despite the gentleness and consideration natural to his position, should have been obliged by his conscience to express himself with as much sharpness as I used in my more ruthless capacity of people's tribune, and to accuse the Progressive Party, on account of its obstinate denial of the economic law proved by myself, of nothing less than deliberate deceit. Judge of the brilliant clarity to which I must have reduced that proof by the fact that it has provoked this language from a prince of the Church."

128. ENGELS TO MARX

Manchester, 24 October, 1869.

Irish history shows one how disastrous it is for a nation when it has subjugated another nation. All the abominations of the English have their origin in the Irish Pale.* I have still to work through the Cromwellian period, but this much seems certain to me, that things would have taken another turn in England but for the necessity for military rule in Ireland and the creation of a new aristocracy there.

129. ENGELS TO MARX

Manchester, 9 November, 1869.

I never thought that Mr. Carey would be such amusing reading. . . . The fellow imagines that the reason why rent is so high in South Lancashire and, among other places, in the Forest of Rossendale (a thickly-populated industrial centre) is because the land here is exceptionally good corn-producing land! I am making a heap of marginal notes for you and as soon as I have read his theory of rent will write you my opinion and send the book back. Of course he explains the origin of rent by just as wild and senseless a story as Ricardo, and his idea of how it took place is as absurd as the way in which all economists represent this sort of thing to themselves. But that has nothing to do with the theory of rent itself. What

* The section of Ireland in which the English laws, language, etc. were imposed before the conquest of the whole country was completed.

Letter 130. 18 November, 1869

Carey calls the "best land" you can see from the fact that, according to his own statement, it is exceptional now for the so-called best land, even in the Northern States, to yield a profit when taken into cultivation.

130. MARX TO ENGELS

London, 18 November, 1869.

Last Tuesday I opened the discussion on Point No. 1, the attitude of the British Ministry to the Irish Amnesty question. Made a speech of about three-quarters of an hour, much cheered, and then proposed the following resolutions on Point No. 1:

Resolved:

that in his reply to the Irish demands for the release of the imprisoned Irish patriots—a reply contained in his letter to Mr. O'Shea, etc., etc.—Mr. Gladstone deliberately insults the Irish nation;

that he clogs political amnesty with conditions alike degrading to the victims of misgovernment and the people they belong to;

that having, in the teeth of his responsible position, publicly and enthusiastically cheered on the American slaveholders' rebellion, he now steps in to preach to the Irish people the doctrine of passive obedience;

that his whole proceedings with reference to the Irish Amnesty question are the true and genuine offspring of that "policy of conquest," by the fiery denunciation of which Mr. Gladstone ousted his Tory rivals from office;

that the General Council of the "International Workingmen's Association" express their admiration of the spirited, firm and high-souled manner in which the Irish people carry on their Amnesty movement;

that these resolutions be communicated to all branches of, and workingmen's bodies connected with, the "International Workingmen's Association" in Europe and America.*

* These resolutions are given in English by Marx.
The Irish Amnesty question—the demand for an amnesty for the Fenian political prisoners, coupled with a protest against their treatment as convicts. See notes on pp. 231 and (Jenny Marx) 392. For the discussion on the General Council, which Marx used to expose George Odger and his friends, see Note to Letter 133, for Marx's main object see Letter 134. [Ed. Enq. ed.]

Gladstone, William Ewart (1809-98). At first a Conservative, became a Liberal and the leader of the Liberal Party. Held office as President of the Board of Trade and Chancellor of the Exchequer; between 1868 and 1892 was four times Prime Minister. Gladstone was one of the most determined representatives of the class interests of the British bourgeoisie in opposition to those of the landowners and the workers and to those of the oppressed peoples in the British colonies. Despite his liberal pacifist speeches he proceeded, where necessary, to the bloody suppression of colonial revolts (e.g., Egypt). He also conducted a struggle against the Irish national revolutionary movement and it was only renewed rebellion which forced him to introduce into the House of Commons two Bills (1886 and 1893) promising Ireland certain minor rights of self-government within the framework of forcible union with Britain (Home Rule); the first Bill was rejected by the House of Commons and the second by the House of Lords. [Ireland only received Dominion status in 1921, after the revolutionary struggle, 1919-21.]

