracted public attention, the more alarmed was the bourgeoisie to witness the growth of a hostile power thus developing against it. The authorities mobilized their forces and took action: in England, on the occasion of an Irish conspiracy, with which the International was erroneously supposed to be connected; in France, under a law which forbade the formation of societies with more than twenty members; in Belgium, after a dispute between miners and mineowners in the Charleroi district, a dispute in which there had been bloodshed. These attacks however, served mainly to strengthen the prestige of the International. During the great strike movement which spread across the Continent from 1866 to 1868, the bourgeoisie came to regard the International as a dread spectre. Its influence was supposed to be at work in every active labour movement; its hand was suspected behind every strike, every rising, all working-class political activity. Ferdinand Tönnies tells us that in his boyhood the International was looked upon as the embodiment of the Red Peril. The newspapers were filled with references to this secret power, with paragraphs about its unlimited command of money. Marx was represented as the sinister protagonist of a worldwide conspiracy. Most of the chatter, of course, was gross exaggeration, the outcome of fear. This much, however, was true, that the organization—despite its internal dissensions, despite its urgent lack of funds, despite the apathy and the misunderstanding and the timidity it had to encounter—steadily grew in prestige and importance under Marx's guidance and inspiration. What Marx had said about the Lausanne Congress, that the main thing was that it should be held, and that what happened at the congress mattered very little, applied still more to the International as a whole. Its value, its importance, did not depend upon its actual doings or achievements, but upon the mere fact of its existence.

### **Schweitzer and Liebknecht**

It cannot but seem strange that the General Union of German Workers, which after Lassalle's death had become the leading labour organization of the German proletariat, should not have been in touch with the International and should not have been represented at any of the congresses.

The reason was, above all, that the General Union of German Workers had, immediately after Lassalle's death, passed under incompetent leadership, and been devastated by a war of succession. But subsequently, when the wing of the organization that was under the control of J. B. von Schweitzer had become able to undertake serious and positive political activities, there was still no attempt to collaborate with Marx. Marx himself had an invincible dislike for this organization that had been founded by Lassalle. His aversion to Lassalle had been transferred to Schweitzer, and was a barrier to any sort of alliance. Furthermore, there had been a personal quarrel between Marx and Schweitzer, the outcome of a trifling matter. The "Sozialdemokrat," the organ of the General Union of German Workers, edited by Schweitzer, had printed an item of Paris correspondence furnished by Moses Hess in



which doubt was thrown on the trustworthiness of Tolain, a leading member of the International in Paris. This was but one of the countless intrigues characteristic of the life of the refugees. Marx ought to have been lenient, seeing that, when he was editing the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," he had given publicity to a similar slander on Bakunin, but he was not inclined to be lenient where Schweitzer was concerned. He marshalled his heavy artillery, not only demanding satisfaction, but making the accusation against Tolain the excuse for abruptly and rudely breaking off his own relations with the "Sozialdemokrat." He declared that the trend of the paper was antipathetic to him. His doubts of Schweitzer ripened to venomous suspicions. Writing to Engels, Marx said that he regarded Schweitzer as "irreclaimable, and probably in secret understanding with Bismarck." He wanted to cut adrift from Schweitzer at any price. He went on to say: "As long as this Lassallist business has the upper hand in Germany, the International Workingmen's Association will make no progress there." He was going much too far, in his anger, for Schweitzer not only withdrew the charge that had been made against Tolain, but offered to lay before the congress of the General Union of German Workers a resolution expressing agreement with the principles of the International and a determination to send delegates to the Brussels Congress. But Marx ignored this proffer of friendship. He would have nothing more to do with Schweitzer and the Lassallist organization. "Since we have to break with the fellow, we had better do it immediately," he wrote to Engels. The latter, answering in the same strain, said; "The longer we dawdle along with him, the deeper we shall get in the mire. The sooner the better." Marx and Engels thereupon sent the "Sozialdemokrat" a statement to the effect that they had not for a moment failed to recognize the difficulties of the situation, and had never asked the newspaper to put forward any demands unsuitable to the meridian of Berlin. But they had repeatedly asked that the "Sozialdemokrat" should use against the ministry and the feudal absolutists a language no less bold than that which it used against the progressives. The tactics adopted by the "Sozialdemokrat" made it impossible for them to continue collaborating with it. Their views concerning Prussian monarchical governmental socialism, and concerning the attitude which ought to be assumed by the labour party towards such humbug, had been expressed as long ago as 1847 in the "Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung." They were still prepared to subscribe to every word of the declaration they had then published.

Thus without inquiry and without a shadow of proof, they implied that the "Sozialdemokrat" was secretly working hand in hand with Bismarck, and was endeavouring to bring about an alliance between the proletariat and the government against the liberal bourgeoisie. In this matter, Marx and Engels were doing a gross injustice to Schweitzer. He had never dreamed of entering into a conspiratorial alliance with Bismarck. As Mehring shows, one cannot find in the "Sozialdemokrat" a single line suggesting a pact with the government against the progressives. The five articles concerning the Bismarck ministry published by Schweitzer in the "Sozialdemokrat," the articles upon which Marx and Engels based their statement, had a very different complexion for one who was actually bearing the heat and burden of the political struggle, and upon whom it was incumbent to avail himself of chance happenings in the opposing army and to turn these to account on behalf of the proletariat—than for one who lived in exile far from the fighting line, and contemplated the fray through a distorting atmosphere.

Schweitzer was a man of independent intelligence and strong character, filled with political earnestness and inspired with a sense of revolutionary responsibility. It may well be that Marx regarded him (like Lassalle) as a dangerous competitor, as one who wished to assume the political role which Marx had reserved for himself.

The determination to discredit him, makes it extremely probable that such a sense of rivalry existed in Marx's mind, in the under levels of consciousness at least. For not only did Marx take an erroneous view of Schweitzer's personal character; he also went astray in his estimate of the General Union of German Workers. Although this had now become an imposing organization, Marx persisted in regarding it as an obscure and eccentric sectarian movement, devoted to the advocacy of petty-bourgeois democratic interests. Unfortunately, in this way of looking at the matter, he was supported by Wilhelm Liebknecht.

Liebknecht, who since 1862 had been living in Berlin, had already played a strange part in the conflict between Marx and the "Sozialdemokrat." He was on the staff of the "Sozialdemokrat," and had actually sub-edited the column in which the offensive paragraph about Tolain had appeared. Instead of trying to pour oil on troubled waters, Liebknecht showed himself completely wanting in tact and comradely feeling. He was himself personally embroiled with Schweitzer, and this led him, not only to ignore his duty to clear up the differences between Marx and Schweitzer, but actually (we may suppose) to intensify the trouble by the tone of his letters to London. For instance, we read in a letter from Marx to Engels: "According to Liebknecht, the only reason why Schweitzer has not been able to sell himself to Bismarck is that he would have had to do so through the instrumentality of that old Hatzfeld woman." This shows the evil atmosphere in which gossip and intrigue were flourishing.

Lassalle, years before, had written fiercely and contemptuously concerning the part played by Liebknecht in the Vogt affair. In a letter to Marx penned in January 1860, he said: "How in the world can you—straitlaced as you rightly are in other respects, bring yourself to have associations with any one who writes in the 'Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung'? You say, indeed, that they all do it, that they contribute to all newspapers without distinction of tint, and that you would be a solitary exception. This bad custom does not affect the matter. If they do, they are all under the same condemnation. ... I am afraid your ties with Liebknecht are not transient or isolated." Marx himself who had been in close touch with Liebknecht during the latter's stay in London, was incessantly criticizing his pupil's political activities in Berlin. In letters to Engels, Marx says that Liebknecht is "dilatatory," a "blockhead"; that Liebknecht makes "many blunders"; "often goes astray." In general, Marx had a poor opinion of Liebknecht's intelligence. Nevertheless, Marx continued, with indefatigable indulgence, to back up Liebknecht and to excuse his errors. He needed Liebknecht as a tool against Schweitzer; and Liebknecht, wholly devoted to Marx, unruffled by the most vehement scoldings, had no objection to being misused in this fashion.

Subsequently, Liebknecht was expelled from Berlin. He went to Leipzig, joined forces with Bebel, and in conjunction with the latter founded at Eisenach in 1869 the Social Democratic Labour Party. It now became plain that everything which Marx blamed Schweitzer for, really, on close examination, applied to Liebknecht. The latter, though Marx's own pupil, was enormously excelled by Schweitzer in the comprehension and elaboration of Marx's ideas upon socialist theory and socialist politics. Schweitzer edited his newspaper in accordance with the principles of the *Communist Manifesto* and the Address, and, as a member of the North German Reichstag, sometimes asked Marx's advice upon difficult political problems. Liebknecht, on the other hand, in the "Demokratisches Wochenblatt," advocated a particularist and confused brand of petty-bourgeois socialism, which perpetually conflicted with Marxian principles. Nevertheless, he remained Marx's favourite child, while Schweitzer was treated as whipping-boy.

“I think you must have made many a worthy man your enemy who might have been one of your adherents,” Lassalle had once said reproachfully to Marx. Schweitzer was among the number of these “worthy men” whom unjust suspicion and mortifying coldness drove out of the workers’ camp, although with all the powers of his intelligence and all his sympathies he earnestly desired Marx’s friendship and alliance.

Causeless suspicion has clouded Schweitzer’s name even in the tomb. Although there was never anything questionable or unsavoury about his behaviour or his political activities, although no words or deeds of his can be quoted that tend to show he was anything but a thoroughly honest socialist, although there is not a blemish on his revolutionary escutcheon, he is still currently supposed to have been dishonest, to have been sold to the other side. Mehring undertook to plead his cause, and Mehring’s demonstration of Schweitzer’s fundamental honesty would be convincing to any impartial tribunal. Nevertheless in the labour movement, it is generally believed that Schweitzer played false, because such was Marx’s opinion.

### **Bakunin**

Michael Bakunin was arrested in 1844 in Saxony after the Dresden rising, and was condemned to death. Instead of executing him, however, the Saxon authorities handed him over to the Austrians, by whom he was tried once more, and again sentenced to death. Yet again he escaped the extreme penalty, and in 1851 the Austrians handed him over to Russia. From then until 1857 he was imprisoned in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, and was afterwards sent to Siberia. Escaping thence in 1861, he made his way back to Europe through Japan and America. Reaching London in the end of 1861, he got into touch with his compatriots Herzen and Ogaryoff, and wrote articles for Herzen’s “Kolokol,” although he was not in sympathy with the moderate tone of that periodical. Here is Bakunin’s own account of what he learned in London:

“While I was having a far from amusing time in German and Russian fortresses and in Siberia, Marx and Co. were peddling, clamouring from the housetops, publishing in English and German newspapers, the most abominable rumours about me. They said it was untrue to declare that I had been imprisoned in a fortress, that, on the contrary, Tsar Nicholas had received me with open arms, had provided me with all possible conveniences and enjoyments, that I was able to amuse myself with light women and had an abundance of champagne to drink. This was infamous, but it was also stupid. ... Hardly had I arrived in London, when an English newspaper published a statement by a certain Urquhart, a turcophile and a semi-imbecile, to the effect that the Russian government had apparently sent me to act as a spy. I answered in a newspaper, challenging the anonymous calumniator to name himself, and promising him that I would answer him, not pen in hand, but with a hand without the pen. He left matters there, and I was not troubled any more.”

In the beginning of 1863, Bakunin went to Sweden, his aim being, from that platform to stir up a revolution in Russia. He returned to London in the end of the same year, and then went on to Italy. In August 1864, he visited Sweden once more, and in October was back in London. Before leaving again for Italy, he had an interview with Marx. About this he wrote: “At that time I had a little note from Marx (it is still among my papers), in which he asked me whether he could come to see me the next day. I answered in the affirmative, and he came. We had an explanation. He swore that he had never said or done anything against me; that, on the contrary, he had always been my true friend, and had retained great respect for me. I knew that he

was lying, but I really no longer bore any grudge against him. The renewal of the acquaintanceship interested me moreover, in another connexion. I knew that he had taken a great part in the foundation of the International. I had read the manifesto written by him in the name of the provisional General Council, a manifesto which was weighty, earnest, and profound, like everything that came from his pen when he was not engaged in personal polemic. In a word, we parted, outwardly, on the best of terms, although I did not return his visit."

We also have Marx's account of this meeting. Under date November 4, 1864, he wrote to Engels: "Bakunin wishes to be remembered to you. He has left for Italy today. I saw him yesterday evening once more, for the first time after sixteen years. I must say that I liked him very much, much better than before. He said that after the failure in Poland he should in future confine himself to participation in the socialist movement. On the whole he is one of the few persons whom I find not to have retrogressed after sixteen years, but to have developed further. I had a talk with him also about Urquhart's denunciations."

Bakunin's resolve to devote himself henceforward to the socialist movement exclusively, and his conviction as to the importance of the International, made him regard it as desirable to be on good terms with Marx once more. Of course this went rather against the grain. Between the old-time friendship and its renewal there had been, not only the series of calumnies circulated about Bakunin and the period of his imprisonment and exile, but also a deplorable dispute with Marx thanks to which Bakunin, from the beginning of his revolutionary career, had been flecked with the suspicion of being a spy. Here is Bakunin's story of that matter:

"In the year 1848 Marx and I had a difference of opinion, and I must say that he was far more in the right of it than I. In Paris and Brussels he had founded a section of German communists and had, in alliance with the French and a few English communists, supported by his friend and inseparable comrade Engels, founded in London the first international association of communists of various lands. ... I myself, the fumes of the revolutionary movement in Europe having gone to my head, had been much more interested in the negative than in the positive side of this revolution, had been, that is to say, much more concerned with the overthrow of the extant than with the question of the upbuilding and organization of what was to follow. But there was one point in which I was right and he was wrong. As a Slav, I wanted the liberation of the Slav race from the German yoke. I wanted this liberation to be brought about by the revolution, that is to say by the destruction of the regime of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Turkey, and by the reorganization of the peoples from below upwards through their own freedom, upon the foundation of complete economic and social equality, and not through the power of any authority, however revolutionary it might call itself, and however intelligent it might in fact be.

"Already at this date the difference between our respective systems (a difference which now severs us in a way that on my side has been very carefully thought out) was well marked. My ideas and aspirations could not fail to be very displeasing to Marx. First of all because they were not his own; secondly because they ran counter to the convictions of the authoritarian communists; and finally because, being a German patriot, he would not admit then, any more than he does today, the right of the Slavs to free themselves from the German yoke—for still, as of old, he thinks that the Germans have a mission to civilize the Slavs, this meaning to Germanize them whether by kindness or by force.

"To punish me for being so bold as to aim at realizing an idea different from and indeed actually opposed to his, Marx then revenged himself after his own fashion. He

was editor of the 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung,' published in Cologne. In one of the issues of that paper I read in the Paris correspondence that Madame George Sand, with whom I had formerly been acquainted, was said to have told some one it was necessary to be cautious in dealing with Bakunin, for it was quite possible that he was some sort of Russian agent."

According to a statement published by Marx on September 1, 1853, in the London newspaper the "Morning Advertiser," on July 5, 1848, the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" had received two letters from Paris, one from the Havas Bureau, and the other "from a political refugee"—Marx did not wish to give his name, but was referring to Dr. Ewerbeck, the sometime leader of the Federation of the Just. Both these letters contained an allegation to the effect that George Sand possessed letters compromising Bakunin, "showing that he had recently been in communication with the Russian government."

Bakunin writes of this: "The accusation was like a tile falling from a roof upon my head, at the very time when I was fully immersed in revolutionary organization, and it completely paralysed my activities for several weeks. All my German and Slav friends fought shy of me. I was the first Russian to concern himself actively with revolutionary work, and it is needless for me to tell you what feelings of traditional mistrust were accustomed to arise in western minds when the words Russian revolutionist were mentioned. In the first instance, therefore, I wrote to Madame Sand."

Bakunin's personal peculiarities and his mode of life gave a good deal of colour to all this gossip and suspicion. He was of aristocratic birth, of striking appearance; his doings had caused a great deal of talk; nobody could understand how it was he had so much money to play about with; he had his fingers in all kinds of queer conspiratorial pies. The Russian embassy, which kept him under close observation, followed its usual policy of broadcasting suspicions about him, hoping thereby to undermine his prestige in revolutionary circles. Writing in the "Neue Oder-Zeitung," Bakunin declared that just before the appearance of the defamatory statement in the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," like rumours had been circulated in Breslau, that they had emanated from the Russian embassy, and that the best way in which he could refute them would be by an appeal to George Sand.

Thereupon George Sand wrote to the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" under date August 3, 1848: "Your correspondent's statements are utterly false, and have not the remotest semblance of truth. I have no atom of proof of the insinuations which you have tried to disseminate against Herr Bakunin, whom the late monarchy banished from France. Consequently, I have never been authorized to express the slightest doubt of the loyalty of his character and the candour of his opinions." By this declaration Bakunin was fully rehabilitated.

Nevertheless, suspicion continued to attach to him. Fifteen years later, in December 1863, when he was travelling through France on the way to Switzerland, a Basle newspaper stirred up the Polish refugees against him by maintaining that, through his revolutionary intrigues, he had involved many of their fellow countrymen in disaster, while himself always remaining immune. During his stay in Italy, he was perpetually being attacked and calumniated in like manner by numerous German periodicals.

Marx, too, still regarded Bakunin with much suspicion, and never missed a chance of speaking against him. With reference to Serne, a Russian whom he believed to be an adviser of Bakunin, he said: "I wanted information from this young man regarding Bakunin. Since, however, I do not trust any Russian, I put my question in this way: 'What is my old friend Bakunin (I don't know if he is still my friend)

doing?"—and so on, and so on. Serne could find nothing better to do than communicate my letter to Bakunin, and Bakunin availed himself of the circumstance to excuse a sentimental entrée!"

This "sentimental entrée" not only redounded to Bakunin's credit, not only showed his good feeling and his insight, but deserved a better reception from Marx than the biting cynicism and the derogatory insolence with which it was encountered (cynicism and insolence which were only masks for embarrassment). "You ask whether I am still your friend," wrote Bakunin. "Yes, more than ever, my dear Marx, for I understand better than ever how right you were to walk along the broad road of the economic revolution, to invite us all to follow you, and to denounce all those who wandered off into the byways of nationalist or exclusively political enterprise. I am now doing what you began to do more than twenty years ago. Since I formally and publicly said good-bye to the bourgeois of the Berne Congress, I know no other society, no other milieu than the world of the workers. My fatherland is now the International, whose chief founder you have been. You see, then, dear friend, that I am your pupil—and I am proud to be this. I think I have said enough to make my personal position and feelings clear to you."

Bakunin honestly endeavoured to be on good terms with Marx, and to avoid friction. But he could not entertain cordial sentiments for Marx. The two men differed too much in mental structure, in theoretical trends, and in fundamental attitudes towards the revolutionary problem, for this to be possible. Bakunin loved the peasants; detested intellectualism and abstract systems with their dogmatism and intolerance; hated the modern State, industrialism, and centralization; had the most intense dislike for Judaism and all its ways, which he regarded as irritable, loquacious, unduly critical, intriguing, and exploitative. Everything for which he had an instinctive abhorrence, everything which aroused in him spiritual repugnance and antagonism, was for him incorporated in Marx. He found Marx's overweening self-esteem intolerable.

"Marx loved his own person much more than he loved his friends and apostles," wrote Bakunin in a comparison between Marx and Mazzini; "and no friendship could hold water against the slightest wound to his vanity. He would far more readily forgive infidelity to his philosophical and socialist system. That he would regard as a proof of stupidity, or at least as an indication of the mental inferiority of his friend, and it would only amuse him. Such a friend would perhaps even be more dear to him, since it was now obvious that he could not be a rival, could not dispute the top-most ground with himself. But Marx will never forgive a slight to his person. You must worship him, make an idol of him, if he is to love you in return; you must at least fear him, if he is to tolerate you. He likes to surround himself with pygmies, with lackeys and flatterers. All the same, there are some remarkable men among his intimates.

"In general, however, one may say that in the circle of Marx's intimates there is very little brotherly frankness, but a great deal of machination and diplomacy. There is a sort of tacit struggle, and a compromise between the self-loves of the various persons concerned; and where vanity is at work, there is no longer place for brotherly feeling. Every one is on his guard, is afraid of being sacrificed, of being annihilated. Marx's circle is a sort of mutual admiration society. Marx is the chief distributor of honours, but is also the invariably perfidious and malicious, the never frank and open, inciter to the persecution of those whom he suspects, or who have had the misfortune of failing to show all the veneration he expects.

“As soon as he has ordered a persecution, there is no limit to the baseness and infamy of the method. Himself a Jew, he has round him in London and in France, and above all in Germany, a number of petty, more or less able, intriguing, mobile, speculative Jews (the sort of Jews you can find all over the place), commercial employees, bank clerks, men of letters, politicians, the correspondents of newspapers of the most various shades of opinion, in a word, literary go-betweens, just as they are financial go-betweens, one foot in the bank, the other in the socialist movement, while their rump is in German periodical literature. ... These Jewish men of letters are adepts in the art of cowardly, odious, and perfidious insinuations. They seldom make open accusation, but they insinuate, saying they ‘have heard—it is said—it may not be true, but,’ and then they hurl the most abominable calumnies in your face.”

Despite the destructive analysis conveyed in the foregoing passage, Bakunin had a profound respect for Marx’s intellectual abilities and scientific efficiency. When he read Marx’s *Capital* he was amazed, and promptly set to work upon translating it into Russian. Writing to Herzen, he said: “For five-and-twenty years Marx has served the cause of socialism ably, energetically, and loyally, taking the lead of every one in this matter. I should never forgive myself if, out of personal motives, I were to destroy or diminish Marx’s beneficial influence. Still, I may be involved in a struggle against him, not because he has wounded me personally, but because of the State socialism he advocates.”

This struggle was soon to break out. Characteristically enough, the flames blazed up on account of a personal dispute. “At the Peace Congress in Geneva,” reports Bakunin, “the veteran communist Becker gave me the first, and as yet the only, volume of the extremely important, learned, profound, though very abstract work *Capital*. Then I made a terrible mistake; I forgot to write to Marx in order to thank him. ... I did not hasten to thank him, and to pay him a compliment upon his really outstanding book. Old Philip Becker, who had known Marx for a very long time, said to me, when he heard of this forgetfulness: ‘What, you haven’t written to him yet? Marx will never forgive you!’” Although Bakunin found it hard to believe that this personal slight, however unpardonable a discourtesy, could be “the cause of the resumption of hostilities,” a letter from Frau Marx to Philip Becker shows that this must actually have been the case. “Have you seen or heard anything of Bakunin? My husband sent him, as an old Hegelian, his book—not a word or a sign. There must be something underneath this! One cannot trust any of these Russians; if they are not in the service of the Little Father in Russia, then they are in Herzen’s service here, which amounts to much the same thing.”

A duel between the two titans had become inevitable. It was fought in the International, of which Bakunin had become a member a few months before the Brussels Congress.

## **Chapter 07: Achievement, Part 2**

### **The Alliance and the International**

At the Berne Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom, Bakunin had tried to induce the league to adopt a revolutionary programme, and to affiliate to the International. When this attempt failed, he resigned from the league, and, in conjunction with J. P. Becker, founded the International Alliance of the Socialist Democracy, also known as the Alliance of Social Revolutionaries. His aim now was to get this Alliance accepted as part of the International; then, by degrees, to excavate and absorb the International; until, at last, the International would be replaced by the Alliance.

For, as he had said at the Berne Congress, he hated communism because it implied the annihilation of freedom, and would concentrate all the powers of society (property included) in the hands of the State. His aim, he had said, was not communism but collectivism, the socialization of the individual by way of free association. He also advocated republicanism and atheism. But high above all principles, he contended, must stand the moral principles of universal human justice.

This programme places him somewhere between Marx and Proudhon. Mehring characterizes Bakunin's attitude very aptly when he says: "Bakunin had advanced far beyond Proudhon, having absorbed a larger measure of European culture; and he understood Marx much better than Proudhon had done. But he was not so intimately acquainted with German philosophy as Marx, nor had he made so thorough a study of the class struggles of western European nations. Above all, his ignorance of political economy was much more disastrous to him than ignorance of natural science had been to Proudhon. Yet he was revolutionary through and through; and, like Marx and Lassalle, he had the gift of making people listen to him. Whereas, however, Marx considered that the core of the revolutionary fighting forces would be formed by the manufacturing proletariat, by the workers whose characteristics he had studied in England, France, and Germany, Bakunin counted upon declassed youth, the peasant masses, and even the tatterdemalion proletariat, for support. Marx favoured centralism, as manifested in the contemporary organization of economic life and of the State; Bakunin favoured federalism, which had been the organizational principle of the pre-capitalist era. That was why Bakunin found most of his adherents in Italy, Spain, and Russia, in countries where capitalist development was backward. Marx's supporters, on the other hand, were recruited from lands of advanced capitalist development, those with an industrial proletariat. The two men represented two successive phases of social evolution. Furthermore, Bakunin looked upon man rather as the subject of history who, 'having the devil in his body, spontaneously ripens for the revolution, and merely needs to have his chains broken; but Marx regarded man rather as the object, who must slowly be trained for action, in order that, marshalled for class activity, he may play his part as a factor of history. The two outlooks might have been combined, for in combination they supply the actual picture of man in history. But in the case of both of these champions, the necessary compromise was rendered impossible by the orthodox rigidity of intellectual dogmatism, by deficient elasticity of the will, and by the narrow circumstances of space and time, so that in actual fact they became adversaries. Then, owing to their respective temperaments, owing to the divergences in mental structure which found expression in behaviour, their opposition in concrete matters developed into personal enmity."

The concrete oppositions found their first expression in the determination of the General Council to refuse the proposed affiliation of the Alliance. This decision was inspired by Marx. Rightly or wrongly, he regarded the Alliance as a rival of the International, and was afraid that in the future there might be two General Councils, two Congresses, and two Internationals. To him, this was an intolerable idea. Presumably that was why, in this particular case, he was so rigid in his insistence that the Alliance was not a suitable body for affiliation to the International, although the latter had not in general been strict in its demand for qualifications. In any case, at his instigation, the General Council insisted that the Genevese section, which had proposed the Alliance for affiliation, must refrain from setting up a Central Committee of the Alliance and from holding its own congresses. Geneva expressed its willingness to comply with these instructions, and the Genevese section was thereupon accepted. But Marx and Engels distrusted the Genevese, who were led by Bakunin. They felt that between them and Bakunin there was an irreconcilable opposition,



which could not be shuffled out of the world by formalities. They believed that Bakunin would continue to pursue his hidden aims, would try to make of the Genevese section the centre of a secret society which would establish itself inside the International in order to disrupt this latter. They were anxious about the foundations of their power.

A further difficulty was the material incompatibility between the programmes of the Alliance and the International. The Bakuninist programme was not what Marx angrily called it: "an olla podrida of worn-out commonplaces, thoughtless chatter; a rose-garland of empty notions, and insipid improvisation." It was, however, based upon another foundation than that of the mental and political characteristics of the workers in contemporary Europe. Bakunin's programme was directed towards a distant goal, whereas Marx was predominantly interested in the way thither. "Marx said to himself: 'The mentality of the workers, arising out of their economic conditions, is this or that. Ways in conformity with the powers of these workers are to be chosen in order to establish economic conditions which will give them enhanced powers. First of all, the workers must be made aware of their own strength by awakening their class consciousness. When that has been done, other things will follow in due course.' On the other hand, the programme of the Alliance, as Marx saw it, wanted the end before the beginning. It turned the aims of education upside down, and thus interfered with the Marxian method of education."

The fear that Bakunin was plotting rivalry to the International was intensified by the fact that, living in Geneva, he had, by zealous agitation, succeeded in winning a large number of adherents among the homeworkers in the watchmaking industry of the Neuchâtel and Bernese Jura. Here there already existed the beginnings of a revolutionary movement; and some years before, in 1865, Dr. Coullery had founded in La Chaux de Fonds a section of the International with four or five hundred members. These highly skilled workers—whose principal leader was James Guillaume, a teacher at the Industrial School in Le Lode, and a Hegelian in philosophy—were federalistically inclined because they were Swiss and were independently working proletarians; they were atheistically inclined as a protest against the sanctimonious orthodoxy of the Genevese; and they were revolutionary because they were in poor circumstances and because they were affected with repressed religious impulses. They became ardent supporters of Bakunin. He amalgamated their groups into a federal council; founded a weekly, "Egalité," and started a vigorous revolutionary movement. In London, this aroused the impression that Bakunin was trying, by a devious method and working within the International, to attain the ends which he had been unable to reach by a direct route. At the Basle Congress of the International, on September 5 and 6, 1869, Bakunin was no longer, as he had been in Brussels, alone against the Marxian front, but was backed up by a resolute phalanx of supporters.

In the proceedings at this congress, Bakunin's views concerning the right of inheritance and the collective ownership of the land did not, indeed, gain an unqualified victory over the views of the General Council. It was obvious, however, that Bakunin's influence was on the increase. This became especially plain during the discussion of the question of direct legislation by the people (initiative and referendum). On this matter, Bakunin reports: "At the Basle Congress there were present for the first time delegates from Germany, Austria, and German Switzerland in very large numbers, extremely well organized, and members of the patriotic, unified, pangerman party, called the Social Democratic Labour Party. Under the instigation of Marx and the Marxists, and in obedience to a strict discipline, the German and German-Swiss delegates presented to the Basle Congress a new political programme which, had it been accepted, would have completely ousted the true programme of the

International, and would have made that organization a tool in the hands of the bourgeois radicals. Their scheme was warmly supported by all the German and English delegates of the General Council. Fortunately, the Latin delegates were in the majority, and the project of the Germans was rejected. Hence this wrath."

For a long time, Bakunin's opponents had been working to undermine his position. They tried to check the growth of his influence by a flood of suspicions and invectives. In particular, an individual named Borckheim, a literary man of doubtful antecedents, who had been helping Marx in various monetary affairs and as intermediary in the arrangement of loans, inaugurated a russophobe campaign against Bakunin. The year before (1868), in the "Demokratisches Wochenblatt" published in Leipzig under Liebknecht's editorship, he had attacked Bakunin's personal honour in the most odious way. At the same time Bebel, in a letter to J. P. Becker, had written that Bakunin was "probably an agent of the Russian government." Liebknecht, too, had circulated a report that Schweitzer had been bought by Bismarck, and that Bakunin was in the Tsar's pay. Moses Hess, likewise, had joined in the underground intrigues against Bakunin by disseminating suspicion. At the Basle Congress, Bakunin was able to bring matters to a head with Liebknecht, and to secure the appointment of a court of arbitration to investigate the charges. Liebknecht had no proofs to adduce, and declared that his words had been misunderstood. The jury unanimously agreed that Liebknecht had behaved "with criminal levity," and made him give Bakunin a written apology. The adversaries shook hands before the congress. Bakunin made a spill out of the apology, and lighted a cigarette with it.

Although it was natural that Bakunin should have defended himself against calumny, suspicion is aroused by his extreme sensitiveness, and by the violence of his reaction. Backbiting, detraction, the utterance of suspicions, were then, as they are now, common enough in times of ferment—especially in the revolutionary camp, which is always a focus for the activities of spies. As we know today (although the matter was then a profound secret), there was a weak spot and a sore one in Bakunin's revolutionary past, something he would fain have forgotten if he could. In 1851, when confined in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, after years of rigorous imprisonment, and when in a condition of intense bodily weakness and profound mental depression, he had, at the instigation of Tsar Nicholas, signed a "confession," in the hope that this would procure his liberation from the grim dungeon. It was a confession as to his revolutionary past, "a mixture of truth and fiction," as he wrote to Herzen; a romantic and inaccurate document, intended to mislead, penned in a tone of assumed humility and hypocritical subserviency. But it gave no names, and betrayed no one. It was, as Polonski said, a "Machiavellian masterpiece." Bakunin was disappointed in his expectations. Nicholas, dissatisfied with the confession, gave orders that the prisoner was to remain where he was till further notice. When, in the end, after the death of the tsar, Bakunin was at least partially freed by being sent to Siberia, memories of this mysterious document haunted him, filled him with shame, anxiety, and despair. He was continually dreading that its publication would expose him to ridicule, hatred, and accusations of dishonourable conduct. These fears made him irritable, unduly sensitive. The worst of it was that the emissaries of the tsarist police, who followed him whithersoever he went, and were always on the watch to counteract his revolutionary machinations, threatened again and again to publish his confession, which they had ready for circulation printed as a pamphlet. This happened in Stockholm, in Lyons, and in Italy. Bakunin naturally believed that some knowledge of the confession had filtered through to his adversaries in the International, and he trembled to think of the day when the story would be spread far and wide and his name as a revolutionist would be tarnished for ever.

In actual fact, his opponents had heard nothing of the confession. They continued to spread calumnies about him, none the less. The rebuke given to Liebknecht had no more than a temporary effect. Even Marx was not ashamed to disseminate suspicion again and again, and in the obscurity of private correspondence to besmirch the honour of the detested rival. In this enterprise, Marx accepted the unclean assistance of a Russian named Utin, who to begin with, "a vain and talkative man," had forced himself on Bakunin, subsequently, when he met with a rebuff, to persecute the latter by spreading abroad malicious reports about him. This same Utin, after Bakunin had removed from Geneva to Locarno, was able by interminable underground machinations to bring about a split in the Genevese section, and to get the editorship of "Egalité" into his hands. Under Marx's protection, he became the go-between in promoting the policy of the General Council of the International. On the strength of information mainly received from Utin, Marx, on March 28, 1870, through the instrumentality of his friend Kugelmann in Hanover, sent a "confidential communication" to the Brunswick executive of the Eisenach Labour Party—the party that had been founded in 1869 by Liebknecht and Bebel as a rival of the General Union of German Workers. In this confidential communication, Marx not only revived the disproved charges against Bakunin, but added a new "revelation." He declared that Bakunin, after Herzen's death, had embezzled an annual subvention of 25,000 francs, which Herzen had intended to be used for propaganda purposes by a "friendly pseudo-socialist panslavist party in Russia." There was not a word of truth in the story. It is mentioned only to show the depths to which those stooped who were engaged in this disastrous quarrel among brethren.

It is necessary to point out, however, that Bakunin never tried to pay Marx back in the same coin. What Mehring says of Bakunin's writings, that "we shall look in them in vain for any trace of venom towards the General Council or towards Marx," applies with equal force to all Bakunin's doings in this fierce campaign. Notwithstanding his unfortunate experiences, he preserved so keen a sense of justice and so splendid a magnanimity, that on January 28, 1872, writing to the internationalists of the Romagna about Marx and the Marxists, he was able to say: "Fortunately for the International there existed in London a group of men who were extremely devoted to the great association, and who were, in the true sense of the words, the real founders and initiators of that body. I speak of the small group of Germans whose leader is Karl Marx. These estimable persons regard me as an enemy, and maltreat me as such whenever and wherever they can. They are greatly mistaken. I am in no respect their enemy, and it gives me on the contrary lively satisfaction when I am able to do them justice. I often have an opportunity of doing so, for I regard them as genuinely important and estimable persons, in respect both of intelligence and knowledge, and also in respect of their passionate devotion to the cause of the proletariat and of a loyalty to that cause which has withstood every possible test—a devotion and a loyalty which have been proved by the achievements of twenty years. Marx is the supreme economic and socialist genius of our day. In the course of my life, I have come into contact with a great many learned men, but I know no one else who is so profoundly learned as he. Engels, who is now secretary for Italy and Spain, Marx's friend and pupil, is also a man of outstanding intelligence. As long ago as 1846 and 1848, working together, they founded the party of the German communists, and their activities in this direction have continued ever since. Marx edited the profound and admirable Preamble to the Provisional Rules of the International, and gave a body to the instinctively unanimous aspirations of the proletariat of nearly all countries of Europe, in that, during the years 1863-1864 he conceived the idea of the International and effected its establishment. These are great and splendid services, and it

would be very ungrateful of us if we were reluctant to acknowledge their importance.”

To the obvious question why, since these things were so, there had been a breach between Bakunin and Marx, Bakunin, in the same epistle, gives the following answer: "Marx is an authoritarian and centralizing communist. He wants what we want: the complete triumph of economic and social equality, but he wants it in the State and through the State power, through the dictatorship of a very strong and, so to say, despotic provisional government, that is, by the negation of liberty. His economic ideal is the State as sole owner of the land and of all kinds of capital, cultivating the land through well-paid agricultural associations under the management of State engineers, and controlling all industrial and commercial associations with State capital.

"We want the same triumph of economic and social equality through the abolition of the State, and of all that passes by the name of law (which, in our view, is the permanent negation of human rights). We want the reconstruction of society, and the unification of mankind, to be achieved, not from above downwards, by any sort of authority, or by socialist officials, engineers, and other accredited men of learning—but from below upwards, by the free federation of all kinds of workers' associations liberated from the yoke of the State.

"You see that two theories could hardly be more sharply opposed to one another than ours are. But there is another difference between us, a purely personal one.

"Marx has two odious faults: he is vain and jealous. He detested Proudhon, simply because Proudhon's great name and well-deserved reputation were prejudicial to him. There is no term of abuse that Marx has failed to apply to Proudhon. Marx is egotistical to the pitch of insanity. He talks of 'my ideas,' and cannot understand that ideas belong to no one in particular, but that, if we look carefully, we shall always find that the best and greatest ideas are the product of the instinctive labour of all. ... Marx, who was already constitutionally inclined towards self-glorification, was definitively corrupted by the idolization of his disciples, who have made a sort of doctrinaire pope out of him. Nothing can be more disastrous to the mental and moral health of a man, even though he be extremely intelligent, than to be idolized and regarded as infallible. All this has made Marx even more egotistical, so that he is beginning to loathe every one who will not bow the neck before him."

Insuperable material differences and invincible personal antagonisms combined to form the abyss which separated the life work of these two men. Fundamentally, the severance was a forcible laceration of their intrinsic interconnexion, and the hatred each felt for the other was a hatred that sprang from love. That is why the severance and the hatred were so distressing and so disastrous for both.

### **The Franco-German War and the Commune**

The first half of the year 1870 was characterized by perpetual quarrels, jealous struggles, and polemical wrangles between the International and the Alliance, especially between the opposing parties in the region of the Jura. The climax of the bickerings occurred at the congress of the Alliance held in La Chaux de Fonds, on April 4, 1870, at which such violent differences of opinion became manifest within the Alliance that it broke up, and the majority and the minority continued their discussions in two separate congresses. The 1870 congress of the International was to have been held in Paris. Since, however, the Bonapartist police had inaugurated legal proceedings against the members of the International, and was staging a great public trial, the General Council summoned the congress for September 5th in Mainz.

But in July 1870, the Franco-German war broke out. In an address issued by the General Council under date July 23rd, Marx expounded the position of the International towards this war, which was described as a consequence of the war of 1866, and as “an amended edition of the coup d’état of December 1851.” He strongly opposed the attitude of Prussia. “On the German side, the war is a war of defence; but who put Germany to the necessity of defending herself? Who enabled Louis Bonaparte to wage war upon her? Prussia! It was Bismarck who conspired with that very same Louis Bonaparte. ... After her victory, did Prussia dream one moment of opposing a free Germany to an enslaved France? Just the contrary. While carefully preserving all the native beauties of her old system, she superadded all the tricks of the Second Empire. ... The Bonapartist regime, which till then only flourished on one side of the Rhine, had now got its counterfeit on the other. From such a state of things, what else could result but war?” What inference was to be drawn as far as the working class was concerned? It must be on its guard lest the defensive character of the war should be transformed into an annexationist one. “If the German working class allows the present war to lose its strictly defensive character, and to degenerate into a war against the French people, victory or defeat will prove alike disastrous.”

In a second address, under date September 9th, Marx showed that Germany had no historical claim upon Alsace-Lorraine, and did not need these provinces for the protection of the country as a whole against France. “If limits are to be fixed by military interests, there will be no end to claims, because every military line is necessarily faulty, and may be improved by an flexing some more outlying territory; and, moreover, they can never be fixed finally and fairly, because they always must be imposed by the conqueror upon the conquered, and consequently carry within them the seed of fresh wars.” He expressly referred to the interests of the working class, which must be given due consideration after the war. “The German working class have resolutely supported the war, which it was not in their power to prevent, as a war for German independence and the liberation of France and Europe from that pestilential incubus, the Second Empire. It was the German workmen who, together with the rural labourers, furnished the sinews and muscles of heroic hosts, leaving behind their half-starved families. Decimated by the battles abroad, they will be once more decimated by misery at home. In their turn they are now coming forward to ask for ‘guarantees’—guarantees that their immense sacrifices have not been brought in vain, that they have conquered liberty, that the victory over the imperialist armies will not, as in 1815, be turned into the defeat of the German people; and as the first of these guarantees, they claim an honourable peace for France, and the recognition of the French republic. ... The French working class moves, therefore, under circumstances of extreme difficulty. ... They have not to recapitulate the past, but to build up the future. Let them calmly and resolutely improve the opportunities of republican liberty, for the work of their own class organization. It will gift them with fresh Herculean powers for the regeneration of France, and for our common task—the emancipation of labour. Upon their energies and wisdom hinges the fate of the republic.”

The establishment of the French republic did not, indeed, as yet signify the taking over of political power by the working class, but only the proclamation of bourgeois interests, above all in respect of the question, who was to pay the gigantic war indemnity demanded by Prussia. The bourgeois class was determined that the burden of the war should on no account fall upon its shoulders, but should be shifted to those of the proletariat. With this end in view, it came to an understanding with the German bourgeoisie (which it had just been fighting) against the proletariat (which had just been fighting as its ally). The negotiations between Thiers and Bismarck meant to the French workers: “Your money or your life!” When the Commune was

proclaimed on March 18, 1871, the Parisian proletariat, as vanguard of the French workers, presented a bold front against the bourgeois highwaymen. It drove its adversaries to Versailles, and engaged upon a life-or-death struggle.

On March 19, 1871, the first number of the "Journal Officiel," the organ of the Commune, was published in Paris. Next day, in a leading article, we read: "Amid the defeats and the treachery of the ruling class, the proletarians of Paris have understood that the hour has struck when they must save the situation by taking the conduct of public affairs into their own hands. ... They have understood that it is their highest duty and their absolute right to make themselves masters of their own fate, and to seize the powers of government." Marx was overflowing with enthusiasm. Writing to Kugelmann, under date April 12th, he said: "What elasticity, what historical initiative, what capacity for self-sacrifice in these Parisians! After six months' starvation and ruination by internal treachery, even more than by the enemy without, they rise under the Prussian bayonets as if there had never been a war between France and Germany, and as if there were no enemy outside the gates of Paris. History offers no parallel to this greatness!"

At the communal elections held in Paris on March 26, 1871, 72 socialists were elected (out of a total membership of 92), among whom were members of the International. Although, in subsequent elections, many more Internationalists became members of the Commune, they did not gain a majority. The tactics were decided by the radicals and the Blanquists. Though there were members of the International in the most important administrative bodies, and though these revolutionists distinguished themselves by efficiency and by devotion to duty, the political influence of the International was restricted to the giving of occasional advice.

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally workingmen, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the central government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workmen's wages. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the central government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the State was laid into the hands of the Commune."

"The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour, show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a working-class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour."

"The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce by popular decree. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending, by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming

circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. In the full consciousness of their historic mission, and with the heroic resolve to act up to it, the working class can afford to smile at the coarse invective of the gentlemen's gentlemen with the pen and inkhorn, and at the didactic patronage of well-wishing bourgeois doctrinaires, pouring forth their ignorant platitudes and sectarian crochets in the oracular tone of scientific infallibility."

"When the Paris Commune took the management of the revolution into its own hands; when plain workingmen for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their 'natural superiors, and, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, performed their work modestly, conscientiously, and efficiently—performed it at salaries the highest of which barely amounted to one-fifth of what, according to high scientific authority, is the minimum required for a secretary to a certain metropolitan school board—the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the red flag, the symbol of the republic of labour, floating over the Hotel de Ville."

"In every revolution there intrude, at the side of its true agents, men of a different stamp; some of them survivors of, and devotees to, past revolutions, without insight into the present movement, but preserving popular influence by their known honesty and courage, or by the sheer force of tradition; others mere bawlers, who, by dint of repeating year after year the same set of stereotyped declamations against the government of the day, have sneaked into the reputation of revolutionists of the first water. After March 18th, some such men did also turn up, and in some cases contrived to play preeminent parts. As far as their power went, they hampered the real action of the working class, exactly as men of that sort have hampered the full development of every previous revolution. They are an unavoidable evil; with time they are shaken off; but time was not allowed to the Commune."

Owing to a number of grave tactical errors, owing to the lack alike of a sufficiently definite aim and of adequate revolutionary determination, and owing to internal dissensions, the Commune was not equal to the performance of its historic mission. The Versaillesse gained the upper hand. "If only the Commune had listened to my warnings," wrote Marx to Professor Beesly. "I advised its members to fortify the northern side of the heights of Montmartre, the Prussian side; and they still had time to do this. I told them that otherwise they would find themselves in a mouse-trap. I denounced Pyat, Grousset, and Vésimier. I begged them to dispatch instantly to London all the papers which could compromise the members of the Committee of National Defence, so that the savagery of the enemies of the Commune might to some extent be held in check. This would in part have frustrated the plan of the Versaillesse." Instead, during the last days of May 1871, the Commune was overthrown and its defenders were massacred by the Parisian bourgeoisie and the Versaillesse troops.

"The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilization and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge. Each new crisis in the class struggle between the appropriator and the producer brings out this fact more glaringly. Even the atrocities of the bourgeois in June 1848 vanish before the ineffable infamy of 1871."

"To find a parallel for the conduct of Thiers and his bloodhounds, we must go back to the times of Sulla and the two triumvirates of Rome. The same wholesale slaughter in cold blood; the same disregard, in massacre, of age and sex, the same system of torturing prisoners; the same proscriptions, but this time of a whole class;

the same savage hunt after concealed leaders, lest one might escape; the same denunciations of political and private enemies; the same indifference for the butchery of entire strangers to the feud. There is but this difference, that the Romans had no mitrailleuses for the dispatch, in the lump, of the proscribed, and that they had not 'the law in their hands,' nor on their lips the cry of 'civilization.'"

Within a few days after the Commune had been drowned in the blood of the Parisian workers, Marx laid before the General Council of the International the draft of the Address it was to issue on *The Civil War in France*—the address from which the foregoing extracts have been taken. Brilliantly written, it is alive with revolutionary passion, and gives a masterly historical sketch of the Commune. At once a report and a criticism, simultaneously a justification and a work of propaganda, it presents a marvellously powerful picture of this volcanic outbreak, unique in the history of revolutions. It defends the honour of the Commune against the shameful injustice of its adversaries. It is a clarion call to arms against the bourgeoisie, a declaration of war whose menace rings through the decades and through the centuries.

### **End of the International**

The Commune left three lessons for the European proletariat. First of all it showed that the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie must not be confined to the economic or industrial field, but must take a political form as well. Secondly it showed that in bourgeois national States this struggle could only be carried on upon the platform of bourgeois politics, in parliament, the entry to which must be secured by electoral campaigns. Thirdly it showed that the main incidence of the political struggle had been transferred from France to Germany, where the working class was rapidly acquiring political impetus. Marx was quick to recognize the new features of the situation. Writing to Kugelmann, he said: "Through the fight in Paris, the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and the capitalist State has entered upon a new phase. No matter how the affair may end, a fresh starting-point of worldwide historical importance has been won." He was prompt, likewise, to do justice to the changed situation.

He foresaw, however, that the Bakuninists inside the International would be a serious obstacle. The more definitely Marx became inclined to elaborate the tactics of a law-abiding policy, in conformity with the methods and trends of the bourgeois State, and the more he aimed at the conquest of the State instead of at the destruction of the State, the more must Bakunin and the Bakuninists consider that he was betraying the revolution, and the more, therefore, would they feel impelled to attack him. Consequently, he had made up his mind to clear the Bakunist opposition out of the way.