131. Engels to Marx
Manchester, 19 November, 1869.

...And now for Carey.

The whole question at issue does not seem to me to have any direct connection with economics proper. Ricardo says, rent is the surplus yield of the more fertile pieces of land over that of the less fertile. Carey says just the same. ... They are therefore agreed on what rent is. The dispute is only about how rent arises. Now Ricardo's description of the process by which rent originates (Carey, p. 104) is just as unhistorical as all the similar detailed stories of the economists and as Carey's own great Robinson-Crusoeade about Adam and Eve (p. 96 seq.). In the older economists, including Ricardo, this is still excusable to a certain extent; they do not want any historical knowledge, they are just as unhistorical in their whole conception as the other apostles of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, with whom such alleged historical digressions are nothing more than a manner of speech enabling them to represent the origin of this, that or the other to themselves in a rational way, and in which primitive man always thinks and behaves exactly as if he were an apostle of eighteenth-century Enlightenment. But when Carey, who wants to develop his own historical theory, proceeds to introduce Adam and Eve to us as Yankee backwoodsmen, he cannot expect us to believe him, he has not the same excuse.

There would be no dispute at all if Ricardo had not been naïve enough to call the more productive land simply "fertile."

"The most fertile and most favourably situated land" is, according to Ricardo, the first cultivated. Just the way a thoughtful bourgeois in a land that has been cultivated for centuries would be bound to represent the thing to himself. Now Carey fastens on to the "fertile," foists on to Ricardo the assertion that the lands most capable of productivity in themselves are those taken into cultivation, and says: No, on the contrary, the most naturally fertile lands (the valley of the Amazon, the Ganges delta, tropical Africa, Borneo and New Guinea, etc.) are not cultivated even yet; the first settlers, because they cannot help themselves, start cultivation on land which drains itself, namely, strips lying on hills and slopes, but these are by nature poorer land. And when Ricardo says: "fertile and the most favourably situated," he is saying the same thing, without noticing that he is expressing himself loosely and that a contradiction can be introduced between these two qualifications connected by "and." But when Carey inserts a sketch on page 138 and declares that Ricardo puts his first settlers in the valley while Carey puts them on the hills (on bare crags and impracticable declivities of 45 degrees, in the sketch) he is simply lying about Ricardo.

Carey's historical illustrations, in so far as they refer to America, are the only useful thing in the book. As a Yankee
he was able to live through the process of settlement himself and could follow it from the beginning; here, therefore, he knows all about it. Nevertheless there is no doubt a lot of uncritical stuff here as well, which would have first to be sifted out. But when he gets to Europe he begins inventing and making himself ridiculous. And that he is not unprejudiced even in America is indicated by the eagerness with which he attempts to prove the worthlessness, indeed the negative quality, of the value of the uncultivated land (that in some respects it is worth minus 10 dollars an acre) and praises the self-sacrifice of the societies which, to their own certain ruin, make waste land serviceable for mankind. Related of the country of colossal land jobbery, this produces a humorous effect. Moreover, he never mentions the prairie land here and it is very lightly touched upon elsewhere. The whole story of the negative value of the waste land and all the calculation he gives to prove it are after all best contradicted by America itself. If the story were true, America would not only be the poorest of countries, but would be becoming relatively poorer every year, because more and more labour would be thrown away on this worthless land.

Now as to his definition of rent: "The amount received as rent is interest upon the value of labour expended, minus the difference between the productive power (the rent-paying land) and that of the newer soils which can be brought into activity by the application of the same labour that has been there given to the work"—pp. 165-6. This may, within certain limits, have a certain amount of truth here and there, especially in America. But rent is in any case such a complicated thing, to which so many other circumstances contribute, that even in those cases, this definition could apply only if other things were equal, only to two pieces of land lying side by side. That "interest for the value of labour expended" is also contained in rent, Ricardo knew as well as he. If Carey declares the land as such to be worse than worthless then rent is bound of course to be either "interest upon the value of labour expended," or, as it is called on p. 139, theft. But he has still to show us the transition from theft to interest.