With this, end in view, instead of summoning a regular congress of the International, he arranged for a conference to be held in London, paying no heed to protests from Geneva, "the focus of intrigues and quarrels." The personnel of the conference was carefully chosen and sifted. Since the General Council was represented by thirteen members, and there were only ten additional delegates present, Marx was in control from the first, and was able to ensure the passing of the resolutions he wanted. The sessions were held from September 17th to 25th, and the work was done with "compressed energy." The General Council was given increased power to deal with refractory organizations, its dictatorial authority being thus notably enhanced. Then arrangements were made for the change in tactics. Whereas in the Preamble to the Provisional Rules it had been stated "that the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political



movement ought to be subordinate as a means," the London Conference adopted the following resolution: "Considering that, against this collective power of the propertied classes, the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a distinct political party, distinct from and opposed to all old parties formed by the propertied classes; that this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end, the abolition of classes; that the combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of the landlords and capitalists—this Conference recalls to the members of the International that, in the militant state of the working class, its economical movement and its political action are indissolubly united." The passing of this resolution implied the adoption of a definite line against Bakunin. The instruction to Utin to collect materials against Bakunin which would enable action to be taken against the latter, was nothing more than a formal gesture, masking a fixed determination to oust Bakunin from the International at all hazards.

The first result of the London Conference was to make the opposition consolidate its forces. In congress at Sonvillier, the Swiss Bakuninists decided to organize themselves as the Jura Federation, and to issue a circular to all sections of the International, protesting against the decisions of the London Conference, and demanding that a congress be summoned. The circular was widely supported in Italy and Spain, and aroused considerable sympathy in Belgium, France, and the United States. In London, the relations between the General Council and the trade unions had gradually become less intimate, and had at length been completely broken off. Odger, Lucraft, and other trade-union leaders, had resigned from the International. The Federal Council formed in accordance with a decision of the London Conference was soon at loggerheads with the General Council; and within the General Council itself there had appeared a majority and a minority faction which before long were at open war. Eccarius had resigned his position as secretary-general, and had quarrelled with Marx because Marx had accused him of conspiring with the American federalists. Jung was fiercely at odds with Engels, who had come to live in London in 1870, and was now a member of the General Council. Hales, finally, the new secretary-general, being also the leader of the newly founded Federal Council, entered into communication, without consulting the General Council, with the Spanish Federation, which had adopted the platform of the Alliance, and had expelled Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law. Thus the centre and headquarters of the International was rent with internal dissensions at the very time when it was threatened with formidable onslaughts from without.

Thus unfavourable were the omens when the Hague Congress opened on September 2, 1872. "The congress is a life-and-death question for the International," Marx had written to Kugelmann. "Before I resign from the General Council, I want at least to free the International from disintegrating elements. Germany, therefore, must have as many representatives as possible. Write to Hepner and tell him that I shall be glad if he will procure for you a mandate as delegate." Thus Marx was carefully organizing the personnel of the Hague Congress just as he had carefully organized that of the London Conference. This was to be a decisive battle, in which he would gain a definitive victory over Bakunin. He wanted to rid the International of all dangerous elements. As soon as the purge had been effected, he intended to withdraw from the General Council.

There were sixty-seven persons at the congress. Two more had turned up, but their credentials were rejected. This was the first congress at which Marx was present; he came as member of the General Council, and had, besides, three

mandates (Mainz, Leipzig, and New York). Engels, in addition to his vote as member of the General Council, had a vote for Breslau and a vote for New York. In these circumstances it was not difficult for Marx to control a majority, especially seeing that Bakunin's Italian supporters had abstained from sending delegates. Marx was sure of a victory before the fight had begun. Bakunin was not there. The cause of the Jura Federation was represented by James Guillaume.

The congress did not get down to solid business until the fourth day. Then the dictatorial powers of the General Council were not merely maintained, but were considerably augmented. This was decided by 36 votes against 6, with 15 abstentions, after Marx had made a long speech in favour of the change. Then, since Marx and Engels were afraid of Blanquist influence in London, the seat of the General Council was transferred from London to New York. (The French delegates, greatly disgruntled by this, declared in a pamphlet they subsequently issued that the International "summoned to do its duty, refused. It evaded the revolution, and took flight across the Atlantic ocean.") As regards the question of political action, a resolution was adopted declaring the "organization of the proletariat as a political party" to be "indispensable," and describing the "conquest of political power" as "the prime duty of the proletariat." A committee was appointed, to sit in camera, in order to inquire into the conflict with the Alliance. This committee, after Guillaume had refused to appear before it in order to defend the Alliance, declared that that body had been founded as a secret organization within the International, that Bakunin had been responsible for its foundation, and that "Citizen Bakunin has resorted to fraudulent manoeuvres in order to possess himself of other people's property." The committee therefore urged the congress: "(1) to expel Citizen Bakunin from the International Workingmen's Association; (2) likewise to expel Citizens Guillaume and Schwitzguébel." When the motion for Bakunin's expulsion was put, it was carried by 27 votes against 7, with 8 abstentions; and Guillaume's expulsion was carried by 25 votes against 9, with 9 abstentions.

Marx had won the victory over his detested adversary. Not content with breaking the political ties between himself and Bakunin, he had emphasized his animus by securing that Bakunin should be publicly stigmatized as an embezzler. It was said that Bakunin had failed to repay an advance of three hundred roubles made him for the translation of *Capital* into Russian. Such was the rope used by Marx to hang his enemy—Marx who had been involved in a thousand shady financial transactions, and had lived all his life as pensioner on a friend's bounty.

Marx was justified in promoting the adoption of a policy which, he was convinced, could alone lead to the liberation of the proletariat. He was right, too, in insisting that the International must free itself from Bakunin, seeing that Bakunin was a declared opponent of this policy, and was doing all he could to counteract it. But that Marx, in order to secure this concrete triumph, should have stooped to personal calumny, is a condemnation, not of Bakunin, but of Marx himself. We have here a deplorable demonstration of the disastrous trait in his character which made him regard all the problems of politics, the labour movement, and the revolution, from the outlook of their bearing on his personal credit. A council of international revolutionaries, whose main business in life is to blow to smithereens the world of private property and bourgeois morality, is induced by its leader to pass a vote of reprobation and a sentence of expulsion upon one of the most brilliant, heroic, and fascinating of revolutionists the world has ever known, on the ground that this revolutionist has misappropriated bourgeois property. Is it possible to point to anything more painfully absurd in the whole story of the human race?

A victory thus secured could bear no fruit. Now that the national labour organizations were taking shape as political parties, and were assuming functions within the framework of the political system of the extant State, there was no longer any justification for the existence of the International. Subordination to the purposes of an extra-national centre could not fail, at this juncture, to conflict with the national independence of the labour parties, and, for the time being, to prove an obstacle to their development. Bakunin had foreseen this. In a contribution to the "Liberté" of Brussels, in October 1872, he wrote: "I regard Monsieur Marx as an extremely earnest, if not always perfectly upright revolutionist, as one who honestly desires the uplifting of the masses, and I ask myself how he can fail to see that the establishment of a universal, collective, or individual dictatorship, which is designed to carry out, as it were, the work of a chief engineer of the world revolution, regulating and guiding the insurrectional movement of the masses in all countries much as a machine might—that, I say, the establishment of such a dictatorship would alone suffice to paralyse and falsify all popular movements? What man, or what group of men, however richly endowed with genius, can venture to flatter themselves—in view of the enormous quantity of interests, trends, and activities, which are so different in every country, every province, every locality, every occupation, and whose huge ensemble, united but not made homogeneous by a great common aspiration and by certain principles which have now entered into the consciousness of the masses, constitutes the coming social revolution—who can flatter themselves that they can grasp and understand this huge ensemble?"

Indeed, as time went on, the threads of political interconnexion and revolutionary leadership which had been concentrated in the International were passing more and more hopelessly out of Marx's hands. The transference of the General Council to New York proved to have been an egregious error. In London, the International remained active only as a heap of ruins, for the mastery of which a swarm of dwarf potentates were ceaselessly bickering. Marx barely escaped the vengeful destiny of being expelled. At length, when the last congress began at Geneva on September 8, 1873—a congress for which, as Becker said in a letter to Sorge, he had "conjured up, out of the ground, as it were, thirteen delegates" out of the thirty present—Marx had to admit, not only that the congress was a complete fiasco, but also that the International had collapsed.

But Marx could not bring himself to retire from the stage without throwing a last handful of mud at Bakunin. The Hague Congress had instructed the committee that examined the charges against Bakunin to publish the results of the investigation. Since the committee had failed to carry out this behest, Marx, in conjunction with Engels and Lafargue, undertook to elaborate a report. It was published under the title *Die Allianz der sozialistischen Demokratie und die Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation* [The Alliance of the Socialist Democracy and the International Workingmen's Association], a malicious pamphlet, in which almost every line is a distortion, almost every allegation an injustice, almost every argument a falsification, and almost every word an untruth. It furnishes pitiless evidence of the way in which years of rivalry, years of struggle poisoned by vanity, hate, and the lust for power, had corrupted and demoralized the genius for controversy which radiates so magnificently from Marx's earlier writings. Even Mehring, who is invariably an indulgent judge where Marx is concerned, places this work "at the lowest rank" among all those published by Marx and Engels.

Bakunin, an old man with one foot in the grave, suffering, disappointed, broken, embittered, was content to meet the attack with grieved resignation. Writing in the "Journal de Genève," he said: "This new pamphlet is a formal denunciation, a

gendarme denunciation directed against a society known by the name of the Alliance. Urged onward by furious hatred, Monsieur Marx has not been afraid to box his own ears, by undertaking to expose himself before the public in the role of a sneakish and calumnious police agent. That is his own affair; and, since he likes the job, let him have it. ... This has given me an intense loathing of public life. I have had enough of it, and, after devoting all my days to the struggle, I am weary. ... Let other and younger persons put their hands to the work. For my own part, I no longer feel strong enough, and perhaps also I lack the necessary confidence to go on trying to roll the stone of Sisyphus uphill against the universally triumphant reaction. I therefore withdraw from the arena, and ask only one thing from my dear contemporaries—oblivion.”

When Bakunin died on July 1, 1876, no trace of the Marxian International remained.

### **The Great Achievement**

The painful feelings aroused in us by Marx’s campaign against Bakunin, and the moral judgments we may be inclined to pronounce on the former’s uncomradely behaviour, must not lead us astray, must not incline us to overlook how immense an achievement was the foundation of the International, must not blind us to the fact that the appearance of that organization marks an epoch.

The economic situation that prevailed throughout Europe in the sixties had brought proletarian masses into being every where, and was in itself an incitement to the workers. Nevertheless, the voicing of a call to arms was the outcome of Marx’s genius, and the mobilization of the awakening forces by the stimulus of international contact was a historic deed which will always remain associated with his name. In the perspective of history, it is of minor importance in what tone and in what rhythm the clarion call was sounded. Only the chronicler need care today to ascertain how much in the programmes and rules and regulations of the first labour battalions was true or false, practicable or impracticable. Marx, with clear vision and sound insight, discerned along what lines and in accordance with what theoretical principles the advance must be made; and this cannot but increase the admiration we feel for his shrewdness and his breadth of vision. By energetically safeguarding the proletariat against confusions, deviations, and misleadings, he did immense service, and saved the workers from many discouragements and disappointments. If Marx were to fulfil the task which he believed to be his historic mission, he had to take his course straight ahead, relentlessly and brutally, regardless of feelings and sentiments, honour and morality, ties of friendship or affection. If, in doing this, he had to forfeit much which is conventionally regarded as virtuous, had to lose the right to be considered what by traditional standards is spoken of as an estimable character, had to dispense with the attributes of a fine humaneness—this was undoubtedly the greatest of the many sacrifices he had to make in the cause. It was not the aim of his endeavour to be a man of noble disposition, a man shining with all the virtues. His business was, amid the turmoil of the moving forces of his age, to secure the triumph of subjecting these forces to his own intellectual guidance and control. The matter at stake was the victory of head over heart, the establishment of the superiority of the intellect in the configuration of life and the regulation of human affairs.

Herein, Marx was the most typical representative of the epoch in which he originated and acted.

The bourgeois era is ideologically characterized by a supreme development of individualism. Previously, individuality had been cabined, cribbed, and confined by

family traditions, vestiges of feudalism, communal ties of all kinds; but at the opening of the new era it was definitively freed by the emancipating and isolating power of money, so that its independence became boundless. The pure ego, absolute individuality, was born, no longer isolated, but as a mass phenomenon. Fichte, the typical representative of philosophical individualism, drank champagne for the first time in his life when his little son said "I" for the first time. The ego is the final and unconditional repudiation of the community. Individuality becomes the sole master of the world, and mirrors itself in the image of the divine.

But this extremity of isolation, in which all ties with fellow men are severed, implies also the utmost peril, and therewith the utmost insecurity. The world of the community encountered every danger and every insecurity with the instrument of communal activity. As the individual awakened, and cut loose from the collectivity, it was necessary for him, since he had to maintain himself amid grave perils, to increase and develop within his own individuality all the forces of defence, all possible capacities for safeguarding, every kind of means for keeping himself going. Until now, with the aid of affects, feelings, moods, with the assistance of fantasy, suggestion, and ecstasy, individuals had been able to achieve transient or sometimes merely apparent community. With the definitive constitution of the individual, however, with the emergence of unconditional isolation, these expedients ceased to be effective. The individual, thrown back on himself, had for his maintenance to disclose and to apply the last reserves of his energy. He set the intellect free, and made of it the chief instrument of his safeguarding.

Thus the bourgeois phase inaugurates itself with the appearance of a vigorous trend towards intellectualization and rationalization. In the world of phenomena and relations, as time goes on, the supreme question is, what can justify itself before the tribunal of the intellect? Religion, hitherto human experience finding expression in works, is rationalized by Luther to a bare faith. Nature, the creation of God and a paradise of wonders and mysteries, is disclosed by science, measured, classified, brought under the dominion of law, and handed over to the exploitation of technique. Society, which man has hitherto regarded as a harmonious structure of will and work, requirement and performance, necessity and action, is made the object of the investigating, analysing, and theorizing human understanding; is fixed as a system, labelled as an evolutionary phase, and rationalized in the law-abidingness of its dynamic. Socialism, as the great hope and the fascinating dream of a complete liberation from the most arduous and most widely generalized needs of life, socialism which has hitherto been regarded as the outcome of human sacrifice and labour, the result of unselfish readiness, self-sacrificing education, noble zeal, and the boundless development of all the spiritual powers—this socialism of the utopists, fanciful enthusiasts, and pure fools—becomes the object of logical demonstration, the upshot of a historical process developed in accordance with fixed laws, something that can be fully grasped by the intelligence, the product of a naturally and scientifically demonstrable necessity.

Thus we proceed from Luther by way of Fichte, Adam Smith, Humboldt, and Darwin, in a direct line to Karl Marx. In this connexion, it is worth remembering that Marx lived in England, where economic life had already assumed a highly developed capitalist form. It was in Britain that political economy first came into being, as a typical science of the capitalist age. It was there that utilitarianism wove a philosophical mantle for capitalist interests. It was there that liberalism was born as the political doctrine of capitalism. It was there, too, that Marx first applied the methods of bourgeois intellectualism to the study of social happenings. Under his treatment, socialism for the first time ceased to be an affair of faith, hope, fantasy, the dream

imagination; ceased to be a construction of the arbitrary creative will of man. His rationalist investigation supplied glimpses into the movements of history and the structure of social phenomena, just as the anatomist's scalpel was doing into the functions of the body, just as the formula of the mathematician was doing into the mosaic of numbers, the microscope of the biologist into the cell-structure of the tissues, the analysis of the chemist into the mysteries of substance. Feelings, emotional heart-beats, spiritual stirrings, and ethical postulates no longer have anything to do with the case. The realm of fantasy is excluded. Ordinary humanity is no longer current. Just as in the world of commodities nothing counts but cash payment, so in the world of social forms and relations nothing counts but the exactly demonstrable, the scientifically proved, and in the world of the ideologies nothing counts but the concept as a coin minted by the intellect. In this way socialism becomes the last link in a chain of proof, all of whose links are strung together in accordance with the laws of logic; becomes the Z of an alphabet beginning with A; becomes the precipitate of a process of fermentation which proceeds in accordance with an ascertained formula; becomes the unknown  $x$  of a problem which can be mathematically worked out. Socialism is in this way lifted from the lowlands of mysticism, utopism, millenarianism, and a simple-minded faith in salvation, into the sphere of science. It quits the realm of religion, sectarian magic, charlatanry, and social quackery, to be consecrated by the approval of the intellect, to be legitimized academically. Taking its place in the domain of exact knowledge, it is ranged upon the same level as the natural sciences.

Such was the immense achievement of Marx—to have effected this scientific ennoblement of socialism! To that task he devoted the greatest number of his years, the ripest of his energies, and the utmost of his diligence. To the sphere of immediate practice, to the International, he gave only part of his attention and energy during less than a decade, whereas to the performance of his task in the domain of theory he addressed himself with the self-sacrifice and the indefatigability of a worker bee for nearly forty years.

The International had fulfilled its role as vehicle of the labour movement within a very short time of its foundation.

Socialist theory, on the other hand, as the spiritual ferment of the movement, had only just begun to get to work when the masses were first set in motion. Since then, operating powerfully and unrestingly down to the present hour, it has helped the proletariat to climb to a point at which the workers have become the decisive factor of history.

Marx's theory, known for short as Marxism, takes indisputable precedence of all other socialist theories, and has had a decisive influence upon the life and struggles of the modern proletariat. It is today almost the only determinative trend of the proletarian class, almost the only one that is achieving realization in a revolutionary direction.

The driving force of this trend is the materialist interpretation of history.

### **The Materialist Interpretation of History**

The *Communist Manifesto* contained the first draft of scientific socialism—sketchy, it is true, but precise. Studying this draft, we can realize how far the plan to write a great politico-economic work on the capitalist method of production had already matured. A partial contribution to the carrying out of this design was made by Marx in the lectures on *Wage Labour and Capital* which he delivered to the Workers' Educational Society in Brussels. During the decade that followed, his work was

continually being interrupted by indisposition or other unfavourable circumstances, and not until 1858 was he able to proceed further with the elaboration of his materials. In 1859 he was able to publish his *Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*.

For the moment, our only interest in this book is in the preface, where Marx, in a survey of the evolution of his scientific thought, presents the first connected account of his method of materialistic interpretation of history.

“My study of the Hegelian philosophy of right led me to understand that legal relations and forms of State are not to be comprehended out of themselves, nor yet out of the so-called general evolution of the human mind, but are, rather, rooted in the material conditions of life, whose totality Hegel, following the example of English and French eighteenth-century writers, subsumed under the name of ‘civil society’; but that the anatomy of civil society was to be sought in political economy. ... The general result at which I arrived, the result which, once achieved, served as guiding principle of my studies, may be formulated as follows. In the social production which human beings carry on, they enter into definite relations which are determined, that is to say, independent of their will—productive relations which correspond to a definite evolutionary phase of the material forces of production. The totality of these productive relations forms the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which a legal and political superstructure develops and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence, but, conversely, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing productive relations, or (to express the matter in legal terminology) with the property relations within which they have hitherto moved. These relations, which have previously been developmental forms of the productive forces, now become metamorphosed into fetters upon production. A period of social revolutions then begins. Concomitantly with the change in the economic foundation, the whole gigantic superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. When we contemplate such transformations, we must always distinguish: on the one hand, between the material changes in the economic conditions of production, changes which can be watched and recorded with all the precision proper to natural science; and, on the other, the legal, political, religious, artistic, or philosophical forms (in a word, the ideological forms) in which human beings become aware of this conflict and fight it to an issue. Just as little as we form an opinion of an individual in accordance with what he thinks of himself, just so little can we appraise a revolutionary epoch in accordance with its own consciousness of itself; for we have to explain this consciousness as the outcome of the contradictions of material life, of the extant conflict between social productive forces and productive relations. No type of social structure ever perishes, until there have been developed all the productive forces for which it has room; and new and higher forces of production never appear upon the scene, until the material conditions of existence requisite for their development have matured within the womb of the old society. That is why mankind never sets itself any tasks which it is not able to perform; for, when we look closely into the matter, we shall always find that the demand for the new enterprise only arises when the material conditions of existence are ripe for its successful performance—or at any rate have begun to ripen. In broad outline we can describe the Asiatic, the classical, the feudal, and the modern (capitalist) forms of production, as progressive epochs in the economic development of society. Bourgeois relations of production are the last of the antagonistic forms of the social process of production—antagonistic, not in the sense of individual antagonism, but in

the sense of an antagonism proceeding out of the social conditions in the individual's life; nevertheless the productive forces developing within the womb of bourgeois society create simultaneously the material conditions for the solution of this antagonism. Consequently, with this formation of society, the primitive history of human society comes to an end."

The foregoing sentences embody a classical statement of the fundamentals of the materialist interpretation of history. The idealist view, according to which the processes of history are the outcome of the unsearchable purposes of God, the expression of the activities of an objective world-spirit, or the achievements of heroic, almost superhuman, divinely endowed personalities, had thus been superseded and discarded.

The change in outlooks was connected with the great transformation that had been taking place in social life. In a world where all things were assuming the form of commodities, and where all the phenomena of the mental and spiritual life were acquiring circumstantiality, it was becoming less and less possible for "the idea" to maintain its credit as the motive force of history. When (as was now obvious in England), behind the theses of philosophy, the postulates of ethics, and the doctrines of politics, the material interests of the bourgeoisie could be plainly seen at work, it had become natural to look upon economic interests as the general determinants of all happenings, all changes in the world of thought, and all the phases of history.

Day by day, Marx's experiences in the environing world taught him to how preponderating a degree economic factors condition the lives and activities of human beings. He was acquainted, too, with the writings of Saint-Simon and Adam Smith, whose theories bordered on that of the materialist interpretation of history. Soon, therefore, it became clear to him that economics were the "motive force" of history, in this sense, that the development of economic life brought about changes in the institutions of society, the forms of the State, social structures, ideologies, and ideals, these latter following the transformations of the former. The changes which human beings effect in the ways by which they satisfy their material needs are attended by changes in social forms, legal institutions, the principles of State, scientific systems, moral ideas, artistic ideals. To simplify matters into a vivid formula, the social and ideological superstructure of any epoch is upbuilt upon the economic foundation of the time.

This foundation is in part supplied ready-made to men, as climate, the fertility of the soil, water supply, the treasures of the earth. Another part of the foundation consists of the traditional technique with the aid of which human beings get to work upon the gifts and the productive forces of nature in order to turn these to human account. But for this it is necessary that human beings should make a further contribution: their more or less developed powers of work, their formative capacities, their mentality, their language, their powers of mental representation, their mind. Natural forces and human forces contribute to the joint effect, and the concrete expression of both combined comprises the relations of production. The general significance of production, as achieved in the cauldron of productive relations by means of the forces of production, is the control of the world in the interests of human beings, and the safeguarding of mankind against the hostile powers which threaten its existence. The forces of production and the relations of production are in a perpetual interplay of mutual dependence, each determining the other. The forces of production are not dead matter, and the relations of production are not a rigid framework. Their life flames up, their forms are transmuted, their content is fertilized, as they unceasingly act on one another in the dialectical process.



The fulfillers, the executors, of this process are human beings. Furthermore, human beings fulfil the process, not as lifeless machines, but as creatures animated with living consciousness.

Consciousness receives its directives from the necessities of the process. In turn, however, it reacts formatively and purposefully upon the process. Thus the ideological life of mankind becomes an image of mobile reality; and reflexes from the ideological content of human consciousness find their way back into reality. Religion, science, morality, politics, legislation, education, and art, receive their content and their form from the procreative power of the material conditions and the economic necessities of their time. They make pictures, sketch systems, fix values, establish postulates; and they introduce ideas into the consciousness of men. Then, this mental world, itself primarily a consequence, becomes in its turn a cause. From it there radiates a modifying, a formative, an ordering energy, which plays its joint part within the sphere of men's lives—that sphere in which men are perpetually trying to safeguard their position.