The origin of rent in different countries and even in one and the same country seems to me to be by no means such a simple process as both Ricardo and Carey imagine. In Ricardo, as I said, this is excusable; it is the story of the fishers and hunters in the sphere of agriculture. It is not in fact an economic dogma, but Carey wants to make a dogma out of his theory and prove it to the world—for which indeed historical studies of a very different sort from Mr. Carey's are necessary. There may even have been places where rent originated in Ricardo's way and others where it originated in Carey's way, and still others where its origin was entirely different. One might also remark to Carey that where fever has to be reckoned with, and above all tropical fever, economics pretty well cease to hold. Unless his theory of population means that with the increase of inhabitants the surplus population is obliged to begin work on the most fertile, i.e., the most unhealthy pieces of land, an attempt in which they either succeed or perish. If so, he has successfully established a harmony between himself and Malthus.

In Northern Europe, rent originated neither in Ricardo's nor in Carey's way, but simply from the feudal burdens which were later reduced to their right economic level by free competition. In Italy different again, see Rome. To calculate how much of the rent in the old civilised countries is really original rent and how much is interest for labour invested is impossible, because every case is different. Moreover it has no importance at all once it has been proved that rent can also increase where no labour is put into the land. The grandfather of Sir Humphrey de Trafford, in Old Trafford near Manchester, was so laden with debt that he did not know what to do. His grandson, after paying off all the debts, has an income of £40,000 a year. If we subtract about £10,000 of this, which comes from building land, £30,000 remains as the yearly value of the agricultural estate, which eighty years ago brought in perhaps £2,000. Further, if £3,000 is taken as interest on invested labour and capital, which is a lot, there remains an increase of £25,000, or five times the former value, including the improvements. And all this, not because labour
was put into it, but because labour was put into something else near by—because the estate lies close to a city like Manchester, where milk, butter and garden produce get a good price. It is just the same on a larger scale. From the moment England became a corn and cattle importing country, and even earlier, the density of population became a factor in the determination of rent, and particularly of rent-increases, quite independently of the labour invested in the land of England as a whole. Ricardo, with his “most favourably situated lands” includes the consideration of connection with the market as well, Carey ignores it. And if he were then to say that land itself only has a negative, but situation a positive value, he would have nevertheless admitted, what he denies, that land, just because it can be monopolised, has, or can have, a value independent of the labour invested in it. But on this point Carey is as quiet as a mouse.

It is equally indifferent whether the labour invested in the land in civilised countries pays regularly or not. More than 20 years ago I made the assertion that in our present society no instrument of production exists which can last from 60 to 100 years, no factory, no building, etc., which by the end of its existence has covered the cost of its production. I still think that one way and another this is perfectly true. And if Carey and I are both right, that proves nothing about the rate of profit or the origin of rent, it only proves that bourgeois production, even measured by its own standards, is rotten.

With these random comments on Carey you will no doubt have enough. They are very mixed because I made no extracts. As for the historical—materialistic—scientific trimming, its whole value that of the two trees, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, which he has planted in his Paradisical work, not indeed for Adam and Eve, who have to slave in the backwoods, but for their descendants. This wretched ignorant stuff can only be compared with the shamelessness which allows him to unburden himself of such nonsense.

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... In my book against Proudhon,* where I still fully accepted Ricardo’s theory of rent, I already showed what was false in it, even from Ricardo’s own point of view.

“Ricardo, after having presupposed bourgeois production as necessary for the determination of rent, nevertheless applies it to landed property in every epoch and every country. These are the errors of all the economists, who regard the conditions of bourgeois production as eternal categories.” Mr. Proudhon had of course immediately transformed Ricardo’s theory into an expression of equalitarian morality and therefore discovered in Ricardo’s determination of rent, “an immense land valuation, carried out by farmers and landlords in opposition to one another... in a higher interest of which the final result must be to equalise the possession of the land between the exploiters of the soil and the industrialists.”

Upon this I remark, among other things:

“In order that any valuation whatever, determined by rent, should have a practical value, it is always necessary to remain within the actual conditions of society. Now we have shown that the rent paid for his farm by a farmer to his landlord roughly expresses the rent only in those countries which are most advanced industrially and commercially. And this farm rent often also includes the interest paid to the landlord for the capital invested in the land. The situation of the land, the neighbourhood of towns and many other circumstances have their effect on the farming and modify the rent. On the other hand, rent cannot be a constant index of the degree of fertility possessed by a piece of land, since at each instant the modern application of chemistry comes in to change the nature of the soil, and it is precisely in the present day that geological knowledge is beginning to upset the old estimates of relative fertility... fertility is not such a natural quality as might well be believed; it is intimately connected with existing social relations.”

* La Misère de la Philosophie [Poverty of Philosophy], chap. II (4).
With regard to the progress of cultivation in the United States themselves, Mr. Carey ignores even the most familiar facts. The English agricultural chemist, Johnstone, for instance, shows in his Notes on the United States that the settlers who left New England for the State of New York left worse for better land (better not in Carey’s sense, that the land has first to be made, but in the chemical and at the same time economic sense). The settlers from the State of New York who established themselves at first beyond the Great Lakes, say in Michigan, left better for worse land, etc. The settlers in Virginia exploited the land suited both in situation and fertility to their chief product, tobacco, so abominably that they had to move on to Ohio, where the land was less good for this product (though not for wheat, etc.). The nationality of the immigrants also asserted itself in their settlements. The people from Norway and from our high forest lands sought out the rough northern forest land of Wisconsin; the Yankees in the same province kept to the prairies, etc.

Prairies, both in the United States and Australia, are, in fact, a thorn in Carey’s flesh. According to him land which is not absolutely overgrown with forests is infertile by nature—including, therefore, all natural pasture land.

The best of it is that Carey’s two great final conclusions (relating to the United States) stand in direct contradiction to his dogma. First, owing to the diabolical influence of England, the inhabitants, instead of socially cultivating the good model lands of New England, are disseminated over the poorer (l) lands of the West. Progress therefore from better land to worse. (Carey’s “dissemination,” in opposition to “association,” by the by, is all copied out of Wakefield). Second, in the south of the United States there is the unfortunate fact that the slaveowners (whom Mr. Carey, as a harmonist, has hitherto defended in all his previous works) take the better land into cultivation too soon and leave out the worst. In fact just what ought not to be: starting with the better land! If Carey had convinced himself by this instance that the real cultivators, in this case the slaves, were decided in this course neither by economic nor any other reason of their own, but by

external force, it would have been obvious to him that this condition also exists in other lands.

According to his theory, cultivation in Europe should have started from the mountains of Norway and continued to the Mediterranean countries instead of proceeding in the reverse direction.

Carey tries, by a highly absurd and fantastic theory of money, to conjure away the awkward economic fact that, unlike all other improved machinery, the earth-machine, which according to him is always a better one, increases—(periodically at least)—the cost of its products instead of cheapening them. (This was one of the points which influenced Ricardo; he could see no further than his nose, namely, the history of corn prices in England from about 1780 to 1815).

As a harmonist, Carey first proved that there was no antagonism between capitalist and wage-labourer. The second step was to prove the harmony between landowner and capitalist, and this is done by taking landownership where it is still in an undeveloped state and representing this as normal. The great and decisive difference between the colonies and the old civilised countries, that in the latter the mass of the population is excluded from land and soil—whether fertile or unfertile, cultivated or uncultivated—by the system of landed property, while in the colony land can, relatively speaking, still be appropriated by the cultivator himself—this fact must not be mentioned whatever happens. It must have absolutely nothing to do with the rapid development of the colonies. The disagreeable “question of property” in its most disagreeable form, would indeed knock harmony off its feet.