The materialist interpretation or conception of history has never consisted wholly and exclusively of the gross and commonplace view that hunger alone, eagerness to satisfy the material needs of the stomach, is the driving force of history. But the materialist conception of history certainly arises out of the elementary, recognition that human beings (as Engels said in his address at Marx's funeral) "must have food and drink, clothing and shelter, first of all, before they can interest themselves in politics, science, art, religion, and the like."

The supporters of the materialist interpretation of history have never been so one-sided as to declare that economic forces are the only forces that make history. What they have always, and most emphatically, contended is that, among the factors of history, economic forces have the last word.

The initiators of the materialist interpretation of history never advocated that crudely mechanical form of materialism, according to which the motive force of history is exclusively derived from the dead materiality of things, so that there can be no place in the world of happenings for the functions of the mind. On the contrary, Marx vigorously opposed the misleading half-heartedness and the metaphysical spurious enlightenment of so-called naturalism—as we see, in especial, in the *Theses on Feuerbach*. He always insisted that, not lifeless things, but living men are the sustainers of the evolutionary process.

Those who advocated the materialist interpretation of history never denied the influence of the mind, never ignored the power of ideas, never under-estimated the importance of the mental or spiritual factor in the course of history. On the contrary, when recognizing that history is made by human beings, they recognized in these human beings the importance of all human attributes, including, therefore, mind, intelligence, consciousness, and ideas. What they were up in arms against was the notion that the phenomena of a purely mental world, as set apart by German ideologists in the form of an "absolute idea," a "moral ego," or something of the kind, should be regarded primarily and abstractly as the essential factor of historical evolution. In their view, neither, the idea nor matter was "in the beginning." For them, all life was an inseparable and eternally mobile interweaving and mutual conditioning of force and matter, combined into an integral unity. And the human being who constituted the core of this living whole was for them a social human being, one who had countless interrelations with his fellows.

For the socialists of the days before Marx, socialism was not an evolutionary product, was not the outcome of a historico-dialectical process, but was the

realization of an ethical demand, was something that had an aesthetic, a humanitarian, a philanthropic aim, was a scheme constructed in some one's brain. As starting-point for their socialism they needed an ethic, a philosophy, a philanthropy, a psychology, or an aesthetic; but they did not need history, did not need any specific way of contemplating history. For them it was enough to know that there was poverty, and that poverty was due to exploitation. For them, therefore, the theory of political economy as stated by Ricardo was amply sufficient. Ricardo showed that capitalism is based upon exploitation, and consequently upon injustice. With shrewd insight, he already perceived in the capitalist system the potential elements of serious conflicts, and he even looked forward to the ultimate collapse of the system. Nevertheless, he did not dream of trying to do away with that system. Still farther from his sphere of thought was the assumption that the abolition of capitalism would occur as the outcome of an internal and inevitable economic development acting in conjunction with the class struggle.

To Marx the problem presented itself in a very different way. The materialist interpretation of history showed that the forms of society and the State, social institutions, human behaviour and human ideas, as these manifest themselves in the structural environment characteristic of a particular epoch, are dependent upon the economic relations peculiar to that epoch, and find therein the conditions of their realization. It was therefore incumbent on Marx to show that socialism was a logical outcome of socio-economic development. For this purpose, he had to study economics, the economics of his own day, the economics of industrial capitalism, in whose womb socialism was developing. His inquiries must be directed to discovering whether, out of the evolution of capitalism, there would organically and necessarily arise the economic basis and therewith the necessary conditions which would make the existence of socialism possible, indeed inevitable. He must reconstitute socialism by means of history and economics; must replace ethico-aesthetic socialism by historico-economic socialism.

## **Chapter 08: Achievement, Part 3**

### **Das Kapital**

The *Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* was published in 1859, the year in which Darwin's *Origin of Species* first appeared. It was only a prelude to the great work which Marx had had on the stocks for years, and whose final elaboration he was continually postponing. In the preface to the *Kritik*, he writes: "I regard the system of bourgeois economics in this succession: capital, landed property, wage labour; State, foreign trade, world market. Under the first three heads I study the economic vital conditions of the three great classes into which modern civil society is separated; the interconnexion of the three other heads is obvious. ... The whole material lies before me in the form of monographs which I penned at widely separated periods for the clarification of my own ideas, not for the press. Circumstances have prevented my elaborating them into a connected whole in accordance with the original plan."

When the *Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* had been published, the author, examining his own work, speedily became aware that the method of presentation could be improved, and he therefore decided to incorporate the contents of the *Kritik*, after due elaboration, in his new work *Das Kapital*. Thus the *Critique* forms the first section of *Capital*. Here, however, we have not a mere repetition, for the contents have been thoroughly reconsidered. In the preface to the first edition of *Capital*, Marx writes: "As far as the nature of the subject matter rendered it possible, many points that were merely alluded to in the earlier work have been more comprehensively

treated in the present one, whereas certain matters treated in detail there find no more than cursory mention here.”

The labours on the preparation of *Capital* had gone forward very slowly. The vast abundance of the material concerning the history of political economy which Marx had at his disposal in the British Museum Reading Room had been a hindrance rather than a help. Frequent interruptions by illness had occurred. His titanic activities on behalf of the International had taken up much of his time. Then there had been the endless money troubles, with all the vexation and waste of time they involved, to interfere with the maintenance of a frame of mind suitable for study and literary composition. Writing to Kugelmann in November 1864, Marx said: “I believe that next year, at last, my work on *Capital* (sixty sheets) will be ready for the press.” He was mistaken. In a letter to Engels, eight months later, we read: “As regards my work, I will tell you how things really are. There are still three chapters to write, in order to make the theoretical part (the first three books) ready. Then there is still the fourth book to write, the historical and literary one, which will be for me, comparatively speaking, the easiest part, since all the main problems have been solved in the first three books, so that this last one is more of the nature of a recapitulation in a historical form. But I cannot make up my mind to part with any of it until I have the whole in my hands. Whatever defects they may have, it is the merit of my writings that they form an artistic whole, and that is only attainable through my method of never sending them to press until they are completed.”

By January 1, 1866, Marx had got so far on with the work that he was able to begin making a fair copy. He felt that he must “finish it off quickly, for the thing has become a perfect nightmare to me.” On January 15th, he wrote to Kugelmann: “As regards my book, I am now spending twelve hours a day making a fair copy. I expect to bring the manuscript myself to Hamburg in March, and shall then have a chance of seeing you.” On February 13th, he wrote to Engels: “As regards the ‘damned book,’ this is how the matter stands. It was finished in the end of December. The discussion of land-rent alone, the penultimate chapter, forms, in the present drafting, one book. I went to the Museum in the daytime, and wrote at night.” Thus also had the whole year of 1866 been spent, in hard and uninterrupted work, notwithstanding money troubles, boils, and quarrels in the International. He could not finish the job to his satisfaction. As early as August 1865, Engels had written: “The day the manuscript goes to press, I shall get gloriously drunk!” But he had to wait, to go on waiting, for the birth was a difficult one, almost a torment.

At length, in March 1867, came the long desired day. “I had made up my mind,” wrote Marx to his friend, “that you should not hear from me again until I could announce to you that my book was ready, as it now is.” To which Engels rejoined with a shout of delight: “Hurrah! I could not repress this exclamation when at length I read in black and white that the first volume is ready, and that you are about to start for Hamburg with it.”

Yet there were difficulties about this voyage to Hamburg in order to hand over the manuscript to the publisher, Otto Meissner. It was not only that Marx was once more suffering from boils; he was short of money. “I must first of all,” he wrote to Engels, “get my clothes and watch out of pawn. Nor can I leave my family in their present need, for they have not a penny, and our creditors are daily becoming more vociferous.” As usual, Engels came to his aid: “That sinews of war may not be lacking, I am sending you seven five-pound notes, £35 in all. ... I hope the carbuncles are pretty well by now, and that the journey will set you up once more altogether.” With the manuscript and money, and free from illness, Marx was able at long last to set

out.

On April 12th he reached Hamburg, went to see Meissner (“a good chap, with a Saxon accent”), and was able, “after a brief discussion, to arrange everything.” It was agreed that the type-setting should be begun at once, Marx expressing his readiness to correct the proofs while still in Germany: “We clinked glasses, and he declared himself ‘delighted’ to have made my esteemed acquaintance.” From Hamburg, Marx went to Hanover, being hospitably received there by Kugelmann, a noted gynaecologist, “a splendid, self-sacrificing, and thoroughly convinced” man. Marx stayed with Kugelmann until the end of May.

Here he received from Engels a letter from which valuable conclusions may be drawn. The writer pours out his heart concerning the troubles he has had about Marx during all these years. The torments and birth-throes which the book had caused, had, towards the last, reached the verge of the intolerable. “It has always seemed to me as if this damned book at which you have been toiling so long was the root cause of your troubles, and that you never would or could get over them until the incubus was shaken off. This eternally unfinished job crushed you to the earth bodily, mentally, and financially; and I can perfectly well understand that, having shaken off the nightmare, you feel quite another being, especially since the world, now that you are coming into contact with it again, looks to you a less melancholy place than of yore.”

Marx, ever curt and repressed where matters of feeling were concerned, was content to answer: “Without you I should never have been able to bring the work to an end, and I assure you that it has always been a heavy load on my conscience that mainly on my account you should have had to waste your splendid energies and allow them to rust in a commercial career, and, over and above this, have had to share all my petty miseries.”

On August 16, 1867, when the proof of the last of the forty-nine sheets had been corrected, Marx drew a breath of relief, and, at two o'clock in the morning, sat down to write to his friend in Manchester a few cordial words: “I have you, and you alone, to thank that this was possible. Without your self-sacrifice on my behalf, I could not possibly have undertaken the tremendous labour necessary for the three volumes. I embrace you, full of thanks.”

Marx had every reason, both for the sigh of relief, and for expressing his gratitude to Engels. For, while what he wrote to Kugelmann is probably true, that never was any work brought into being under such difficult conditions as *Capital*; it is equally true that never, under the most difficult conditions, did a friendship show itself more genuine, deeper, and more devoted, than the friendship of Engels for Marx.

### **First Volume**

The full title of the book is *Capital, A Criticism of Political Economy*. This implies that it was planned as an investigation, as an analysis, in the field of social science. “The subject of study in the present work,” says Marx in the preface, “is the capitalist method of production, and the relations of production and exchange appropriate to that method.” The second volume would deal with the process of the circulation of capital, and with the various forms assumed by capital in the course of its development; the concluding volume, the third, would be concerned with the history of capitalist theory. Thus the general topic of the whole work was to be capitalism.

When we speak of capitalism, we are referring to the epoch of economic history and social evolution in which the whole of life has become predominantly economic life, and in which all things, ideas, and feelings have been transformed into commodities. The analysis of the capitalist economic system must therefore begin with an analysis of the commodity. Since in Marx's day England was the classical land of capitalism, it was from that country that he took all the examples he used to illustrate his theory. But "the land which is more developed industrially shows to the land which is less developed nothing but the picture of what will be the latter's future." In Germany, the capitalist method of production did not ripen "until its antagonistic character had already manifested itself noisily in France and England by struggles that had become historical."

*Capital* begins by telling us that "the wealth of societies in which the capitalist method of production prevails, takes the form of 'an immense accumulation of commodities,' wherein individual commodities are the elementary units. Our investigation must therefore begin with an analysis of the commodity."

A commodity is something possessed of qualities which enable it to satisfy human wants, and something which, before it passes into consumption in order to satisfy these wants, has been subjected to an exchange. It is therefore made with an eye to exchange. It has already come into existence in pre-capitalist epochs. What characterizes the capitalist world is the exclusive predominance of a commodity economy.

In order to be capable of being exchanged in the market, the commodity must have an exchange-value. This exchange-value has a specific quantity, in contradistinction to use-value, which is one of the natural qualities of the commodity, determines its capacity for use, and manifests itself as a quality. Political economy is solely concerned with exchange-value. This latter expresses the social relation in which commodities stand one to another, and it is measured by the amount of average social labour which is represented in the commodity. The measure of the labour is the labour time, conceived as average social labour time independent of individual and exceptional circumstances.

In practice, no absolute determination of the exchange-value manifested in a commodity is possible. For the needs of economic life, a relative determination by comparison suffices. In early days, two different commodities presenting themselves in the market are compared one with another as regards exchange-value on the basis of an estimate of the labour time which experience has shown to be necessary to produce one and the other. In due course, however, all the commodities in the market come to have their values expressed in terms of one particular commodity, which is used permanently as the measure of value. This commodity, which ultimately serves all other commodities for the drawing of conclusions as to their normal worth, is termed money. A minted coin functions as a symbol for a fixed number of hours of social labour, in which the value of every commodity is reflected. Value, originating in the process of production, appears in the money form as price, differing a little from time to time owing to the oscillations of the market.

The commodity enters the market labelled with a price. Its material individuality and quality form only the stimulus to exchange. With the social estimate of their value, commodities have no concern whatever. The commodity has become an abstraction. Once it has left the hand of the producer and has forfeited its peculiarity as a real object, it has ceased to be a product and to be controlled by man. It has acquired a "ghostly objectivity," and leads a life peculiar to itself. "At the first glance, a commodity seems a commonplace sort of thing, one easily understood. Analysis

shows, however, that it is a very queer thing indeed, full of metaphysical subtleties and theological whimsies." Cut adrift from the will of man, it ranges itself in mysterious ranks, acquires or renounces capacity for exchange, acts in accordance with laws of its own as player upon a phantom stage. In the market reports, cotton "rises," copper "falls," maize is "lively," coal is "slack," wheat is "jumpy," and mineral oil "shows tendencies." The things have acquired an independent life, and exhibit human gestures. Human beings, meanwhile, subordinate themselves to the things, allow the things to dictate human actions, become servants of the world of commodities. The commodity, though made by human hands, has become an idol, a fetish, which holds sway over its human makers. Marx speaks of the fetishistic character attaching to commodities. "This fetishistic character of the world of commodities is the outcome of the peculiar social quality of the labour which produces commodities. ... It is only the specific social relation between men which here assumes the phantasmagorical form of a relation between things."

The fetishistic character likewise influences the whole atmosphere of capitalist economy. The fixing of prices, competition, the course of the market, the value of money, and so on, constitute mysterious phenomena in the world of commodities, phenomena which the capitalist regards with the same uncomprehending impotence as that with which the savage in the African forests regards the caprices of an idol. Money, in especial, "the reflexion of the relations of all other commodities clinging to one single commodity," acquires dominion over men, exercising the tyrannical power of a demon, usurping authority over social and economic life. Money becomes a god.

Money is exchanged for commodities of equal value. Men, too, can be bought for money. Nay more, money is able to buy parts of human beings, able to recruit the manifestation of human vital functions. Thus it is that, for instance, human labour power appears in the market and offers itself for sale as a commodity. The owner of this commodity labour power is a human being who has, besides labour power, a stomach, and he must from time to time put food into his stomach unless he is to die of hunger. In order to acquire the things with which he can satisfy his hunger, in order to cover his nakedness, in order to keep himself alive, he must, wherever a commodity economy prevails, have money, for none of the necessities of life are purchasable as commodities except for money. Consequently, as his only possible means of self-preservation, he must sell his labour power.

The buyer of the commodity labour power, acting in accordance with the customary regulations of exchange, pays a price which corresponds more or less to its value. This value, like all exchanges-values, is determined by the average cost of production at the time and place where the commodity is sold. The average cost of production of labour power depends upon the expenditure upon food, clothing, shelter, etc., requisite to produce human labour power day by day and to keep it in a fit condition. That is what determines the price of labour power, and the price of labour power is what we call wages.

If there are persons who own nothing but their labour power, and have no other means of livelihood than what they receive for the sale of their labour power, this is an outcome of historical evolution, as is vividly set forth in the *Communist Manifesto*. Such persons make their first appearance as a social category in the capitalist era. They are known as proletarians.

The proletarian is a free man. No longer tied to the soil as in the days of feudal serfdom, not restricted by any prescriptions of station or conventions of origin, freed from all the ties of the guilds, he is his own master, can freely dispose of his own person, his labour power, his skill.

But if he does not succeed in selling his labour power as a commodity, he has only one option, to starve. He is blessed with the gift of freedom; but, should he try to use that freedom for any other purpose than to sell his labour power, he is condemned to irretrievable starvation.

Inasmuch as labour power attaches to man as a quality inseparable from the individual, since it cannot be isolated from him, or utilized apart from him, the man as a whole, having sold his labour power, passes into the possession of the purchaser. Not, of course, with his stomach, his hunger and thirst, his need for rest, his individual wishes and claims, but only in respect of his labour power. For the purchaser, he is not a human being with a soul, feelings, individuality, happiness and unhappiness; he is not God's image or the crown of creation; he is not even of like kind with the purchaser. For the purchaser, the man who has sold him labour power is nothing but labour power; nothing but arms, hands, fingers, capable of work; nothing but muscles, eyes, voice; nothing but capacity for labour, faculty for production.

The owner of money, who has bought labour power, becomes the effective owner of the labour power as soon as, in virtue of the process of production, he has been able to detach it from the worker. By placing the worker in a factory or workshop, and by setting the man to work there upon iron, wood, clay, yarn, or what you will, in such a way that commodities are produced, the owner effects the liberation of labour power from the worker and its crystallization as commodity value. The labour power has been absorbed by the raw material, has been consumed, and reappears in conjunction with the raw material as a commodity.

In the course of the labour process, thanks to the continued expenditure of labour power on raw material, there comes into existence a quantity of commodity value which ere long is equal to the quantity of money value which the supplier of labour power receives as the price of his labour power in the form of wages. There comes a moment when the owner of labour power and the owner of money are quits. It would seem obvious, on the face of it, that at this point, when service and equivalent balance one another, their relation must be broken off.

Nevertheless, the owner of money, the buyer of the commodity labour power, is a capitalist. He is using his money in order to increase it in amount. He wants to get more out of the productive process than he has put into it. Money must breed money. The money which, when thus set in motion, has the quality of promoting its own increase, is known as capital.

If he is to gain his end, the capitalist must invest his money in two different ways. First of all he has to provide the material requisites of production, must spend money on the purchase of raw materials, machinery, tools, the erection and equipment of workshops, and so on. Money invested in these things has not the power of spontaneous growth, and is therefore termed constant capital.

If production is to begin, human labour power must come into contact with constant capital. The capitalist buys labour power in the labour market, investing therein part of his capital. Thereupon labour power, brought into contact with raw materials, machinery, tools, etc., develops the mysterious capacity for expending itself in such a way that in the process of its own consumption it reproduces its own value. But it can do more than this, can produce value over and above. Inasmuch as the quantity of capital invested in labour power varies thus in amount, it is known as variable capital.

The capitalist is not content that labour power should create only as much commodity value as corresponds to the amount of capital value invested in wages. He

wants a surplus. In order to get this, he compels the worker to go on expending labour power for a longer time than is necessary to pay back the wages. He prolongs the process of creating value into a period when it effects the enhancement of value. Thus the surplus is added to the equivalent for wages. Surplus labour time provides surplus value. Surplus value has come into existence. Capital has attained its end.

If the worker were fully aware of the nature of this process, he would perhaps put himself in a posture of defence against the capitalist when he reaches the point at which the production of surplus value begins, for he would feel that at this point the capitalist has begun to overreach him. Being a seller of a commodity, who wishes to exchange his commodity for an equivalent, he would see that at this point he is being forced into the position of a debtor who has to pay back value received with interest superadded. Since more is being demanded from him than he has been given, he will, in so far as he understands the process, regard the exchange as an unjust one, and recognize that he is being exploited.

But if he were to enter a protest, his protest would be of little avail. Wherever he may turn, he will find himself faced by capitalists who will only buy his commodity, labour power, on similar terms. In the capitalist world, labour power is only saleable upon such conditions. If the worker does not like the conditions, and will not accept them, he must refrain from the sale of his labour power. There is no constraint. He is not forced to sell it. Except for this—that if he does not sell it, he must starve! To avoid starvation, therefore, he takes the only other option, and accepts the conditions. His course of action is dictated by the circumstance that he is under the yoke of a particular commodity; is subject to the laws regulating the sale of his own commodity, labour power; is a slave to its fetishistic character.

Besides, the worker is in truth making a mistake when he believes himself to be cheated and overreached by the capitalist. The capitalist has honestly paid him the full value of his commodity, labour power. The capitalist did not decide the value of labour power. That value was determined by the cost of producing labour power as a commodity, with the result that the price of labour power in the labour market, the price which the capitalist pays as wages, corresponds, on the average, to the value of the labour power. The wages paid the worker by the capitalist for a day's work enable the worker and his family to live for a whole day. In return for these wages, the worker must place himself at the capitalist's disposal in the process of production for a whole working day.

If, in the course of the labour process, it becomes apparent that the worker is able, by his activities, to repay his wages (in the form of commodity values) in a shorter time than a whole working day, this phenomenon is the outcome of the peculiar character of the commodity, labour power. That commodity, like all other commodities, is capable of being consumed; but it differs from all other commodities in this respect, that, in the course of being consumed, it creates more value than it itself represents. Not only does it reproduce its own value, but creates surplus value in addition.

Marx was not the original discoverer of this peculiar faculty in the commodity, labour power. Observation and experience had disclosed the wonder centuries before. At a certain stage in the development of productive technique, labour becomes competent to produce a surplus beyond what is required for the consumption of the worker. As soon as this stage was reached, there was a motive for the deliberate utilization of labour power in order to produce a surplus; and, ultimately, the desire to obtain this surplus became the urge and the precondition for the inauguration of the capitalist system. The capitalist turned to account, and still turns to account, the



peculiar characteristic of the commodity, labour power. He monopolizes its advantages. Capitalist production means production in order to secure surplus value. The primary and proper function of production, namely to supply human beings with the necessaries and the amenities of life, has passed into the background. "Capital, therefore, is not only what Adam Smith calls it, the command over labour. Fundamentally, it is the command of unpaid labour. All surplus value, whatever the form into which it may subsequently become crystallized—as profit, land-rent, interest, etc.—is, substantially, the materialization of unpaid labour time. The secret of the self-expansion of capital finds its explanation in this, that capital has at its disposal a definite quantity of other people's unpaid labour."

As compared with the worker, the capitalist is in the fortunate position of being stronger. Inasmuch as the worker is compelled, under the menace of starvation, to sell his labour power, the capitalist can impose the condition that he will only buy on terms advantageous to himself. The capitalist is able to gain surplus value because he is in a superior economic position. Thus the problem of the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist cannot be fought out in a hand-to-hand struggle between the one and the other. It is not a personal matter at all, and exploitation is not the outcome of the injustice of any particular capitalist. The problem is a social one, dependent upon the peculiarities of the capitalist system as a whole. The question of exploitation, therefore, is not a question of morality, or justice, or humanity; it is simply and solely a question of power, and here, indeed, a question of compulsion. The capitalist, like the worker, is subject to the compulsion of the capitalist system.

The superior power wielded by the capitalist finds expression, first of all, in the length of the working day. The more the working day is prolonged after the period at which the creation of the value of the labour power has come to an end, the longer will be the period during which capital is being increased, the greater will be the surplus labour and the surplus value. This surplus value becomes fluid as soon as the newly created commodity is sold in the market. It then returns into the capitalist's pocket in the money form, and is known as profit.

But the working day has a natural limit, since a human being's capacity for suffering exploitation has a limit. Even though it may be the capitalist's ideal to keep the worker employed for twenty-four hours every day, it is not to his interest to wear out the worker prematurely, and thus to deprive himself of the requisite further supply of labour power. Consequently, the working day must be sufficiently short to enable the worker to recuperate his forces during the hours of leisure, and to bring up children until they shall become likewise fit for labour. Surplus value produced by means of prolongation of the working day is termed absolute surplus value. Its production constitutes the general foundation of the capitalist system.

Whereas, however, the length of the working day has limits, the capitalist's hunger for surplus value is unlimited; and even if the prolongation of the working day cannot be effected directly, it can be effected indirectly. "In order to increase the period of surplus labour, the period of necessary labour is shortened by means which enable the equivalent of the wage of labour to be produced in a shorter time. ... The production of relative surplus value revolutionizes out and out the technical processes of labour and the way in which society is subdivided into groups." With every improvement in tools and machinery, and with increasing efficiency in the organization of the work of production, the capitalist is given new possibilities of indirectly lengthening the working day, and thus indirectly increasing surplus value.

When the evolution of production has attained a certain level, the increase of surplus value becomes a purely technical problem. The interest of the capitalist class

in the advance of science, research, and technique; capitalist enthusiasm for discoveries, inventions, and the triumph of human genius—disclose themselves, in the last analysis, as expressions of satisfaction at the appearance of new possibilities of indirectly increasing the rate of surplus value and the sum total of profit.

Thus it is a persistent trend of capitalist development to bring about a relative increase in constant capital and a relative decrease in variable capital. But this change in the internal composition of capital has disastrous results. Inasmuch as profit is created by variable capital alone, a persistent fall in the rate of profit is an inevitable consequence. The rate of exploitation of labour increases, the total number of workers increases, the absolute mass of surplus value increases. “These are not mere possibilities; they are (apart from transient oscillations) inevitable upon the basis of capitalist production.” None the less, with each advance in technique, the relative rate of profit falls; the business of exploitation becomes, for the capitalist, continually a less profitable one in relation to the total outlay. Thus we have the absurd result that, the greater the absolute outlay, the less the relative yield. In this way capital gradually cuts off its own sources of supply. It increases by gnawing at its own roots. It perishes more hopelessly at these roots, the more luxuriantly it is flourishing above ground.

As an outcome of these inherent contradictions, capitalism must inevitably perish. A point must infallibly be reached at which the total quantity of profit at the lowered rate will be required for the accumulation of constant capital, and a point therefore at which production will have ceased to pay the capitalist. The point will have been reached at which capital will have become an absurdity because it will no longer provide profit for the capitalists. Marx says: “The capitalist method of production encounters a limit in the development of the forces of production, a limit which has nothing to do with the production of wealth as such; and this peculiar limit bears witness to the fleeting character of the capitalist method of production.”

The endeavour to increase the productivity of human labour is a necessary sequel to the existence of relative surplus value.

“By an increase in the productivity of labour, we mean a change in the labour process whereby the quantity of social labour time necessary for the production of a commodity is diminished, so that a smaller quantity of labour power becomes enabled to produce a greater quantity of use-value.”

The capitalist method of production begins with co-operation. “Alike historically and conceptually, the starting-point of capitalist production is where a large number of workers are aggregated at one time and in one place (or, if you like, upon the same field of labour), under the command of one capitalist, for the production of one and the same kind of commodity.” Each member of the co-operation is a fully adequate and independent producer. The whole labour process is effected by each member individually. It might seem, then, as if cooperation were nothing more than the simple addition of individual labour functions. But this is not the case. “Just as the offensive power of a squadron of cavalry or the defensive power of a regiment of infantry is very different from the sum of the powers for offence and defence which the individual cavalryman or infantryman can develop in isolation, so is the sum of the mechanical energies which unassociated workers can develop very different from the social potential which comes into being when many hands are simultaneously engaged upon the same undivided operation.” What has happened is, not merely that a new productive power, the power of a mass, has come into operation, but also that the productive power of the individual member of the co-operation has been intensified. For, “apart from the new energy created by the fusion of many energies into one

united energy, it usually happens in productive work that the very existence of social contact arouses emulation and induces a certain stimulation of the animal spirits, whereby the efficiency of each individual worker is promoted; with the result that a working day of 144 hours comprising the conjoint 12-hour working days of a dozen persons who co-operate, yields a much larger aggregate product than the total product of 12 workers each of whom works 12 hours in isolation, or than the total product of a solitary worker who works for a total of 144 hours during 12 days in succession. The reason is that man is by nature, if not (as Aristotle says) a political animal, at any rate a social one. ... When a worker co-operates systematically with other workers, he transcends his individual limitations and develops the capabilities that belong to him as member of a species.

Co-operation speedily involves the necessity for guidance. The capitalist assumes this function of guidance. In course of time, his command in the field of production becomes as indispensable as the command of the general in the battlefield. "Capitalist guidance and control do not present themselves exclusively as a function arising out of the very nature of the social labour process and appertaining to that process; they present themselves also as a function whose purpose it is to exploit a social labour process, one that is the outcome of the inevitable antagonism between the exploiter and the living raw material he exploits. ... The capitalist is not a capitalist because he is a commander of industry; he becomes a commander of industry because he is a capitalist. Command in industry is an attribute of capital; just as, in the days of feudalism, command in war and a seat on the judges' bench were attributes of landed property."

So far, simple co-operation. The next step in the development of the forms of production leads to a cleavage of the process of production, which has hitherto been unified in the hands of the individual worker. The division of labour ensues. Manufacture originates—manufacture in the original sense of that term, as it was used before the days of power-driven machinery and large-scale production.

In some forms of manufacture, the workers who complete a product from start to finish are all assembled in one work place under the command of one capitalist, but are organized in groups each of which is engaged upon a particular phase of the elaboration. In other forms of manufacture, the workers who are united under the command of a single capitalist carry out only one or only some of the stages in the elaboration of a completed product. In either case, manufacture is a method of production in which the worker has ceased to be one who completes a whole commodity from start to finish. The handicraftsman has become a detail worker, one who is perpetually repeating a partial operation in the labour process.

The pauses that used to occur while the handicraftsman was changing from the use of one tool to the use of another have been discontinued. The pores in the labour day have been filled out with productive labour power. The process of production has been compacted, has been intensified, has been made more productive.

The detail worker is confined to the performance of a partial operation. There-with he acquires the utmost dexterity in the handling of his tool. The perpetual repetition of the same narrow function develops his skill in the performance of that function to the highest degree.

Experience gained in the performance of each detail operation gives pointers for the perfection of the tools used in its performance. The intensification of manual dexterity leads to the extremest possible differentiation of the instruments of labour. "The manufacturing period simplifies, improves, and multiplies the implements of labour by adapting them to the exclusive and peculiar functions of the detail worker."

The next step is the combination of tools, the combination of the technical aids to labour, for the purpose of speedier and more purposive functioning. Therein we find the material presuppositions for the origination of the machine. Whereas the specific machinery of the manufacturing period is the generalized worker who is a combination of a number of detail workers, is an added and multiplied human being; the machinery of the subsequent period is a highly elaborated and purposive combination of tools, a putting together of mechanical apparatus and instruments designed to carry on a unified productive function, a worker of steel and iron. Whereas the manufacturing system proper culminates as "an economic artifice" upon the broad basis of urban handicraft and rural home industry, the machine does away with handicraft "as the regulative principle of social production."

With the entry of machinery into the field, capitalist development begins its victorious career. The industrial revolution is inaugurated.

The worker manipulating an isolated tool is replaced by a mechanism representing a mass of workers. His incompleteness, which consists, above all, in his incapacity for the incessant repetition of precisely similar movements, is made good by the perfectionment of a mechanical apparatus which, driven by natural forces, is able to repeat a particular movement millions upon millions of times with a precision far exceeding the limits of human capacity. "A system of machinery (whether, like weaving, it be one in which there is a mere co-operation among working machines of the same kind; or, like spinning, a combination of machines of different kinds) becomes a huge automaton as soon as it is driven by a self-acting prime motor. ... An organized system of working machines which are one and all set in motion by the transmitting mechanism from a central automaton, constitutes the fully developed form of machinofacture. In place of the individual machine, we now have a mechanical monster whose body fills the whole factory, and whose demon power, hidden from our sight at first because of the measured and almost ceremonious character of the movement of his giant limbs, discloses itself at length in the vast and furious whirl of his numberless working organs."

One industry after another is revolutionized. At length large-scale industry gains control over its own characteristic means of production, the machine, and produces machinery by machinery. The forces of steam are superadded, lifting machinery into the sphere of cyclopean wonders. "The mechanical lathe is a titanic reproduction of the ordinary foot-lathe; the planing machine is an iron carpenter who works upon iron with the same tool used by the living carpenter when he planes wood; the implement which cuts veneers in the London shipbuilding yards is a gigantic razor; the tool of the shearing machine, which cuts iron as easily as a tailor cuts cloth with his shears, is an enormous pair of scissors; and the steamhammer works with a head just like that of an ordinary hammer, but such a heavy one that Thor himself could not wield it."

As a highly elaborated tool which has become independent of the worker, the machine enters into competition with the worker. The instrument of labour, enormously excelling the worker in its power of production, lays the worker low. The worker, who was formerly lord and master of the tool obedient to his hand, now becomes a servant of the machine, its appendage, a screw, a crank, in its mechanism. It makes him superfluous, forces down his value, becomes the most powerful of weapons for the repression of the periodical labour revolts against the autocracy of capital. By making quick returns on the capital invested in it essential to the capitalist, machinery enforces a prolongation of the working day. At the same time, thanks to improved construction and accelerated work, machinery becomes an objectified

and systematically utilized means of extorting more labour in a given period of time—a means, that is to say, for the progressive intensification of labour. “In so far as machinery does away with the need for any considerable expenditure of muscular power, it becomes a means for the utilization of workers with comparatively little strength, and those whose bodily growth is immature but whose limbs are all the more supple. The labour of women and children was, therefore, the first word in the capitalist utilization of machinery. ... In former days, the worker used to sell his own labour power, being ostensibly, in this respect, a free person. Now he sells his wife and his children. He becomes a slavetrader.”

All the advantages of machinery accrue to the capitalist. In a shorter time, and at less expenditure of labour power, he obtains a larger quantity of commodities, and therewith a larger quantity of surplus value. Furthermore, with the aid of machinery and large-scale industry, he is continually destroying manufacture, handicraft, and home work, thus securing new markets, and forcing his way into an increasingly large number of branches of production. Thus he secures a progressively increasing share in the totality of production, and ultimately becomes the lord of the commodity market. “The revolution in the social methods of carrying on industry, a revolution which necessarily follows upon the revolution in the means of production, expresses itself in a medley of transitional forms.” Factory legislation has to intervene for the regulation of the activities of labour. But “the compulsory regulation of the working day in respect of its length, its pauses, the hours at which it begins and ends, the system of relays for children, the prohibition of the employment of children below a certain age, and so on—necessitates, on the one hand, an increased use of machinery and the replacement of human muscles by steam-power as a motive force. On the other hand, in order to gain in space what has been lost in time, there occurs an extension in the domain of the jointly used means of production, the furnaces, the buildings, etc. In a word, there ensues a greater concentration of the means of production, and a correspondingly greater aggregation of workpeople.”

In the domain of agriculture, likewise, machinery has a revolutionary influence, inasmuch as it destroys the bulwark of the old society, the peasant, and substitutes for him the wage worker. The countryside is assimilated to the town; traditions are swept away by reforms; lazy adhesion to irrational customary methods is replaced by the purposive technological application of science. “In agriculture, as in manufacture, the capitalist transformation of the process of production signifies, at the same time, the martyrdom of the producer; the instrument of labour becomes the means of subjugating, exploiting, and impoverishing the worker; the social combination and organization of the labour process, functions as an elaborate method for crushing the worker’s individual vitality, freedom, and independence.”

In his *Principles of Political Economy*, John Stuart Mill writes: “It is questionable, if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day’s toil of any human being.” There is no question, however, about this, that the technical inventions incorporated in machinery have transformed the process of production into a perennial source of wealth, and have made the capitalist the sole beneficiary of this wealth.

Capital produces profit. That is its purpose; that is its function. But profit is competent, in its turn, to produce capital. This closes the circle, and the circulation begins afresh.

The process which effects this is called, at first reproduction, and subsequently accumulation.

Simple reproduction is a mere repetition of the process of production upon the same footing. The worker receives as wages no longer, as at the outset of the process of production, a sum advanced by the capitalist, but part of the value he has himself created. He himself has reproduced the requisite variable capital. The remainder of the value, namely the profit, accrues to the capitalist, who consumes it. In these circumstances, under these conditions, production is repeated over and over again upon the existent foundation.

The worker, however, produces not merely his wages, but also himself. Inasmuch as he eats, drinks, and sleeps, he sees to it that his labour power shall be replaced from day to day, shall reappear in the labour market day after day. For the reproduction of capital it is indispensable that labour power should be continually renewed, should be eternalized. From the outlook of the process of reproduction, everything which the worker does for his own maintenance and for the maintenance of his class is reproduction.

If, however, production is to do something more than mark time, if it is to be an advance, if it is to be an evolution, constant capital must be reproduced as well as variable capital and labour power. Simple reproduction must develop into accumulation.

By accumulation is meant the retransformation of part of the acquired surplus value into capital, so that an expansion of the primary basis of production may occur. "At present we are disregarding whatever portion of the surplus value is consumed by the capitalist. Nor, for the moment, are we interested in the question whether the additional capital is tacked on to the original capital, or is applied separately to an independent process of expansion. It does not matter to us whether the capitalist who has accumulated it makes use of it, or whether he hands it over to others. What we have to bear in mind is that, side by side with the newly formed implements of capital, the original capital continues to reproduce itself and to produce surplus value; and that the same is true of every portion of accumulated capital in relation to the additional capital it engenders."

Just as simple reproduction is continually reproducing the capital relation, so accumulation is continually reproducing this capital relation upon an extended scale; more capitalists or greater capitalists at one pole, more wage workers at the other. The accumulation of capital involves an increase in the proletariat.

In the general course of accumulation, a point is reached at which the development of the productivity of associated labour becomes the most powerful lever of accumulation. The organic composition of capital is revolutionized. Constant capital increases at the expense of variable capital, for it is the aim and the result of machinery to make human hands superfluous. Thanks to the increasing productivity of labour, the quantity of the means of production grows more quickly than the quantity of labour power incorporated in them. The need for labour power lags farther and farther behind the advance of accumulation. "The continual retransformation of surplus value into capital displays itself as a steady growth of the capital engaged in the process of production. This, in turn, becomes the foundation of an increase in the scale of production, and of the accompanying methods of increasing the productivity of labour and of bringing about an accelerated production of surplus value. If, therefore, a certain amount of accumulation manifests itself to be a necessary condition of the specifically capitalist method of production, the latter conversely causes an accelerated accumulation of capital. A specifically capitalist method of production therefore develops as the accumulation of capital develops; and the accumulation of capital develops as the specifically capitalist method of production develops. Both these

economic factors, in virtue of their reciprocal relationships, furnish the impetus for that change in the technical composition of capital thanks to which the variable constituent grows continually smaller in comparison with the constant.”

This process has several consequences. The first of these is the concentration of capital. Since every accumulation becomes the means for new accumulation, accumulation, as it increases the quantity of wealth functioning as capital, increases its concentration in the hands of individual capitalists. The authority of capital over labour becomes condensed in nodal points, which undergo enormous enlargement. “At the same time, portions break away from the original capitals.” These new formations tend to interfere with the growth and the dominion of the old capitals. But the tendency towards disintegration is counteracted by a tendency towards integration. Thanks to mutual attraction, already constituted capitals undergo concentration into a higher form; their individual independence is abrogated; lesser capitalists are expropriated by greater capitalists, many small capitals are transformed into a few great capitals. “Capital aggregates into great masses in one hand because, elsewhere, it is taken out of many hands. Here we have genuine centralization in contradistinction to accumulation and concentration.”

Competition is the motive force which determines all these movements, formations, aggregations. For the conquest of new markets, prices must be lowered, and prices can only be lowered if the productivity of labour is increased by perfected technique. Hence the urge towards the introduction of new machinery, more extensive plant, improved methods of production. Hence the levying of larger and ever larger aggregates of capital; the absorption of small enterprises by large ones; the development of productive foci into colossal structures and giant enterprises with the most highly elaborated technique, the best possible machinery, the most economical management.

“The lesser capitals, therefore, crowd into spheres of production which large-scale industry has not yet fully annexed, has conquered only here and there. In these fields, competition rages in direct proportion to the number and in inverse proportion to the magnitude of the competing capitals. ... With the growth of capitalist production there comes into being an entirely new power, that of the credit system. To begin with, the credit system appears furtively, as it were, in the form of a modest helper of accumulation, drawing into the hands of individual or associated capitalists the monetary resources scattered over the surface of a society, and doing this by means of invisible threads. Ere long, however, it becomes a new and formidable weapon in the competitive struggle; and in the end it manifests itself as a gigantic social mechanism for the centralization of capital. ... With the magnitude of social capital already functioning, and the degree of its increase, with the extension of the scale of production and the increase in the number of workers set in motion, with the development in the productivity of their labour, with the extended flow of all the sources of wealth, there is also an extension of the scale on which a greater attraction of workers by capital is associated with a greater repulsion of them. Therewith, there is an increasing rapidity in the change in the organic composition of capital and in its technical form; and more and more spheres of production become involved in this change, now simultaneously, and now alternately.”

In connexion therewith there arises an excess of labour power, an excess relatively to the capacity of capital for applying labour to promote its own increase; there is formed an industrial reserve army which, in this unhappy posture of affairs, stations itself outside the factory gates, undercuts wages, attacks strikers in the rear, paralyses the workers' class struggle, and (consisting of persons whose existence is

perpetually insecure, and who are always in danger of falling down into the tattered-malion proletariat) is perpetually being used by the capitalist class against the working class as a whole.

The capitalist system moves in the following circle. The anarchy of commodity production leads to competition. In the struggle of competition, the producer of the cheapest commodities wins the battle. Maximum cheapness is achieved by maximum productivity, and this is brought about by having the most efficient machinery and installations. For this, large aggregates of capital are requisite. Hence increasing accumulation upon a larger and ever larger scale. But the more extensive the machinery, the less extensive (relatively) the quantity of workers, and the smaller, therefore, the proportion of variable capital. Since, however, variable capital is the only constituent of capital which creates value, the rate of surplus value, though it may increase absolutely, is continually declining relatively. The larger, therefore, is the number of workers "set at liberty" by capital, and thus deprived of wages. Thereby, the power of purchase and of consumption is increasingly reduced in relation to the enormous quantity of commodities with which the market is flooded. If the unemployed are to be made capable of consumption, they must be given occupation in new or expanded branches of production. But for this, capital is needed, and capital can only be supplied by accumulation. To render accumulation possible, the rate of surplus value must be increased. To increase the rate of surplus value, the value of labour power must be reduced by cheapening commodities. But, in order to make commodities cheaper, productivity must be increased yet more, technique must be further improved, the installations must be yet further rationalized. For this, accumulation is indispensable. And so on, and so on. There is no issue from the vicious circle.

From time to time there ensues a pause in the mad circular dance, a pause brought about by the occurrence of an economic crisis. Purchasing power falls to a minimum. The storehouses are overfilled. The market cannot take up any more goods. The channels along which commodities ordinarily flow are blocked. No orders come to the factories. These work short time, or close down; workers are dismissed wholesale; production is discontinued; unemployment is rife, bread riots occur. After a while, the accumulated supplies are gradually used up, the storehouses slowly empty themselves, demand begins once more, there is a general stimulus to production, the crisis is overcome, things are on the up-grade, and at length production is at full swing once more. So it goes on until the next crisis begins. This cycle usually occupies about ten years. Throughout the nineteenth century, decade after decade, economic life was convulsed by these cyclical returns of glut and stagnation. Entangled in the mechanism of the system, and dominated by the mysterious fetishism of commodities (which is stronger than the human will), the bourgeoisie bows before the dictates of a necessity whose ways to it are unsearchable because the bourgeoisie itself is not merely the object and the Victim of this necessity, but also its favourer and beneficiary.

But the proletariat, burdened with all the costs, disadvantages, and terrors of the system, seeks to defend itself, and, as soon as it has learned where to place the crow-bar which will overthrow that system, it deliberately marshals its ranks for the great struggle.

When money is transformed into capital, when capital produces surplus value, and when surplus value once more becomes capital, this is a movement which occurs upon the extant basis of the capitalist method of production starting-point of that method of production?



Marx answers the question in the chapter entitled "Primary Accumulation." He writes: "In political economy this primary accumulation plays much the same part that is played by original sin in theology. The origin of sin is supposed to be explained by a folk-tale. In like manner we are told, as regards primary accumulation, that in times long past there were two sorts of people: some of them, the chosen few, were industrious, intelligent, and, above all, thrifty; the others, lazy rascals, wasted their substance in riotous living. But there is a difference. The theological legend of the Fall tells us this much, at least, why man has been condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his face. On the other hand, the economic history of the Fall reveals to us why there are persons who need do nothing of the kind. No matter! It is from this economic Fall that dates the poverty of the masses, who, for all time, however hard they may work, have nothing to sell but themselves; and thence, likewise, dates the wealth of the few, which continually grows, although the few have long since ceased to work."

Such is the legend; such the idyll. The reality is very different. In the real world, the last word lies with force.

The process which creates the capital relation is nothing other than the "divorce of the worker from ownership of the conditions of labour," a process which, on the one hand, transforms the social means of life and production into capital, and, on the other hand, transforms the immediate producers into wage workers. Primary accumulation severs the producer from the means of production. It occurs at the end of the feudal epoch, with the cessation of adscription to the soil, of serfdom, of guild coercion. The serf and the handicraftsman are freed. But simultaneously the economic ground is cut from under their feet, and they are deprived of the guarantees which the ancient feudal institutions furnished for their existence. "In the history of primary accumulation we must regard as epoch-making all revolutions that acted as stepping-stones for the capitalist class in course of formation. Above all, this applies to those moments when great masses of human beings were suddenly and forcibly torn away from the means of subsistence, and hurled into the labour market as masterless proletarians. The expropriation of the agricultural producers, the peasants, their severance from the soil, was the basis of the whole process. In different countries, the history of this expropriation assumed different forms, running through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different historical periods. Only in England can it be said to have had a typical development."

These "free" proletarians, freed by the dissolution of the companies of feudal retainers, these ex-peasants, driven off the land by forcible expropriation, are absorbed into the rising manufactures. But they are absorbed in part only, for their numbers increase more rapidly than the process of production can incorporate them into its framework. Besides, those who have thus suddenly been uprooted from their traditional surroundings find it difficult to adapt themselves with equal suddenness to the discipline of the new conditions. Many of the masterless men become beggars, vagabonds, robbers, and for a long period are the terror of western Europe. Ultimately, in accordance with a newly inaugurated and barbarous legal code, they are flogged, branded, racked, and, in the end, are handed over like beasts of burden for use in the "Houses of Terror," the manufactories and the factories.

The same economic and political evolution which brings about the formation of a landless, occupationless proletariat with no means of subsistence, favours the appearance of capitalist farmers and industrial capitalists. Unquestionably, too, guild masters, independent artisans, and even wage workers, are sometimes able, in one way or another, to become small capitalists, and, by gradually extending the scale on

which they exploit wage labour, in conjunction with a corresponding accumulation of capital, some of these become capitalists on the grand scale. "During the childhood of capitalist production, what happened was often parallel to what had happened during the childhood of the mediaeval town system, when the question which of two fugitive serfs was to become a master and which a servant was mainly decided by which had run away before the other. But the snail's pace of this method could not keep up with the needs of the new world-market which had come into existence thanks to the great discoveries at the close of the fifteenth century." As anticipatory forms of modern capital, there arose in the Middle Ages trading capital and usurers' capital. This money capital effects the opening up of the world, and discloses the sources of vast wealth. "The discoveries of gold and silver in America; the extirpation of the indigens in some instances, their enslavement or their entombment in the mines in others; the beginnings of the conquest and looting of the East Indies; the transformation of Africa into a precinct for the supply of the negroes who were the raw material of the slave trade—these were the incidents that characterized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These were the idyllic processes that formed the chief factors of primary accumulation. Hard upon their heels came the commercial war between the European nations, fought over the whole surface of the globe. It was opened when the Netherlands broke away from Spain; it assumed gigantic proportions in England's anti-Jacobin war; and it found a recent sequel in the opium wars against China."