As for the deliberate distortion that, because in a country with developed production the natural fertility of the soil is an important condition for the production of surplus value (or, as Ricardo says, affects the rate of profit), therefore the converse must also follow that the richest and most developed production will be found in the most naturally fertile lands, so that it must stand higher, e.g., in Mexico than in New England, I have already answered this in Capital, p. 502 et seq.*

Carey's only merit is that he is just as one-sided in asserting the progress from worse to better lands as Ricardo is in asserting the opposite. In reality, different kinds of land, unequal in their degrees of fertility, are always cultivated simultaneously, and therefore the Germans, the Slavs and the Celts took this into account and made a very careful division of the strips of land of different kinds among the members of the community; it was this which later made the breaking up of the common lands so difficult. As to the progress of cultivation throughout the course of history, however, this, influenced by a mass of circumstances, sometimes takes place in both directions at once, sometimes one tendency prevails for a period and sometimes the other.

Interest on the capital embodied in the land becomes a part of the differential rent just because of the fact that the landowner gets this interest from capital which not he but the tenant-farmer has put into the land. This fact, known throughout Europe, is supposed to have no economic existence because the tenant system is not yet developed in the United States. But there the thing takes place in another form. The land jobber and not the farmer gets paid in the end, in the price of the land, for the capital invested by the latter. Indeed the history of the pioneers and land jobbers in the United States often reminds one of the worst horrors taking place, e.g., in Ireland.

133. ENGELS TO MARX
Manchester, 29 November, 1869.

The election in Tipperary* is an event. It forces the Fenians out of empty conspiracy and the fabrication of small coups into a path of action which, even if legal in appearance, is still far more revolutionary than what they have been doing since the failure of their insurrection. In fact, they are adopting the methods of the French workers and that is an enormous advance. If only the thing is carried on as intended. The terror which this new turn has produced among the philistines,

*The election of O'Donovan Rossa, one of the Fenian prisoners. See Note to Letter 134. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

and which is now being screamed throughout the whole Liberal press, is the best proof that this time the nail has been hit on the head. Typical is the Solicitors' Journal, which remarks with horror that the election of a political prisoner is without precedent in the realm of Britain! So much the worse—where is there a country except England in which such a case is not a common event? The worthy Gladstone must be horribly annoyed.

But you really ought to look at the Times now. Three leaders in eight days in which either it is demanded of the Government or the Government itself demands that an end be put to the excesses of the Irish Nationalist press.

I am very eager to hear about your debate tomorrow evening and its result, about which there can be no doubt. It would be very fine to get Odger into a hole. I hope Bradlaugh will stand for Southwark as well as he, and it would be much better if Bradlaugh were elected. For the rest, if the English workers cannot take an example from the peasants of Tipperary they are in a bad way....

Last week I waded through the tracts by old Sir John Davies (Attorney-General for Ireland under James). I do not know if you have read them, they are the main source; at any rate you have seen them quoted a hundred times. It is a real shame that one cannot have the original sources for everything; one can see infinitely more from them than from the second-hand versions which reduce everything that is clear and simple in the original to confusion and complexity.

From these tracts it is clear that communal property in land still existed in full force in Ireland in the year 1600, and this was brought forward by Mr. Davies in the pleas regarding the confiscation of the alienated lands in Ulster, as a proof that the land did not belong to the individual owners (peasants) and therefore either belonged to the lord, who had forfeited it, or from the beginning to the Crown. I have never read anything finer than this plea. The division took place ares each every two to three years. In another pamphlet he gives an exact description of the income, etc., of the chief of the clan. These things I have never seen quoted and if you can use them I will send
them you in detail. At the same time I have nicely caught Monsieur Goldwin Smith. This person has never read Davies and so puts up the most absurd assertions in extenuation of the English. But I shall get the fellow....

"Your Debate... Odger," etc. The debate in the General Council of the International on the Irish resolution. (See Letters 130, 134.) Marx had described the adjourned debate to Engels on November 26, 1869:

"The meeting last Tuesday was very fiery, heated and violent. Mr. Muddlehead or whatever in the hell the fellow is called*—a Chartist and old friend of Harney's—had brought along Odger and Applegarth as a precaution. On the other side Weston and Lucraft were absent because they had gone to an Irish ball. Reynolds had published my resolutions in its Saturday issue, together with a summary of my speech... which was put right on the front page, after the first leading article. This seems to have scared the people who are making love to Gladstone. Hence the appearance of Odger and a long rambling speech from Maddershead, who got knocked on the head damned heavily by Milner (an Irishman himself). Applegarth was sitting next me and therefore did not dare to speak against the resolution, indeed he spoke for it, obviously with an uneasy conscience. Odger said that if the resolutions were forced to a vote he would be obliged to vote for them, but unanimity would surely be better, could be reached with a few small modifications, etc. To this, as he is the one I particularly want to put into a hole, I replied that he should bring forward his amendments next Tuesday! At our last meeting, although many of our most reliable members were absent, we should have got the resolution through with only one vote against. Next Tuesday we shall be in full force."