In the annals of mankind, the history of capitalism is written in letters of blood and fire. Its development has left a broad trail of sweat, blood, and tears. W. Howitt writes: "The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and upon every people they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age of the earth." Quoting this in *Capital*, Marx adds: "The history of the colonial administration of Holland, the model capitalist nation during the seventeenth century, is, according to Thomas Stamford Raffles, sometime lieutenant-governor of Java, 'one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre, and meanness.'" Marx goes on to say: "The treatment of the aborigines was, naturally, worst of all in the plantations which were intended to serve only for export trade, such as the West Indies; and in rich and well-populated countries, such as Mexico and Hindustan, which were delivered over to plunder."

Commercial supremacy led to industrial dominance. The colonial system "was a 'strange god' who had mounted the altar cheek by jowl with the old gods of Europe, and who, one fine day, with a shove and a kick, swept them all into the dustbin." Profit-making was now proclaimed to be the final aim of mankind. The system of public credit, of national debts, developed into an instrument for the capitalist seizure and subjugation of whole territories and States. "With the wave of an enchanter's wand, the 'funds' endowed barren money with the power of reproduction, thus transforming it into capital, and this without the risk and the trouble inseparable from its investment in industrial undertakings and even from putting it out upon usury." In addition, the system of national debt "has given rise to joint-stock companies, to dealings in negotiable securities of all kinds, to stock-jobbing—in a word, to gambling on the stock exchange and to the modern bankocracy. ... The colonial system, national debt, the heavy burden of taxation, protection, commercial wars, and so on—these offspring of the manufacturing period properly so-called—grew luxuriantly during the childhood of large-scale industry. ... With the development of capitalist production in the manufacturing period, the public opinion of Europe had lost the last vestiges of shame and conscience. ... The cotton industry, while introducing child

slavery into England, gave at the same time an impetus towards the transformation of the slave system of the United States, which had hitherto been a more or less patriarchal one, into a commercial system of exploitation. Speaking generally, the veiled slavery of the European wage earners became the pedestal of unqualified slavery in the New World. ... As Augier said, 'money comes into the world with a birth-mark on the cheek'; it is no less true that capital comes into the world soiled with mire from top to toe, and oozing blood from every pore.

"What does the primary accumulation of capital, its historical origin, amount to? In so far as it is not the direct transformation of slaves and serfs into wage earners (a mere change of form), it signifies nothing other than the expropriation of the immediate producers, that is to say the making an end of private property based upon the labour of its owner.

Self-earned private property, the private property that may be looked upon as grounded on a coalescence of the isolated, individual, and independent worker, with his working conditions, is supplanted by capitalist private property, which is maintained by the exploitation of others' labour, but of labour which, in a formal sense, is free.

"As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently disintegrated the old society, has decomposed it through and through; as soon as the workers have been metamorphosed into proletarians, and their working conditions into capital; as soon as the capitalist method of production can stand upon its own feet—then the further socialization of labour and the further transformation of the land and of the other means of production into socially utilized (that is to say, communal) means of production, which implies the further expropriation of private owners, takes on a new form. What has now to be expropriated, is no longer the labourer working on his own account, but the capitalist who exploits many labourers.

"This expropriation is brought about by the operation of the immanent laws of capitalist production, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist lays a number of his fellow capitalists low. Hand-in-hand with such centralization, concomitantly with the expropriation of many capitalists by a few, the co-operative form of the labour process develops to an ever-increasing degree; therewith we find a growing tendency towards the purposive application of science to the improvement of technique; the land is more methodically cultivated; the instruments of labour tend to assume forms which are only utilizable by combined effort; the means of production are economized through being turned to account only by joint, by social labour. All the peoples of the world are enmeshed in the net of the world market, and therefore the capitalist regime tends more and more to assume an international character. While there is thus a progressive diminution in the number of the capitalist magnates (who usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this transformative process), there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, and exploitation; but at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class—a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, unified, and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labour reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

"The capitalist method of appropriation proceeding out of the capitalist method of production, and consequently capitalist private property, is the first negation of

individual private property based upon individual labour. But, with the inexorability of a law of nature, capitalist production begets its own negation. It is a negation of a negation. This second negation does not re-establish private property; but it does re-establish individual property upon the basis of the acquisitions of the capitalist era; i.e. on co-operation and the common ownership of the land and of the means of production (which labour itself produces).”

## **Chapter 09: Achievement, Part 4**

### **Second and Third Volumes**

In the first volume of *Capital*, which ends with a prophetic glimpse through the gates of the coming social order, Marx disclosed the economic fundamentals of contemporary society.

He solved the problem of the origin of profit. He had not solved that problem after the manner of the petty-bourgeois defenders of capitalism, who use science for the justification and safeguarding of selfish interests, and look upon profit as something which rightly accrues to the capitalist in return for services rendered. Nor did he answer it after the manner of the utopian socialists, to whom the capitalist system had seemed to be the outcome of human baseness, and who had denounced profit as being derived from theft and cheating. Marx dealt with the matter in a new way, one peculiar to himself. For him, the purchase of the commodity, labour power, by the capitalist was a legitimate exchange of values; the creation of surplus value by surplus labour was the logical consequence of an objective system; and the appropriation of this surplus value by the capitalists followed as a matter of course in accordance with the internal laws regulating a class society. Pursuing this train of scientific reasoning, he was inspired by it neither with love for capitalism, as were the bourgeois economists, nor with hatred for capitalism, as were the utopists. He merely drew the inference, clearly and coldly, that for the abolition of the exploitation of man by man a fundamental change in the system was essential. To him, such a change seemed to be an inevitable consequence of the laws of historical evolution. He expected the completion of this evolution to be effected by the working class, growing conscious of its situation as a class, and trained to pursue its aims as a class.

The first volume of *Capital* examines and analyses capitalism within the field of the process of production. That process goes on in the workshop or other place where work is carried on. The worker comes to the workshop as bearer of the commodity, labour power. He receives a wage, and begins to produce. Commodities proceed out of his hands. We cannot tell, simply from looking at these structures of iron, wood, earthenware, leather, etc., to what extent they represent newly created values, and at what point in them the process of expanding value has begun. We know, however, that surplus value is included in their value; that, freshly made and still damp with the sweat of the worker who has made them, they have hidden away within them a wealth which lives only for the capitalist. This unearned surplus value accruing to the capitalist will become profit, will assume the money form, and will, as jingling coins, find its way into the pocket of the beneficiary. But the transformation of surplus value into cash cannot take place in the workshop. For that a change of venue is requisite. Surplus value does not become profit until the commodity is sold, and therefore it can only become profit in the market, in the shop, or on the exchange.

Thither we are taken in the second volume of *Capital*, which discusses the process of the circulation of capital in three sections, respectively entitled: “The Metamorphoses of Capital and their Cycles”; “The Turn-Over of Capital”; “The

Reproduction and Circulation of the Aggregate Social Capital.”

In the market, the fetishistic power of commodities affects the capitalist differently from in the workshop. Whereas production is characterized by the discipline of an artificially constructed order, in the market the most perplexing anarchy prevails. There, commodities escape from the hands of their creator, engage in the maddest dance. They assume prices according to fancies of their own; make journeys; change owners; collect themselves into heaps, or scatter themselves to all the winds of heaven; store themselves away in warehouses, to rot there sometimes and thus fail to achieve their purpose; or speed from person to person, from town to town, to be consumed in the predestined way. Forming a fantastic world of their own, they lead therein an autocratic life, independent of the will of the producer.

If a man is not to lose his senses amid such a riot, and if, above all, he is not to lose his money, he must learn how to take his bearings in this process of the circulation of commodities. He must be able as a capitalist to find a buyer for his wares at the proper time; must provide himself at the proper time with the raw materials needed for the production of more commodities; must supply himself with adequate funds for the hiring of workers; and, in the eternal circulation of commodities and money, must never miss an opportunity, never allow himself to be got the better of by his competitors. In a realm where time and place are perpetually uncertain, he must be always on the watch to do the right thing at the right time and in the right place. He must forecast the needs of the market, must estimate the purchasing power of the consumers, must calculate the extent of demand. There is no guide book he can consult, for the economics of the market are anarchical. The market is a city without a plan. Nevertheless, the individual capitalist must work according to plan, unless he is to go down in the struggle. He cannot come to an understanding with others, for he must not disclose his intentions, his business secrets, to his rivals. Nevertheless, he must conduct himself as if he were acting on the basis of an understanding with his rivals, as if he and they were solidarized in the interests of the capitalist economy. It is not within his power to establish order in the chaos. Yet, under pain of destruction, he must see to it that everything shall “click,” that no failure in the market shall rob him of what he has gained in the workshop. For the profit created as surplus value in the workshop does not come to life until the market is reached and the commodity is sold. Only in the market does that which hitherto has been a mere abstract calculation, become a concrete gain. Only in the market is a man repaid for being a capitalist, for engaging in capitalist enterprise.

The business awaiting the capitalist in the market is difficult, laborious, and risky. It demands from him the utmost efficiency and perspicacity, great resourcefulness, marked sagacity. He must have fine hearing and a thick skin; must be simultaneously cautious and venturesome, a swashbuckler and a calculator, careless and careful. He must develop all the qualities of an experienced man of business.

None the less, the individual, however talented he may be, remains exposed to the uncalculable vicissitudes of the market. Consequently, large-scale collective safeguarding must replace small-scale individual safeguarding. The capitalists, who are independent of one another, and indeed hostile to one another, have to combine in the one matter which for them is of central importance—in the matter of money. They engage in mutual aid by establishing banks; help one another out by the joint provision of credit; amalgamate their individual interests into a unity by measures conceived in the general capitalist interest.

Thenceforward the main process of circulation can be better subjected to examination in all its phases. In a sense, the chaotic interplay of phenomena and

movements is regulated to this extent, that the basic pillars of the capitalist economy (the continuance of commodity production, the creation of surplus value, the supply of subsistence to the working class, and the enrichment of the bourgeoisie) are secured. Thus a primary provision is made for progressive accumulation, for the evolution of capitalism into mightier and ever mightier forms, and for the perpetuation of the system.

Of course the multiplicity of the processes of capitalism as a whole involves a like multiplicity of the functions which have to be performed, and of the forces requisite for their performance. The category of capitalists loses its earlier simplicity. The capitalist, nowadays, is not only a producer of commodities; he is also a seller of commodities, a middleman, a merchant, a banker, a landowner, a purveyor of raw materials. He appears in many shapes. Now, as from the first, in so far as he is a producer of commodities he is a producer of surplus value. But, as economic life has grown more complicated, he has delegated his functions to various persons. They all take part, in one way or another, in the production of commodities, the exploitation of the wage workers, the sale of commodities, the provision of capital, the continuance of the capitalist process, and the origination of profit. They all help to ensure that capital shall make profit. They present their respective claims, demand their appropriate shares in the spoil. They insist upon being satisfied. Profit has to be divided among a pack of hungry wolves.

But what share in the spoils is this or that individual to get? How is it to be measured? Who decides? How is the distribution so regulated that no one shall go short? The answer is that the world of commodities regulates these things for itself. The mechanism of the capitalist system is so contrived that, out of the interplay of its forces, factors, and trends, the satisfaction of all the before-mentioned claims spontaneously ensues. The settlement occurs without plan or set scheme, without rules and regulations, simply as the effect of the immanent logic of commodities, and the immanent justice of their exchange, which themselves formulate the principle in accordance wherewith each gets his share.

It is here that the fetishistic character of commodities manifests its supreme triumph, and it is to this matter that Marx devotes the third volume of *Capital*.

There he finds the answer to a riddle over which the professional economists had previously puzzled their heads in vain. He unravels the mystery of the fact that the capitals invested in different branches of production, although they "work" under the most widely varying conditions, nevertheless, at any particular time and within the boundaries of any particular country, secure much the same gains, produce an average rate of profit. This average rate of profit arises because the differences between the profits cancel one another when the commodities are being sold in the market. The minus which results when certain kinds of commodities are sold at less than their value is compensated by the plus when certain other kinds of commodities are sold above their value. Thus there arises an average in which all variations are levelled. The individual capitalist does not pouch the profit made by him in individual production, but only the proportional share that accrues to him out of the general spoil. "As far as profit is concerned, the various capitalists play the part of mere shareholders in a joint-stock company, whose shares in the profit are a percentage allotted proportionally to their holdings; and thus these shares differ from capitalist to capitalist only in proportion to the amount of the capital which each has invested in the joint undertaking." As if endowed with magical powers, as if dominated by elemental forces, the world of commodities regulates its affairs in accordance with its own will and in pursuance of its own laws, regulates the course of the processes and

the balancing of the profits in a way that is independent of individual intelligence and with a certainty which is far beyond the power of human functioning. Only the firmament of heaven, where the stars move on their courses for all eternity independent of the human will, offers a parallel to the mystery of the capitalist economy.

But just as the science of astronomy has disclosed the working of the heavens, has described the paths of the stars, has learned how to predict cosmic catastrophes, and has thus revealed to us the secrets of the firmament, so Marx has thrown light upon the darkness of economic happenings, has discovered the laws of the world of commodities, has disclosed the mechanisms of the winning of profits, and has thereby resolved the mysterious predestination of man to wealth or poverty into the calculable consequences of a mutable system. He has shown that interest, land-rent, revenues of all kinds, every form of capitalist gain, are essentially nothing more than profit under a masquerade.

Of the three volumes of *Capital*, the first is the most straightforward, the most compact, the most impressive, and the most important. Though it be true that the second volume supplements the analysis of capitalism in ways that are of very great significance, and though it be true that from the scientific standpoint the third volume must be regarded as the completion of the Marxian criticism of political economy, it is unquestionable that the main features of Marx's scientific achievement are contained in the first volume.

It answers the two central problems with which socialism and the labour movement are concerned: the origin of surplus value; and the socialization of the process of production. Only when we have learned how surplus value originates, can we scientifically explain how the proletariat is exploited. Only when we have understood the socialization of the labour process, can we scientifically demonstrate the fundamentals of the socialist revolution. The solution of the former problem reveals to the worker the nature of the capitalist present; the solution of the second problem discloses to him the way to the socialist future.

Therewith the main need of the labour movement, as far as theory is concerned, has been satisfied. Regarded from the outlook of the class struggle, these two problems are of more primary and more basic importance than any others, however interesting and noteworthy others may be in respect of detail.

That explains why in socialist circles, among the intellectuals and the leaders as well as among the rank and file, a knowledge of Marx's *Capital* is usually confined to the first volume. This first volume is continually being discussed, has been popularized, is utilized day by day for propaganda purposes; the second and third volumes gather dust on the shelves of libraries. Bernard Shaw, the semi-socialist Fabian, was right when he made fun of Hyndman, the thoroughgoing socialist, because the latter, though he was acquainted only with the first volume of *Capital*, claimed the title of thoroughgoing Marxist. Nevertheless, Hyndman was likewise right when he pleaded in excuse that the whole labour movement, its greatest leaders not excepted, knew nothing of the third volume of *Capital*, and yet carried on the class struggle in the Marxian sense. In actual fact, a knowledge of the first volume was fully adequate for that phase of the class struggle which now lies behind us.

But with every step we take beyond this phase, the second and third volumes gain in importance. The visage of Marxism changes as the times change. As against the vulgar Marxist of the old school, who bases his theoretical trend exclusively upon the first volume of *Capital* and upon a crudely mechanistic historical materialism, the modern Marxist, recognizing that Marxism is like all else subject to evolution, is often tempted to echo Marx by saying: "For my part, I am not a Marxist!"

### **The Evening and the End**

Fate grudged Marx the privilege of sending the second and third volumes of *Capital* to the press. Death struck the pen from his hand. His great design of producing a standard treatise on economics remained unfulfilled. Engels, his executor in scientific matters, saw to it that at least *Capital* should be finished. Taking over the editorship of the manuscripts left by Marx, he prepared them for the press, publishing the second volume of *Capital* in 1885, and the third volume in 1894. From 1870 onwards, the friendship between Marx and Engels was yet further cemented by proximity of residence. Engels had retired from his position in the firm of Ermen and Engels, had left Manchester, and had settled down in London. Under date November 29, 1868, he wrote to Marx: "1. How much money will you need to pay all your debts, so that you can make a clean start? 2. Can you get along with £350 a year for your ordinary needs (excluding extraordinary expenditure upon illness and other unforeseen happenings); get along so that you will not need to run into debt any more? If that sum will not suffice, let me know just what you will require. All this on the assumption that the old debts are first of all paid off. My negotiations with Gottfried Ermen have taken such a turn that he wishes to buy me out when my contract expires on June 30th; that is to say he offers me a sum of money if I pledge myself not to start a competitive business within the next five years, and allow him to carry on the firm. That is the very point to which I wished to bring him. ... The sum he offers me will enable me to pay you £350 a year for the next five or six years, certainly, and in special circumstances a little more." Marx answered by return of post: "I am quite overcome by your extreme kindness. My wife and I have gone into the figures together, and we find that the amount of the debts is much larger than I had supposed, £210 (of which about £75 are for the pawnshop and interest)." On July 1, 1869, Engels, with an hurrah, said farewell to "sweet commerce," became a "free man," made a "clean sweep" of Marx's debts, and a year later removed to London, settling down close to Marx.

In the Marx household, meanwhile, there had been many changes. Suitors had come for the two elder daughters, Jenny and Laura. In August 1866, Marx had written to Engels: "Since yesterday, Laura is half pledged to Monsieur Lafargue, my creole medical student. She has been treating him much like the others, but the emotional excesses characteristic of creoles, a certain fear on her part that the young man (he is twenty-five years old) would do himself a hurt, and so on, perhaps some predilection for him, cold as ever in Laura's case (he is a handsome, intelligent, and vigorously developed fellow), have led, more or less, to a compromise. The young man attached himself to me at the outset, but soon transferred the attraction from the old man to the daughter. Economically speaking, he is moderately well off, being the only child of a sometime planter. He has been sent down from Paris University for two years on account of the Liège Congress, but intends to pass his examination in Strasburg." Marx asked for precise particulars as to the property question from the would-be son-in-law's parents, and, when these particulars proved satisfactory, categorically declared that "there must be no question of a marriage" until young Lafargue had passed all his examinations. "Yesterday I told our creole that unless he can calm his manners down to the English standard, Laura will unceremoniously dismiss him. He must make this perfectly clear to himself, or the whole thing will be broken off. He is a thoroughly good fellow, but a spoiled child, and too much a child of nature." Lafargue passed his examination, and married his Laura. Having settled down to practise in Paris, he took part in the struggles of the Commune, became a refugee when the Commune was suppressed, and returned to London. He abandoned his medical career on the ground that this "could not be carried on without quackery," and started



in business as a photographer, at which he made barely enough to live upon.

Jenny, too, had a wooer. This was Charles Longuet, editor of a periodical run by the socialist students of Paris. He was sent to London in 1866 as a delegate of the French section of the International, which was in opposition to the General Council. Shortly afterwards, Longuet became a member of the General Council. During the Paris Commune, he was editor of the official organ of the Commune, and a member of the Council of the Commune. In 1873, he married Jenny, and eventually went back with her to Paris.

Of the three daughters, the only one now left at home was Tussy, or Eleanor. She was courted by Lissagaray, the historian of the Commune, who in 1871 had taken refuge in London; but Marx disapproved of the would-be son-in-law. Subsequently Tussy entered into a free union with Edward Aveling, was very unhappy with him, and after a time committed suicide. Bernard Shaw took Aveling as the model for Dubedat in *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

Many years later, Laura Lafargue and her husband committed suicide in Paris, to escape the disagreeables of old age. Jean Longuet, a son of Charles Longuet, leader of the left wing of the French social democracy, is the only living descendant of Marx who plays an active part in public life.

When the household had been reduced by the marriages of Jenny and Laura, Marx removed to 41 Maitland Park Road, Haverstock Hill. Here he spent the closing years of his life, which were "a slow death." From 1873 onwards, he suffered terribly from headache, which often unfitted him for work. His long-standing liver trouble had also recurred. Engels summoned his old friend and doctor Gumpert from Manchester, and Gumpert ordered a cure in Karlsbad. With Engels' financial help, Marx was able to visit Karlsbad in 1874, 1875, and 1876, and derived much benefit. In 1877, he took a course of the waters at Neuenahr. The liver trouble was now better, but chronic stomach disorder, in association with headache, sleeplessness, nervous exhaustion, and incapacity for work, were ailments that defied medical skill. A stay at the seaside brought no more than temporary improvement. His health grew worse from year to year.

There is good ground for the supposition that his unsatisfactory general condition was as much dependent upon psychological as upon physical causes. His illness was characterized by profound depression, both bodily and mental. The collapse of the International had seemed to him tantamount to a failure of his life work, although his reason told him that the break-up of the organization had been the outcome of objective necessities, just as its foundation had been. Furthermore, he had hoped that *Capital* would have a signal success, and the reality lagged far behind his expectations. The book was to have proved a lever which would lift the world out of its old rut; but the world went rolling along in that rut just as before, and as if the book had never been written. For years, *Capital* was ignored; and when "these tactics were no longer accordant with the conditions of the time," it was mauled uncomprehendingly by "the mealy-mouthed babblers of German vulgar economics." Even such a man as Freiligrath could find nothing better to say than that "on the Rhine many merchants and factory owners will display great enthusiasm for the book." In view of such widespread lack of understanding, it was a poor consolation to Marx to find "one reader who really understood Capital," Joseph Dietzgen, a man of proletarian origin, making his livelihood in Russia as a tanner.

There were additional reasons for Marx's depression. In Germany a vigorous social-democratic movement had developed; but it went its own way, fought its battles and formulated its tasks, without troubling to ask his advice, and without

expecting his sanction for its evolution. True, Liebknecht kept up a regular correspondence with Marx and Engels, asking counsel and help upon difficult political problems, and paying due respect to the oracle in London. But Liebknecht was not the German party, which in important matters was apt to disregard his wishes, and to follow its own bent. Thus it came to pass that Liebknecht often incurred Marx's wrath. In letters exchanged between Marx and Engels we find much angry and even contemptuous criticism of him and his doings. For these differences and disharmonies there was a deep-seated cause. Marx, who had now been living in England for several decades, had lost touch with Germany, and no longer possessed an intimate understanding of the peculiarities of the German situation. He saw everything German in a distorted perspective, with the inevitable result that many of his judgments were erroneous, and much of the advice he tendered from London was injudicious or impracticable. These discrepancies became conspicuous when the Lassallists and the Eisenachers, weary of perpetual wrangling, and yielding to the pressure of circumstances, came together at Gotha in 1875, and founded the united Social Democratic Party. Marx strenuously opposed this step, subjected the programme of unification to a fiercely destructive criticism, and, in a letter to Liebknecht, tried to give the course of events the turn he desired. Liebknecht did the best thing he could when he kept the letter in his pocket; but Marx was affronted, felt himself shut out and robbed of his influence, was wounded in his most sensitive spot, his vanity.

His relations with the French socialists were no happier. Not even his sons-in-law would march in accordance with his orders, although the orders were sent often enough. Though they remained cordial in private relations, they took the liberty of going their own way. "Longuet is the last Proudhonist," writes Marx to Engels in 1882; "and Lafargue is the last Bakuninist! To the devil with them both!"

Most painful of all to Marx was the state of affairs in England. He had lived and worked there for thirty years, but not a single grain of the seed he had cast upon this ground had sprouted. There was, indeed, a labour movement, but it took no notice of Marx or his teaching. Personal relations with the leaders of the movement had been broken off; with acrimony, as a rule. Nowhere was Marx held so completely at arms' length as here.

The sense of being forsaken, the spiritual isolation, made his illness more and more intolerable; and, on the other hand, the progressive deterioration in his bodily condition made his mood more and more irritable. After 1878, Marx was no longer able to do any useful scientific work. He could not finish anything. His self-confidence had been shattered.

At about this time, Frau Marx began to fall ill. Her life had been a hard one, and now the end was coming, slowly and terribly, from cancer. Making a last heroic effort, she fulfilled a long felt wish in the summer of 1881, by going to Paris to visit her daughters there. When she returned, Marx was laid up with bronchitis and pleurisy. Tussy and Lenchen Demuth had devoted themselves to the care of the invalid, and had had the pleasure of seeing him on his feet once more. Writing to a friend, Tussy says: "Mother was in bed in the big front room, and Mohr in the back room. These two, whose lives had been so closely intertwined, could no longer be together. Mohr got over his illness. I shall never forget the morning when he felt strong enough to go into mother's room. It was as if they had been quite young again—she a loving girl and he a loving youth, entering upon life together, instead of an old man ravaged by illness, and a dying old woman, taking leave of one another for ever."

Frau Marx died on December 2, 1881. When Engels entered the house, he said: "Mohr is dead too." How true this was was shown by the rapid ebb which now set in in Marx's forces. Writing to Sorge in December, Marx said: "I have come out of the last illness doubly crippled, morally by the death of my wife, physically because it has left a thickening of the diaphragm and great irritability of the bronchial tubes." Engels did everything in his power to promote a cure. Under medical orders Marx visited the Isle of Wight. Then, in March and April 1882, he went to Algiers, where the weather was unkind, being rainy and cold. May he spent in Cannes, Nice, and Monte Carlo. In June and July, he was with his daughter Jenny at Argenteuil near Paris; and he stayed during August with Laura at Vevey on the Lake of Geneva. In the end of September he got back to London, obviously much better, and in the mood for work. To avoid the London fogs, he went again to the Isle of Wight, but here once more the weather was unfavourable, and brought about a bad relapse.

On January 12, 1883, Marx's favourite daughter Jenny, Madame Longuet, died suddenly. This was an overwhelming blow, and his own condition promptly grew worse, so that he was dangerously ill when he returned to London. The end came on March 14th. Writing to Sorge, late on the following evening, Engels said: "For the last six weeks, every morning as I turned the corner into the street, I was in terror lest I should see the blinds down. Yesterday afternoon (the afternoon was the best time to visit him) when I arrived at 2:30 I found every one in tears, for it seemed that the end was at hand. I asked what had happened, and tried to make them look at the hopeful side. He had only had a slight haemorrhage, but there had been a grave collapse. Our good old Lenchen, who has looked after him as assiduously as any mother ever cared for a sick child, went upstairs, and came back to tell me that he was in a doze, but I might go up. I found him lying there, asleep indeed, but in the sleep from which there is no waking. He was pulseless and had ceased to breathe. During the two minutes of Lenchen's absence he had quietly and painlessly passed away." Already the day before, Engels had written to Liebknecht: "I find it almost impossible to realize that this man of genius has ceased to fertilize the proletarian movement of two worlds with his mighty thoughts. What we all of us are, we are through him; what the contemporary movement is, it is thanks to his activity in the fields of theory and practice. Without him, we should still be wandering in a maze of confusion."

On March 17th, Marx was buried in Highgate cemetery. The funeral was a simple affair, the only persons present being Engels, Lessner, Liebknecht, Longuet, Lafargue, and one or two other friends. Engels delivered a funeral oration, which may be given at full length, for it contains an admirable summary of Marx's life work.

"On March 14th, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest of living thinkers ceased to think. He had been left alone for barely two minutes; but when we entered his room we found that, seated in his chair, he had quietly gone to sleep—for ever.

"The loss which his death has inflicted upon the fighting proletariat in Europe and America, and upon the science of history, is immeasurable. The gaps that will be made by the death of this titan will soon be felt.

"Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history. He discovered the simple fact (heretofore hidden beneath ideological excrescences) that human beings must have food and drink, clothing and shelter, first of all, before they can interest themselves in politics, science, art, religion, and the like. This implies that the production of the immediately requisite material means of subsistence, and therewith the extant economic

developmental phase of a nation or an epoch, constitute the foundation upon which the State institutions, the legal outlooks, the artistic and even the religious ideas, of those concerned, have been built up. It implies that these latter must be explained out of the former, whereas usually the former have been explained as issuing from the latter.

"Nor was this all. Marx likewise discovered the special law of motion proper to the contemporary capitalist method of production and to the bourgeois society which that method of production has brought into being. The discovery of surplus value suddenly threw light here, whereas all previous investigators (socialist critics no less than bourgeois economists) had been groping in the dark.

"Two such discoveries might suffice for one man's lifetime. Fortunate is he who is privileged to make even one discovery so outstanding. But in every field he studied (the fields were many, and the studies were exhaustive), Marx made independent discoveries—even in mathematics.

"I have pictured the man of science. But the man of science was still only half the man. For Marx, science was a motive force of history, was a revolutionary force. Whilst he took a pure delight in a purely theoretical discovery, in one which had not and perhaps never would have a practical application, he experienced a joy of a very different kind when he was concerned with a discovery which would forthwith exert a revolutionary influence on industry, on historical evolution in general. For instance, he paid close attention to the advances of electrical science, and, of late years, to the discoveries of Marcel Deprez.

"For, before all else, Marx was a revolutionist. To collaborate in one way or another in the overthrow of capitalist society and of the State institutions created by that society; to collaborate in the freeing of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to inspire with a consciousness of its needs, with a knowledge of the conditions requisite for its emancipation—this was his true mission in life. Fighting was his natural element. Few men ever fought with so much passion, tenacity, and success. His work on the 'Rheinische Zeitung' in 1842, on the Parisian 'Vorwärts' in 1844, on the 'Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung' in 1847, on the 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung' in 1848 and 1849, on the 'New York Tribune' from 1852 to 1861; a great number of pamphlets; multifarious activities in Paris, Brussels, and London; finally, as crown of his labours, the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association: there you have his record. Had Marx done nothing but found the International, that was an achievement of which he might well have been proud.

"Because he was an active revolutionist, Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time. He was shown the door by various governments, republican as well as absolute. Bourgeois, ultra-democrats as well as conservatives, vied with one another in spreading libels about him. He brushed these aside like cobwebs, ignored them, only troubled to answer them when he positively had to. Yet he has gone down to his death honoured, loved, and mourned by millions of revolutionary workers all over the world, in Europe and Asia as far eastward as the Siberian mines, and in America as far westward as California. I can boldly assert that, while he may still have many adversaries, he has now hardly one personal enemy.

"His name and his works will live on through the centuries."

The inscription on the tomb reads as follows:

Jenny von Westphalen The Beloved Wife of Karl Marx Born 12. February 1814 Died 2. December 1881 And Karl Marx Born May 5. 1818; Died March 14. 1883 And Harry Longuet Their Grandson Born July 4. 1878; Died March 20. 1883 And

Helene Demuth Born January 1. 1823; Died November 4. 1890.

## **Chapter 10: Appraisement**

### **The Man**

If the materialist interpretation of history be, in very truth, the best interpretation of the processes of history, it must hold good, not only with regard to the masses who are the executors of these processes, but also with regard to the individuals who embody this execution.

The application of the materialist interpretation of history to the masses, as the executors of historical processes, is the task of sociology.

Its application to individuals is the concern of psychology.

The substance of the materialist conception or interpretation of history is as follows. Society (or, within a class society, the dominant class) forms the social order out of the natural forces of production and the extant relations of production. The structure of this material foundation is reflected in the ideological superstructure. The foundation and the superstructure have a dialectical reciprocal interaction. Decisive for the character of the social order is the need for safeguarding society, or for safeguarding its dominant stratum.

If we translate into psychological terms these principles of the method of historical materialism, we get the following. Man forms his character out of his organic constitution and his social and family position. The biological and social interests that promote his safeguarding find expression (unconsciously) in aims. The main trends of his behaviour arise with reference to these aims. Opinions, conceptions, ideas, manifest themselves as forms of expression of the individual's aim to safeguard his own existence. Decisive for each one of us in the formation of character and in the development of trends of behaviour is, in the individualistic epoch, the urge to self-expression as an individuality, an urge dictated by the circumstances of life. When, in the light of these guiding principles, we contemplate the man Marx—contemplate him solely as a man, apart from his work—our attention is riveted by three characteristics:

First, his persistent ill-health, from which we infer that there was constitutional weakness or organic defect.

Secondly, his Jewish origin, which he felt as a social stigma.

Thirdly, his position as a first-born child.

Each of these traits, a biological, a social, and a family trait, seems, at the first glance, isolated from the others. There is nothing obvious to show that they are interconnected. Still less do we see any obvious reason for supposing that, as constituents of a whole, they can be reduced to a common denominator.

Nevertheless, the method of the materialist interpretation of history constrains us to connect them and unify them.

If we set out from the view that every organism is, in a general sense, unified through its adaptation to the natural conditions of existence, we shall perceive that all its constituents develop, coalesce, and mutually further one another, as if they were animated by a unitary purpose, and controlled by that purpose. From the purely biological standpoint, we can say that this fundamental aim in the case of a living organism is self-preservation, the maintenance of its life.

The human organism is distinguished from the organism of other living creatures by this, that in man the biological aims are complicated by social aims, which do not necessarily coincide with the biological aims—for human sociology, in contradistinction to that of the animal kingdom, has a tradition, has a history. Each generation of human beings takes over the social content handed down from previous generations, and has to elaborate this in the interest of its own maintenance. Furthermore, social evolution runs a speedier course than biological, and often runs a different course.

The organism of the individual human being is in a still more difficult position. The individual is threatened, not only by the dangers of the natural environment and by the dangers of society, but also by dangers proceeding from other individuals. The aim of self-preservation is not always in conformity with the aim of species-preservation, or of society-preservation. Conflicts ensue.

The general aim of life is to pass from insecurity to security. Phrasing this concretely, we get, in the biological domain, the aim to live long and remain healthy. In the sociological domain, we get in addition the aim to win a place in society, and thus to be enabled to fulfil the tasks of occupation, marriage, and comradeship.

True, society is not a unity, for it consists of stratified classes, of an upper stratum and a lower. Its sociological structure determines a psychological valuation. The personal aim in life thus becomes an aim, an individual urge, to avoid being outrun by others in the race of life, an urge to achieve validity in one way or another. Subjectively, this urge finds expression in the sense of individuality.

The lower the self-esteem, and the stronger therefore the feeling of insecurity, the stronger is the urge to intensify the sense of individuality, and the stronger therewith is the urge to secure compensation for the perils of the dangerous situation of inferiority. Appraised from the social standpoint, a comparative inadequacy for life, whatever its kind, is always felt as inferiority. This sense of inferiority generates an impulse towards exaggeration of the sense of individuality. The process presents itself as a compensatory endeavour to re-establish the lost mental balance; and it finds its counterpart in the physical sphere, where organic defect is compensated by increased organic activity.

It is a psychological characteristic of the capitalist epoch that, by proletarianization and individualization, it has robbed the great masses of the population of their traditional securities, and has made a sense of insecurity a generalized psychological trait. Inasmuch as the sense of insecurity is felt almost exclusively in comparison with a neighbour whose position is secure or is believed to be secure, the sense of inferiority has become a universal psychical feature of contemporary man.

This general sense of inferiority may, under special conditions, be excessively stimulated, and may then be so intensified as to dominate the individual's mind, and to enlist all the mental faculties in its service. That is especially apt to happen in the case of those who suffer from a weak constitution, from organic defects, from grave social disadvantages, an unfavourable family position, and a bad preparation for life owing to a defective education. It is the typical outcome of a bad start in life, or of an inadequate equipment for life's struggle.

Should a strong sense of inferiority be intensified by the failure of attempts at compensation, or should fresh factors of insecurity come into play, the attempts towards compensation will be excessive, and compensation will take the form of over-compensation. The individual's aim will no longer merely be security, validity; the aim will be to prove oneself worth more than others, superior to others, superhuman,

godlike.

Thenceforward the individual's mental life will range from the intensified sense of inferiority as starting-point, towards the intensified ideal of individuality as aim. Consciously in part, unconsciously for the most part, but always in a unified fashion, the manifestations of the personality range between these two poles. From the time when he becomes aware of his own ego, down to the day of his death, all the individual's doings, all his wishes, all his thoughts and feelings, all his judgments—however contradictory and enigmatic they may seem—move along this line from below upwards. Everything is coerced into the service of the ideal of individuality: the body, sex life, the intelligence, logic, memory, experience. Purposively and in unitary fashion, thought and feeling and action express this struggle away from the sense of inferiority and towards an intensified sense of individuality. We discern numerous manifestations of behaviour whose significance can only be understood with reference to this aim. The sum of these methods of behaviour is what we speak of as character. In his character traits, the man is building paths which, as he believes, will lead him most swiftly and safely to the heights towards which he aspires. With unconscious purposiveness, he “makes” experiences, stores up tendentious memories, formulates judgments. In each new period of life he finds confirmation of his previous opinions concerning himself, of his previous outlooks on the world and on life. He is perpetually repeating the same round of luck and ill-luck; is having again and again like experiences with women, colleagues, and friends; is always reiterating the same impressions and judgments. What seems to be a change is, as a rule, only a change of form, the new man being merely the old one under new conditions. Those, therefore, who are not deceived by the ostensible contradictions of the surface, can discern in every individuality a unified and circumscribed image, in which all the movements of the mind are dictated by a central aim, are controlled by a unified tendency; and in which each function plays its appropriate part. Biological and social aims become building material incorporated into the individual psychological aims. The whole man stands before us as a circumscribed unity.

Unified and unambiguous, too, is the use which the man makes of the means he finds to his hand in his bodily constitution, his social position, his situation within the family. Placed by birth in special circumstances which are not of his own choosing and which it is not within his power to alter, he must accommodate himself to the extant. He does accommodate himself, in accordance with his life plan. He turns a constitutional weakness, an organic defect, to his own uses; he learns how to take advantage of his social position; he is able to avail himself of his family situation. Every shortcoming, every disadvantage, becomes, under his (unconscious) manipulation, a means for promoting his advance towards his aim. This aim is always the achievement of superiority. If he is unable to reach the desired height by the application of the means at his disposal, he uses them as extenuating circumstances, to exonerate himself and to free himself from responsibility.

If, in the light of these considerations, we turn to examine the personality of Marx, we see the before-mentioned biological, social, and family traits in a new and instructive light. But the traits in question are only the elements, the first crude constituents, of a psychological analysis—with which we have to content ourselves, since we lack more detailed materials as regards the life of Marx. Obviously, they do not suffice for an exhaustive analysis. Many of the gaps in our observation will have to be filled in artificially; a schematic construction will have to supplement the defects of observation. Nevertheless, we can get a great deal farther than was possible by earlier psychological methods. Even if we do not achieve definitive knowledge, in this respect psychological analysis is no more inadequate than the other sciences, for

science has to leave many ultimate problems open.

While quite young, Marx began to suffer from liver trouble, which was considered a family disease, and which Marx believed himself to have inherited. Throughout life, he suffered from a secret fear of cancer of the liver, which was supposed to be the doom of members of his family. Probably his liver trouble was closely connected with a general weakness of the digestive apparatus, a disorder of the whole gastro-intestinal tract; for, in addition to the ordinary symptoms of liver trouble, he suffered also from various morbid conditions, such as loss of appetite, constipation, gastric and intestinal catarrh, hemorrhoids, furunculosis, etc., which are to be regarded as manifestations and accompaniments of grave disturbances of metabolism. Essentially, he suffered from metabolic disorders.

This biological condition is of great importance. Obviously, so grave a disturbance of so vital a function could not fail to take effect on Marx's psyche in the form of a strong sense of insecurity and inadequacy. Beyond question, this was the chief cause of his sense of inferiority.

To this was superadded a social factor, his Jewish descent. In the early part of the present book I showed how great were the social, legal, and political disadvantages from which the Jews suffered in Germany before the time of the March revolution, and how the Jews of Rhineland in especial were despised and persecuted. Marx felt that as a Jew he had been given a bad start in life, one which would seriously handicap his prospects of advancement. No doubt the conversion of the family to Protestantism had done something to make up for this, but his racial origin could not be washed away by the waters of baptism. No one could ever forget that Marx had been born a Jew, for not only was his facial type markedly Hebraic, but his whole aspect shouted a Semitic origin. Baptized or unbaptized, Marx remained a Jew, recognizable as such at the first glance, and burdened therefore with all the odium attaching to his race. One may presume that from early childhood he had been on the defensive, earnestly endeavouring, by means of intelligence and industry, to compensate for the disadvantages of birth. Even if his Jewish origin proved no drawback to Marx, or only entailed obstacles which it was easy for him to overcome, he may none the less have felt his descent to entail upon him a social stigma, which must have aroused in him a sense of inferiority. For actual inferiority is not needed to arouse the sense of it; mere suspicions, assumptions, imaginations, and exaggerations suffice to induce this mental state. Very striking is the unusual acerbity with which, when he is discussing the Jewish problem, Marx attacks "the empirical essence of Judaism." He writes: "What is the mundane basis of Judaism? Practical needs; self-interest. What is the mundane cult of the Jews? Huckstering. What is the Jews' mundane god? Money." Marx denounces the Jews as prototypes of the commercial spirit and of a monetary economy; he makes Judaism the symbol of bloodsucking capitalism. The reader cannot escape the feeling that he is ostentatiously showing his opposition to Judaism, is demonstratively severing himself from his own race, and by emphasizing his anti-capitalist tendencies is declaring himself before all the world not to be a Jew. But one who takes so much trouble to declare that he is not a Jew must have reason for being afraid of being regarded as a Jew. I think there can be no doubt that this social factor of Marx's Jewish origin intensified his sense of inferiority, and must have increased his urge towards compensatory achievements.

Finally, it is probable that his family position reinforced the same trend. Marx was a firstborn child, an only son, and the hope of the family. Since intellectual achievements were part of the family tradition, great hopes were entertained of his talents in this direction, especially seeing that he was a precocious and remarkably



clever boy. Certainly at school his success justified high expectations. He was regarded as a wonder-child. At seventeen he was ripe for a university career.

But high gifts entail high obligations. Above all is this the case when they are associated with responsibility for the revival of a lost prestige. Still more exacting are the demands made of one who has shown precocious talent. When there has been an unusually rapid advance up to the age of seventeen, everyone expects this advance to be sustained at the same speed. These febrile anticipations are entertained by the person most concerned, and act upon him with the painful stimulation of a whip. Besides, Karl Marx's father earnestly hoped that his son would enter one of the learned professions, and the father's authority seems to have had a great influence upon the son's education.

All the greater was the disappointment when, after the brilliant start, young Marx seemed at a standstill. During the first year of his life at the university, there appeared to be a relaxation in his forces, and a lull in his ambition. Serious disputes ensued between him and his father, so that at one time there was a risk that his university career would be broken off. That disaster was avoided, but Marx's apparent failure at a time when his family was looking to him for success had shaken his self-confidence. A condition of anxiety, doubt, and confusion supervened. He began to be afraid that he would never fulfil these great expectations. He shirked his lectures, avoided examinations, procrastinated the choice of a profession—these being typical manifestations of profound discouragement. His ambition intensified his sense of responsibility so much that he was almost incapable of regular work.

To summarize, we may say that the three characteristic features of Marx's individuality—poor health, Jewish origin, and the fact that he was firstborn—interact, and combine to produce an intensified sense of inferiority.

The resulting compensation begins with the formulation of an aim. The lower the self-esteem, the higher the aim. The position of a child, with the difficulties and needs attendant on that position, is retained as foundation. Throughout life, Marx remains the young student, who is afraid of disappointing others through the inadequacy of his achievement, and therefore sets himself aim beyond aim, piles task upon task. He cannot escape the voices calling after him: "You must show what you can do! Must climb! Must have a brilliant career! Must do something extraordinary! Must be the first!" This will-to-conquest and this urge-to-superiority dominate all the phases of his existence as worker and fighter. Indefatigably he trains his understanding, schools his memory, sharpens his wits. He is diligent to excess. Like Saint-Simon, who made his valet exhort him every morning, so Marx exhorts himself, day after day, in the tones of an ambition that masquerades as a sense of duty: "Get up! You have great things to perform! You have a world to win!" Thus is the aim formulated. He must do something extraordinary, unique; he must be the only one of his kind; he must assume the highest responsibilities. The urge to be godlike forms his plans in life, and guides all his activities.

But whatever aims a man may set himself, in his endeavours to attain them he is restricted to the use of the means with which he is endowed. He must work with the tools at his disposal. What were these, in Marx's case? A sickly frame, Jewish descent, and the position of firstborn. If he wishes to attain greatness, it must be by the use of these instruments. He must press them into the service of his compensatory endeavours.

Persons with digestive disorders, with troubles of the stomach, the bowels and the liver, are well-known to be prone to disorder of the affective life. They are depressed, capricious, spiteful, discontented creatures; they lack a proper contact

with the environing world; they are full of suspicions; they are unable to enter into sympathetic relations with others; they are isolated, embittered, always on edge, ever ready to scratch. It seems as if the bodily difficulties, inhibitions, and convulsions, had been transferred into the mental sphere. In very truth, the organic material substratum secures expression in the psychical superstructure. In the latter, as in the former, there are the same disturbances, the same irregularities, the same anomalies of function. The orderly succession of income and output has been disarranged. Either the output of thought substance is checked, this leading to a sort of spiritual constipation; or else there is a lack of spiritual income, and then the mind is starved. On the other hand there may be an immoderate absorption of spiritual sustenance, leading to a kind of mental distension; or there may be an extravagant expenditure, followed by mental exhaustion. Always there is a lack of due measure; always there is what may be called a disorder of mental metabolism. The example of the child recurs here, the child that eats too little or too much, that is over-dainty or gluttonous. In later life these become persons who never acquire a sound relation towards the important vital function of nutrition; they become misers or spendthrifts, are stingy or extravagant, are pedants, croesuses, etc.

Marx suffered typically from this sort of disorder of spiritual metabolism. Always capricious, depressed, spiteful, he behaved like one affected with indigestion, tortured by flatulence, or racked by biliary colic. He was a hypochondriac, and, like all hypochondriacs, made too much of his bodily troubles. Just as he had a poor relation to his food, ate little, irregularly, and with little appetite, stimulating his desire with mixed pickles, spices, vinegar, caviare, and the like; so he had a bad relation to his work and to his fellow men. Bad eaters are bad workers and bad comrades. They either do not eat at all or they overfill their stomachs; they either idle or overwork; they either shun their fellow men or make friends with Tom, Dick, and Harry. They are always in extremes. Neither their stomach, nor their brain, nor their spirit, can endure such sudden antitheses. Just as in youth Marx did not engage upon the regular study of something which might have proved a means of livelihood, so later he was incapable of regular intellectual work which would have nourished the whole man. He had no profession, no office, no regular occupation, no dependable means of livelihood. Everything was improvised, capricious, the sport of chance. Instead of attending lectures in his student days, and thus preparing himself for a professional career, he filled his mental stomach with philosophical and literary mixed pickles. He lacked discipline, a sense of order, a feeling for a proper relation between income and expenditure. Now, for months at a time, he would not write a line; then he would hurl himself at his work like a titan. By day and by night he devoured whole libraries, heaped up mountains of extracts, filled thick manuscript books, left behind him piles of half finished writings. Yet in all this work he had as little pleasure as he had at his meals; he groaned, cursed, deplored his fate, described himself as a slave of the intelligence, martyred his family. Often, when his household was urgently in need of the fees he might have earned, he left it to Engels to write the necessary newspaper articles, while himself luxuriating in the ancient classics, poring over the most precious treasures of the libraries, devouring costly literature like caviare, or giving himself up with delight to the entirely unremunerative study of the higher mathematics. He could never get enough of these intellectual dainties, just as he could never eat enough caviare and mixed pickles to satisfy him. But regular work bored him, conventional occupation put him out of humour. Without a penny in his pocket, and with his shirt pawned, he surveyed the world with a lordly air. He detested social intercourse upon equal terms. He only cared to clink glasses with persons who praised and admired him. He took refuge in cynicism from any profounder

manifestation of feeling. He was one who knew nothing of the joys of convivial intercourse; was a solitary, an eremite. Proneness to solitude and to severance from the community is apt to be intensified in persons suffering from disorders of metabolism, for they are inclined to regard their troubles (since these concern the digestive and excretory organs) as unclean and disgusting. They are apt to react with a mania for cleanliness, a fanaticism for tidiness, pedantry. Their personal ideal is: to be the cleanest, the most immaculate, the noblest and most sublime person in the world. From such therefore is recruited the army of moralists, of the apostles of good behaviour, of the heroes of virtue, of the revealers of a new ethic or of an ideal mode of life. The aspiration towards an especial purity of character, towards absolute immaculacy, towards perfect purity of motives, towards sublimity of philosophy, has in most cases such an origin. Paradoxical as it may seem, moral and aesthetic rigorism springs out of the bowel.