Of the final discussion Marx reported to Engels on December 4: "The resolutions unanimously carried, despite Odger's persistent verbal amendments. I only gave way to him on one point: to omit the word 'deliberate' before 'insults' in paragraph one. I did this on the pretence that everything a Prime Minister did publicly must be presumed eo ipso to be

* Mottershead. See also Letter 168.

Deliberate. The real reason was that I knew that if once we got the essential point of paragraph one conceded all further opposition would be useless... With the exception of Mottershead, who came out as John Bull, and Odger, who was as much of a diplomat as ever, the English delegates behaved splendidly."

A general debate on the relation of the English working class to the Irish question was to follow. (See Letters 134, 136.) [Ed. Eng. ed.]

Odger, etc. (See Note to Letter 71.) Eighteen months previously Marx had written to Kugelmann (April 6, 1868):

"The Irish question is dominant here just now. Of course it is only being exploited by Gladstone and Co. in order to get them into office, principally as an election cry for the forthcoming elections, which will be held on household suffrage. At the moment this turn of affairs is harmful for the workers' party, for the intrigues among the workers who want to get into the next parliament, like Odger and Potter, now have a new excuse for joining with the bourgeois Liberals." Gladstone came into office at the elections that autumn. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

Applegarth, Robert (1833-1923). Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (1862). Marx wrote to Engels (December 4, 1869) that Applegarth was "very important" because he was regarded by both Houses of Parliament as "the officially recognised representative of the English trade unions." Together with Odger and Allan (Amalgamated Society of Engineers) he was one of the so-called "Junta," the leading representatives of the "new model" trade unionism. Marx related to Engels (December 4) that after the final debate on the Irish question Applegarth, "who had behaved very well," had informed him that "an eminent member of the House of Commons" had been commissioned by "an eminent member of the House of Lords" to ask Applegarth if he had voted for the abolition of all private property at the Basle Congress of the International. His answer would decide the attitude of his parliamentary patrons. Applegarth wanted to "give the fellows a decided answer" and commissioned Marx to draw up "the reason" for him. Despite ill-health and press of work Marx wrote him "eight pages which will take him a long time to chew" on "landed property and the necessity of its abolition." "Odger and Applegarth," wrote Marx to Engels, April 5, 1869, "are
both possessed with a mania for compromise and a thirst for respectability." Applegarth eventually became the owner of a flourishing business. See also Notes on Odger and on the Beehive, Letter 71. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

134. **MARX TO KUGELMANN**

London, 29 November, 1869.

You will probably have seen in the Volksstaat the resolution against Gladstone which I proposed on the question of the Irish amnesty. I have now attacked Gladstone—and it has attracted attention here—just as I formerly attacked Palmerston. The demagogic refugees here love to fall upon the Continental despots from a safe distance. That sort of thing only attracts me, when it happens *vultus instantis tyranni.*

Nevertheless both my coming out on this Irish Amnesty question and my further proposal to the General Council to discuss the relation of the English working class to Ireland and to pass resolutions on it, have of course other objects besides that of speaking out loudly and decidedly for the oppressed Irish against their oppressors.

I have become more and more convinced—and the only question is to bring this conviction home to the English working class—that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland in the most definite way from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship. And, indeed, this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it must join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England itself is crippled by the disunion with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England. The primary condition of emancipation here—the overthrow of the English landed oligarchy—remains impossible because its position here cannot be stormed so long as it maintains its strongly entrenched outposts in Ireland. But there, once affairs are in the hands of the Irish people itself, once it is made its own legislator and ruler, once it becomes autonomous, the abolition of the landed aristocracy (to a large extent the same persons as the English landlords) will be infinitely easier than here, because in Ireland it is not merely a simple economic question, but at the same time a national question, since the landlords there are not like those in England, the traditional dignitaries and representatives, but are the mortally hated oppressors of a nation. And not only does England’s internal social development remain crippled by her present relation with Ireland; her foreign policy, and particularly her policy with regard to Russia and America, suffers the same fate.