Marx was one of those persons who are overpowered by a perpetual urge towards the highest, the purest, the most ideal. It was not merely his ambition to be the most famous among those who have studied socialist literature, and the most learned of all the critics of economic science; he also wanted to be the most efficient revolutionist, and pre-eminent among the advocates of revolution. He wanted to expound the purest theory, to establish the most complete system of communism. As a preliminary to the demonstration of this superiority, he must prove that the socialist theories of all his predecessors were worthless, false, contemptible, or ludicrous. He had to show that the socialism of the utopists was a crazy-quilt of outworn and questionable ideas. That Proudhon was a suspect intruder into the realm of socialist thought. That Lassalle, Bakunin, and Schweitzer were tainted with bourgeois ideology, and had probably sold themselves to the enemy. He, Marx alone, was in possession of the true doctrine. His was the crystal-clear knowledge; his was the philosopher's stone; his the immaculate conception of socialism; his the divine truth. With contemptuous wrath, with bitter mockery and profound hostility, he rejected all other opinions, fought against all other convictions, than his own, persecuted all ideas that had not originated in his own brain. For him, there was no wisdom except his own, no socialism other than the socialism he proclaimed, no true gospel outside the limits of his own doctrine. His work was the essence of intellectual purity and scientific integrity. His system was Allah, and he was its prophet.

In marked contrast with the lofty pedestal on which Marx thus placed himself in the world of theory, was the position he occupied as soon as it ceased to be a question of great ideas and abstract problems, and became a question of petty realities and the concrete tasks of life. In that world of concrete reality, Marx failed no less utterly than he triumphed in the realm of abstract intelligence. His failure was as pitiful in the one as his success was magnificent in the other. Essentially, however, there is no opposition between these two phenomena.

Persons affected with metabolic disorders, those who cannot regulate their digestive functions properly, almost always show themselves to be persons who are likewise unable to control the functioning of their economic life. In that field, too, they are unable to achieve a due balance between income and expenditure. They do not know how to put two and two together, even when, like Marx, they are adepts in the higher mathematics. They cannot keep petty accounts. They are thoroughly bad housekeepers. They are penny wise and pound foolish. They earn badly and spend badly. Their economic sense is either non-existent, or else it is hypertrophied. They suffer from a disorder of economic metabolism.

In the present volume, countless instances have been given to show how hopelessly ineffectual Marx was in the domain of domestic economy. Throughout life, he was hard up. He was ridiculously ineffectual in his endeavours to cope with the economic needs of his household and his family; and his incapacity in monetary matters involved him in an endless series of struggles and catastrophes. He was always in debt; was incessantly being dunned by creditors, persecuted by usurers, drained by bloodsuckers. Half his household goods were always at the pawnshop. His budget defied all attempts to set it in order. His bankruptcy was chronic. The thousands upon thousands which Engels handed over to him, melted away in his fingers like snow.

This state of affairs was not the outcome of any moral lapses, nor yet of a tragical destiny. It was simply the consequence of a grave disturbance of function, of a disorder of metabolism, which affected the man's whole system, working itself out in the economic field as well as in the bodily and mental fields. Financial crises visited Marx's household with the same inevitable frequency as that with which boils troubled his body; and disputes with friends and foes were as common among his experiences as were financial distresses. When we look closely into the matter, we see that all alike were symptoms of one and the same trouble, manifesting itself in three separate departments of life—equally painful, equally burdensome, equally tormenting in them all. But even a whimsical and malicious disorder of metabolism has a positive side as well as a negative one, this confirming the old experience that a man's greatest weakness is at the same time his greatest strength.

Inferiority seeks compensation. The sense of inferiority, stimulated ever and again by recurrent ill-success, failure, and defeat, gives no rest until the minus has been compensated by a plus. If the minus be an inherited defect, the plus becomes a matter of personal achievement. Thus only was it that Demosthenes the stammerer could become the greatest orator of antiquity, that the deaf Beethoven proved the most famous of all musicians, that the hideous Michelangelo was able to hand down to posterity the most marvellous of all depictions of human beauty.

In like manner the sufferer from gastric trouble, the sufferer from metabolic disorder, feels a perpetual urge to compensate the negative of his physical condition by some positive achievement. Making a virtue of necessity, he wins victory out of defeat. It depends only on his courage how far he can secure compensation. In the endeavour to compensate for gastro-intestinal inferiority, one will become a famous caterer or chef; another will become a specialist in diseases of the digestive system; a third will discover some nutritive salt, will invent some special method of dietetics; a fourth will be a vegetarian propagandist, will advocate the use of unfired food, and so on. Always the compensatory aim arises out of the perspective of the actual inferiority. Already in childhood we can note how the ideas and wishes as to a future occupation are determined by unconscious feelings of inferiority. Always the hidden aim is to make good for an inherited defect by a surplus of achievement. Whether the achievement takes the form of something which counts in the concrete world, or only takes the form of a neurotic expedient, is a question of individual courage.

Marx sought for spiritual compensation in the realm of ideas. His compensatory endeavour made him the founder of an economic theory, the creator of a new economic system. His aim was the widest possible. He became the saviour of humanity at large, and built for eternity.

The man who had a poor appetite and a difficult digestion propounded a plan for the reorganization of the economic structure of society whose result was to be that every one was to have plenty to eat and an adequate supply of all the conveniences of

life. The man who had always been short of money, perpetually in debt, announced and fought for the establishment of a world order in which everyone was to have a sufficient share in the world's goods. The man who was a master of unsociability, and was incapable of true friendship, issued as a watchword that all men were to be brothers. The man who did not know how to spend a shilling wisely, elaborated in his own mind the most profound of all the theories of money; and created imaginatively the splendid thought edifice of a revolutionized economic system, established upon new and communal foundations.

As compensation for his sense of inferiority, he made it his life work to be the scientific founder of an economic and social order in which all were to be able to do what he could not do, and all were to have what he lacked.

In point of character, Marx differs in no essential respects from the men of his day and our own. They are all neurotic; they all suffer from a sense of inferiority, strive towards superiority, show themselves vain, ambitious; eager for success, greedy of power.

But Marx, though he does not differ from others in essentials, differs in the matter of degree. He differs alike in respect of the unusual intensity of his sense of inferiority, and in respect of the unusually high quality of his means of compensation. Thus he presents us with a classical example of the way in which the utmost subjective need releases in a man the most tremendous energies, develops them on a titanic scale, equips them with splendid creative faculties, sets them to work in the womb of the social process, where they ripen to historic deeds, and whence they are born into the light of day. The individual human being evokes the energies and achieves the work. He becomes the fulfiller of a function under stress of subjective necessity, as an outcome of the coercion of his personal needs and demands.

When the work thus performed is one of supreme worth to society, one which society recognizes as of supreme importance to its own safeguarding, society qualifies it as a work of genius.

### **His Work**

If a man does not succeed in compensating his sense of inferiority by actual achievements, he contents himself, in the end, with the semblance of achievement.

Since, however, his increased impulse to self-assertion makes him feel the admission of incapacity or ill-success to be a defeat and a disgrace, he seeks for some expedient whereby he can evade responsibility for failure. His favourite method, in such circumstances, will be to have recourse to an illness which will relieve him of his burden. It is not only that illness will make others kindly and considerate towards him. Furthermore, in the general view, illness is the work of an objective and mysterious power to which man succumbs through the decrees of fate. In especial, such a view is an outcome of the doctrine (no longer scientifically tenable, but still widely held), according to which illnesses and anomalies are handed down automatically from generation to generation, so that the persons who suffer from them are the subjects of an inevitable doom. This outlook is an aid to one who wishes to regard his illness as an excuse for failure in life.

One who adopts such an expedient will have little difficulty in discovering somewhere in his organism a weakness, however insignificant, a defect, however trifling, which he can press into the service. By a process of training, deliberately though perhaps unconsciously pursued, he is able in course of time to develop this convenient lack or defect into the illness which will serve his turn. With increasing adroitness,

he finds it possible to arrange that the morbid manifestations shall always occur when they suit his purpose. The purpose is, of course, to explain failure as the outcome of the overwhelming power of the illness. With long practice and special skill, such a person is able to make of his illness a charter which will excuse him from all further effort. Now he has gained his end. He will no longer be expected to prove his mettle, and will therefore be safeguarded against any further defeat. His illness has become a harbour of refuge.

For this advantage, the patient is willing to pay the price in the form of pains, renouncements, material expenditure, troublesome methods of treatment. To be freed from daily demands upon his efficiency, and from the consequent daily prospect of dishonourable defeat, is worth more to him than what he has to pay in the form of the inconveniences of his malady. Besides, now that he is an invalid, he has gained advantages that were unknown to him when he was in good health; he has become the centre of a circle of devoted attendants, and is richer for interesting experiences. He is a person of worth, now that he is among the sufferers who are sympathized with, protected, and cared for. Above all, he has risen in his own esteem, for the perennial excuse, "If I were not ill ..." enables him to fancy himself "otherwise" capable of boundless achievements, destined for unrivalled successes. In these circumstances, he will have enough self-conceit to regard his most trifling achievements as heroic deeds.

Physicians and psychologists give the name of "neurotics" to persons of this kind, persons who by such expedients escape the tasks of life, and are able to content themselves with the semblance of achievement. Behaviour which aims at an escape from the duties, the tasks, the functions of life, without renouncing the claims made on life, and unaccompanied by any recognition that such behaviour is anti-social and anti-evolutionary, is known as "neurosis." There are today very few persons wholly free from neurotic traits. Neurosis is a universal contemporary characteristic.

Unquestionably Marx was a neurotic. For every one familiar with neurotic symptoms, the neurotic traits in his clinical history are unmistakable. His supposed affliction with a congenital disorder of the liver obviously served him as a sort of lightning-conductor, as a pretext for escaping from difficult situations. Experience has abundantly shown that autosuggestion is competent to induce severe cardiac spasms, bilious attacks, asthmatic or epileptic paroxysms, haemorrhages, simulated burns, paralyses, etc. It is easy enough, therefore, especially when we may suppose a pre-existent genuine organic weakness or disorder of function, to develop a first-class liver trouble or metabolic disorder whenever it is wanted. I am not talking of deception, of deliberate fraud. Modern psychiatry has shown that psychological factors are at work in many illnesses; and the day may well come when a number of mysterious and incurable maladies now regarded as hereditary will be revealed as unconscious artifacts, the masks for discouragement. In the case of Marx's illness, the characteristics are so obviously those of a cleverly operated unconscious mechanism, that there can be no doubt of its neurotic character. He believed that he was perpetually dogged by disaster, was continually afflicted with inefficient collaborators, was prevented from performing his duties as breadwinner, was disappointed again and again by untrustworthy friends, and was perpetually being entangled in conflicts and quarrels. In his own view, of course, his ailments were the basic cause of his troubles.

Yet however much Marx had recourse to neurotic tricks and expedients, when in search of extenuating circumstances, he never, mentally speaking, surrendered wholly and permanently to neurosis—and this is the decisive matter.

Even though Marx failed to solve the problem of earning a livelihood, he was never a man to shrink from hard work. On the contrary, his industry and his powers of work arouse our amazement.

Although he made a poor showing as breadwinner, he was otherwise a happy and successful husband, a tender father, was able on into old age to delight his charming and clever wife, and to retain her affection.

Though he was at feud with all the world, he never forfeited the friendship of Engels, who was worth hundreds of other friends, and was not a man to give his friendship to the first comer.

A sense of inferiority like that of Marx, intensified by various factors, may certainly induce neurotic behaviour, may lead in the end to neurotic flight from the world, but it does not compel one who suffers from it to sacrifice himself wholly to neurosis. Whether and how far a man gives way to the tendency to run away from life, yields to the inner urge to escape into a masked passivity—depends upon the amount of community feeling with which he is endowed, the amount of community feeling he is able to transform into a courageous facing of realities, into positive activities.

Marx had recourse to the neurotic protective mechanisms whenever he stood alone, whenever he was delivered over to his own weaknesses without the support of a community: as breadwinner, as the writer of articles for periodicals, as controversialist, as the defender of personal ideas and theses. From dread lest he should be put to the test, he was unable to show any community feeling in these private matters. But as soon as he was engaged in, a wider field, he was as if transformed. Then community feeling surged up in him from the depths. Just as Antaeus developed a giant's strength as soon as he touched the earth, so Marx, as soon as he felt the ground of the community under his feet, was endowed with the power of courageously ignoring all the uncertainties, doubts, pusillanimities, and cowardices, which would otherwise have hindered his advance. Here what seemed more was really less, for the imaginary great community demanded from him less courage than did the actual small community. Nevertheless, on the ground of that greater community, his powers ripened, his courage grew, his work throve to become a historic deed. His monumental greatness was the outcome of the overwhelming powers of a spiritual community-sense.

When Marx entered the political arena, the German bourgeoisie was striving to secure social recognition, and to get possession of the powers of the State. It needed superabundant energies to cope with the situation into which its development had brought it. In order to mobilize all available forces and to throw these into the fighting front, it represented its struggle for power as a struggle for power on the part of the people in general, and represented its ideal as a universally valid human ideal. The consequence was that every one capable of enthusiasm for the ideals of progress and liberty, became an enthusiast for the ideals of bourgeois progress and bourgeois liberty. The amalgamation of all individual wills into one great communal will gained the victory.

But within the womb of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat had been engendered. As long as it was still attached by the navel string of its petty-bourgeois and peasant origin, it identified its interests with those of the bourgeoisie. For that reason, it accepted the war aims of bourgeois emancipation and bourgeois revolution, fought for the bourgeoisie on the barricades, and took the bourgeois proclamations of humanist ideals at their face value. But directly the victory had been won, a gulf opened between the rights and living conditions of the bourgeoisie and the rights and living

conditions of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie, having safely reached port, dropped its humanitarian aims, and turned to attack the proletariat.

The conditions under which this took place were the most unfavourable for the proletariat that can be imagined. It had just been sacrificing blood and life and strength for the purposes of the bourgeoisie. It was still bleeding from a thousand wounds; it was weakened and exhausted; it was staggering along confusedly in a situation which it did not yet fully understand. This was the moment at which its sometime friends treacherously attacked it. Panic-stricken and despairing, the proletarians flung themselves on the ground, submitting to their evil fate. For a decade, they showed no understanding of history, displayed no sign of a political consciousness. But the decade passed. Overcoming their despair, shaking off their lassitude, the masses rose to their feet, looked this way and that, revived the demand for liberty and humanitarian aims which had been abandoned by the bourgeoisie, and hoisted the flag for renewed struggles. But the bourgeoisie of the sixties was not the bourgeoisie of the forties. The ten years after 1848 had been turned to good account for the economic and social strengthening of the bourgeois position. The bourgeoisie had become great, rich, and powerful; was in possession of excellent means for defending its position; and was determined to crush unmercifully any attempt at advance made by the proletariat. The pressure exercised by the bourgeoisie on the proletariat was overwhelming. The proletariat, powerless economically and socially, with no culture of its own, depressed by the failure of the revolution and the experience of the counter-revolution, delivered over to the onslaughts of an adversary possessed of enormously superior force, was profoundly discouraged.

Here, upon the plane of class life, was a neurotic situation analogous to that described above on the plane of individual life. In the course of historical evolution, the proletariat found itself faced with a great task, its very existence depending upon the proper performance of that task. It suffered from anxiety, it did not feel equal to the demands of the time. It attempted to evade these demands, to take refuge in political indifferentism, in the semblance of achievement, in neurotic behaviour. At the historic moment, its failure seemed imminent.

Nothing but an act which would bring encouragement would save the imperilled cause of the proletariat. A treatment that would overcome the sense of inferiority, a method of education that would re-establish self-confidence and revive self-esteem, was essential. The proletariat needed an elixir that would restore hope, needed a miraculous energy that could only be inspired by a great conviction, needed a quasi-fanatical obsession. Then came Marx, and supplied this magic potion. His community sense had led him, with instinctive logic, to espouse the cause of the proletariat. He saw that the conditions of proletarian impotence were the outcome of the structure of bourgeois society, and he drew the inference that the causes of this impotence could only be removed by changing the structure of society. With this end in view, he annulled the individualist concept of personality, replacing it by the collective concept of class—a concept which he originated. He deprived individual struggles for individual power of meaning and justification, putting in their place the notion of the community and the struggle on behalf of the collective power of the proletarian class. He made the class struggle a law of historical evolution, and depicted socialism as the necessary and logical outcome of that struggle.

By expounding in a scientific system his views on the foundations and connexions, the laws and the consequences, of social evolution, and by incorporating that system into his writings, he secured compensation for the torments of his subjective sense of inferiority. By placing his writings and his doctrine at the disposal of the



proletariat, he provided this class with the means for compensating its social sense of inferiority through the practical application of the knowledge thus gained—once more, then, by achievement.

At a particular point in historical evolution at which a class, owing to psychical inhibitions and to the stagnation of its energies, is prevented from fulfilling the mission allotted to it by history and urgently needing fulfilment, it becomes a life-or-death question for society to overcome the obstacles that are hindering the course of evolution. For this an energy, a strength, is needed far exceeding the customary. There is requisite a superhuman achievement, a heroic deed. Only one who is subjectively aware of so profound an inferiority that nothing but a titanic achievement, a heroic deed, will restore his spiritual equipoise—only such a one is competent for such a task. But such a one is competent when the comprehensiveness and the quality of the means at his disposal are rightly accordant to the strength of his urge.

Thus a vitally important service is done to society or to one of its social classes. Thereby, society, or the class, is saved from destruction. For this reason, the person who performs such a task receives the highest honour, inasmuch as he becomes known as a genius.

Genius is something more than quality, form, achievement, work. Above all, genius is a social category. It expresses a definite relation between society and an individual. That relation exists when an individual supreme achievement is effected in a phase of social development wherein this particular achievement is supremely important in the interests of social safeguarding. In the genius, the line of the compensatory achievement of an individual intersects with the line of the compensatory need of society or of a class.

Appraised from the outlook of the proletariat, Marx was a genius. What was his achievement, as regards the vital needs of the proletarian class? By his teaching, when the proletariat was in a phase of extreme discouragement, he inspired it with the uttermost courage. "Historical evolution is on your side," he shouted to the proletariat. "Capitalism, brought into being by the laws of historical evolution, will be destroyed by the inexorable working of these same laws. The bourgeoisie, the business manager of the capitalist system, appeared on the stage of history with that system, and must make its exit when that system walks off the stage. You, proletarians, keep capitalism going by your labour, and maintain the whole of bourgeois society by the fruits of your industry. But socialism will be a necessary organic outcome of capitalism, the essence of the latter being implied in the essence of the former. With the end of capitalism, comes the beginning of socialism as a logical consequence. You proletarians, as a class, being the incorporators of the forces and tendencies which will do away with capitalism, must necessarily make an end of the bourgeoisie. You merely need, as a class, to fulfil the evolution which your mission calls on you to fulfil. All you need is to will! History makes this as easy as possible for you. You need not hatch out any new ideas, make any plans, discover a future State. You need not 'dogmatically anticipate the world.' You need merely put your hands to the task which is awaiting you. The means by which you will do it are to be found in the unceasing, purposive, consistent fighting of the class struggle, whose crown will be the victory of the social revolution."

"Evolution is on your side!" With this word of power, the proletariat was awakened from its lethargy, was delivered from its sense of inferiority.

"You need only will!" With this magic potion, it was raised to its feet and set a-going. Its paralysing anxiety had been overcome, its uncertainties had been shaken off, its lack of faith had been conquered by self-confidence.

Socialism, till then an aim of religious ardour, a wonderland of fanciful hopes, an artifact of the imagination, had now been scientifically demonstrated as the ripe fruit of evolution, which would fall into the laps of those who shook the tree. Marx's teaching came in black and white to give the proletariat the certainty that socialism would be realized.

This gospel, not the outcome of blind faith, but based upon a keen use of the intelligence, and upon the most rational logic, could not fail to provide the proletariat with an unprecedented dynamic impetus. It animated the workers to throw off their chains, filled them with a hope enabling them to unlock all the doors between them and the future.

If we consider Marx and his work from such a standpoint, we perceive that the historical greatness of the phenomenon which now passes by the name of Marxism depends neither on the man nor on his work. It depends, rather, on the fact that Marx, at the critical moment of history, bestowed his teaching on the proletariat as the vehicle of an upward movement which had become historically indispensable.

Thus envisaged and thus appraised, it does not matter whether we regard Marxism as an eternal truth, or as a temporarily valid guiding fiction: whether the system is consequential and coherent in all its details; or whether it contains gaps, contradictions, and untenable theses: whether the theory of the imminent collapse of capitalism complies with the demands of scientific method, or has merely the restricted value of a fascinating apotheosis. What Marxism had to effect (the shaking of the proletariat out of its historical namelessness, the compacting of it into a political power, the making of it into a conscious factor of historical evolution, the placing of it on the stage of history as the author of and the actor in its own drama), all these things Marxism has achieved. If, over and above this, as the facts show, Marxism was and is logically sound, then Marxism has done even more than history could have demanded of it.

Only those who are content to look at the surface of things can believe (though the view is widely entertained today) that the logicalness and validity of Marxism have been undermined by the most recent happenings of history.

Marxism, being primarily called upon to stir up the proletarian masses, to make them collect their forces, and to lead them on to the battlefield, must necessarily display itself at the outset in a guise which would encourage optimism; in a guise which, by representing historical evolution as the guarantee of the liberation of mankind, would make the workers believe in their own mission. To gain headway, it must relentlessly clear out of the path all rationalistic and utopian systems of socialism, and must inexorably proceed on its own course. Today, when its first work is finished, Marxism begins to assume a new aspect. In our own time, not merely can Marxism occasionally recur to the systems of the utopists and the rationalists; it is directly forced in this direction by the practical demands of the day, by the growing claims for positive achievements in the class struggle. Vulgar Marxism, the Marxism of the crowd, the Marxism of those who regard the mechanism of things as the essential factor of evolution, must yield place to a transformed Marxism, to a profounder Marxism, to the Marxism of those who look upon the activities of human beings as the main factors of evolution.

Therewith our appraisal of Marx's personality has likewise been profoundly modified. Whereas persons of the last generation, in view of the opposing nature of their interests, reflected in their ideology, looked upon Marx either as a criminal disturber of the peace and a devil, or else as a saint and as an infallible pope—those of our own generation can admit him to have been a man equipped both with human

weaknesses and with human strengths, both with human vices and with human virtues. We are, indeed, compelled to regard him thus, unless we would refuse to apply the materialist interpretation of history to individuals as well as to general processes. Modern psychology, as used in the present work to throw light upon the character and the behaviour of a human being, is nothing other than the application of the method of historical materialism to the study of the human mind.

Marx had to be an obstinate, pig-headed, intolerant thinker and investigator; had to regard other people's opinions with suspicion; had to be hostile towards every alien trend; had to be cantankerous, dictatorial, fanatically obsessed with the rightness of his own convictions, fiercely opposed to any deviations from, any falsifications of, his ideas. He had to concentrate his genius, his understanding, his creative energy, for decade after decade, upon this one point, upon this one scientific task; had to neglect his calling, his family, his livelihood, his friends. He had to be whipped on by overweening ambition, blinded by intolerable selfishness, goaded day and night by a torturing sense of inferiority—that he might be equipped for his formidable achievements. The main thing was the work which had to be done; the qualities of the doer mattered little. Or, rather, the doer of the work which had to be done, had to be spurred to his task by an impetus such as could only be furnished by the neurosis from which Marx suffered! Today we have different problems to solve, and they must be solved by highly qualified persons who have freed themselves from neurosis; must be solved by champions of the class struggle who approach the undertaking with a keen sense of responsibility, an awakened consciousness, and a strongly developed community feeling.

To each age its own problems! Had Marx, as a neurotic, been content with the semblance of achievement, his work would have crepitated in the void, and he himself would have been a figure tragical in its futility. As things were, however, he performed a supreme task in the history of his own time and of subsequent times. That is why the class which he thus helped to become conscious of its own life and of the future which history holds in store for it, honours him as its greatest genius.

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