But since the English working class undoubtedly throws the decisive weight into the scale of social emancipation generally, the lever has to be applied here. As a matter of fact, the English republic under Cromwell met shipwreck in—Ireland. *Non bis in idem!* [Not twice for the same thing]. The Irish have played a capital joke on the English government by electing the "convict felon" O'Donovan Rossa to Parliament. The government papers are already threatening a renewed suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, a "renewed system of terror." In fact, England never has and never can—so long as the present relation lasts—rule Ireland otherwise than by the most abominable reign of terror and the most reprehensible corruption.*

*O’DONOVAN ROSSA (born 1831). Irish politician and journalist. In 1865 founded in Dublin the organ of the Fenians, the Irish People. The revolutionary tendencies of this paper led to his being sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1869 he was elected while in prison as M.P. for Tipperary. (Letter 133.) The election was declared invalid but he was released and in

* Letters to Dr. Kugelmann (Martin Lawrence 1934) page 95.
1870 went to America. [For the Fenians compare Letters 102, 130, 133, 136.]

[Habeas corpus, supposed to guarantee personal freedom to British subjects. Can be suspended by Parliament.]

135. Engels to Marx

Manchester, 9 December, 1869.

... Ireland still remains the Holy Isle whose aspirations must on no account be mixed with the profane class-struggles of the rest of the sinful world. This is no doubt partly honest madness on the part of the people, but it is equally certain that it is also partly a calculation on the side of the leaders in order to maintain their domination over the peasant. Added to this, a nation of peasants always has to take its literary representatives from the bourgeoisie of the towns and their intelligentsia, and in this respect Dublin (I mean Catholic Dublin) is to Ireland much what Copenhagen is to Denmark. But to these gentry the whole labour movement is pure heresy and the Irish peasant must not on any account know that the Socialist workers are his sole allies in Europe.

136. Marx to Engels

London, 10 December, 1869.

As to the Irish question.... The way I shall put forward the matter next Tuesday is this: that quite apart from all phrases about "international" and "human" justice for Ireland—which are to be taken for granted in the International Council—it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland. And this is my most complete conviction, and for reasons which in part I cannot tell the English workers themselves. For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendancy. I always expressed this point of view in the New York Tribune. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general.

I have read a lot of Davis in extracts. The book itself I had only glanced through superficially in the Museum. So you would do me a service if you would copy out the passages relating to common property. You must get Curran's Speeches edited by Davis, (London, James Duffy, 22 Paternoster Row.) I meant to have given it you when you were in London. It is now circulating among the English members of the Central Council and God knows when I shall see it again. For the period 1779-80 (Union) it is of decisive importance, not only because of Curran's speeches (especially the legal ones; I consider Curran the only great advocate—people's advocate—of the eighteenth century and the noblest nature, while Grattan was a parliamentary rogue) but because you will find quoted there all the sources for the United Irishmen. This period is of the highest interest, scientifically and dramatically. Firstly, the foul doings of the English in 1788-89 repeated (and perhaps even intensified) in 1788-89. Secondly, it can be easily proved that there was a class movement in the Irish movement itself. Thirdly, the infamous policy of Pitt. Fourthly, which will annoy the English gentlemen very much, the proof that Ireland came to grief because, in fact, from a revolutionary standpoint, the Irish were too far advanced for the English Church and King mob, while on the other hand the English reaction in England had its roots (as in Cromwell's time) in the subjugation of Ireland. This period must be described in at least one chapter. John Bull in the pillory!... As to the present Irish movement, there are three important factors: (1) opposition to lawyers and trading politicians and blarney; (2) opposition to the dictates of the priests, who (the superior ones) are traitors, as in O'Connell's time, from 1789-1800; (3) the agricultural labouring class beginning to come out against the farming class at the last meetings. (A similar phenomenon in 1795-1800.)

The rise of the Irishman was only due to the suppression of the Fenian press. For a long time it had been in opposition
to Fenianism. Luby, etc., of the Irish People, etc., were educated men who treated religion as a bagatelle. The government put them in prison and then came the Pigotts and Co. The Irishman will only be anything until those people come out of prison again. It is aware of this although it is making political capital now by declaiming for the "felon-convicts."

Curran, John Philpot (1750-1817). Irish barrister and politician who took part in the struggle for emancipation. Elected to the House of Commons in 1770, Curran attacked himself to the opposition and protested against English policy in Ireland. Pitt tried to bribe him with position and a peerage but Curran would not be bribed. [In 1783 he became a member of the freed Irish Parliament; he was a follower of Grattan's party. Curran's speeches in defence of Wolfe Tone and other Irish rebels made him famous.] Byron wrote of him: "He has fifty faces and twice as many voices when he mimics... I have heard that man speak more poetry than I have ever seen written." His speeches were published in 1855.

Grattan, Henry (1746-1820). Succeeded Flood as leader of the Protestant "patriot" party which carried on agitation for the emancipation of the Irish parliament. The measure of emancipation granted in 1783, however, (see Note to Letter 128), was due to causes more powerful than the agitation of Grattan's party. Grattan, whom Fox called "the Irish Demosthenes," was a great figure in the Irish parliament ("Grattan's parliament"). He always protested his loyalty to the English Crown. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

137. Engels to Marx

[Manchester] 1 February, 1870.

It is a real mercy that in spite of G. Flourens, there was no outbreak at Noir's funeral. The fury of the "Pays"* shows the bitter disappointment of the Bonapartists. Indeed what could be wished for better than to catch the whole of the


138. Marx to Engels

[London] 10 February, 1870

I have read the first 150 pages of Flerovsky's book (they are taken up by Siberia, North Russia and Astrakan). This is the first work to tell the truth about Russian economic conditions. The man is a determined enemy of what he calls "Russian optimism." I never held very rosy views of this communistic Eldorado, but Flerovsky surpasses all expectations. In fact it is wonderful and undoubtedly a sign of change that such a thing could be printed in Petersburg at all.

"Our proletariat is small in number but the mass of our
working class consists entirely of workers whose lot is worse than the lot of all other proletarians.*

The method of presentation is quite original, at times it reminds one most of Monteil. One can see that the man has travelled around everywhere and seen everything for himself. A glowing hatred of landlords, capitalists and officials. No socialist doctrine, no mysticism about the land (although in favour of the communal form of ownership), no nihilistic extravagance. Here and there a certain amount of well-meaning twaddle, which, however, is suited to the stage of development reached by the people for whom the book is intended. In any case this is the most important book which has appeared since your *Condition of the Working Class*. The family life of the Russian peasants—the awful beating to death of wives, the vodka and the concubines—is also well described. It will therefore come quite opportunely if you would now send me the imaginative lies of Citizen Herzen.

*Flerovsky, Vassili Vassilyevitch (1829-1918) Russian publicist, Narodnik. In 1862, having protested against the actions of the Government, he drew reprisals upon himself and was first banished to Astrakhan, then to Siberia (Kuznez, Tomsk district) and later to the northern part of European Russia (Vologda, Tver). In the 'eighties he went abroad. The book which Marx is referring to, *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*, was published in 1868. (See next letter).

Marx, in his letter to the members of the Committee of the Russian section in Geneva on March 24, 1870, said of *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*, "this book was a real discovery for Europe." "The Russian optimism which was widely spread on the Continent, even among the so-called revolutionaries, is ruthlessly exposed in this work. I am doing the book no injury if I say that in certain places it cannot, from a purely theoretical point of view, be criticised altogether favourably. It is the production of an earnest observer, a fearless worker, a dispassionate critic, a great artist and above all of a man whom servitude of every kind enrages, who will not tolerate all manner of national hymns of praise and who

*Quoted by Marx in Russian.

Letter 139. 12 February, 1870

passionately enters into all the sufferings and the struggle of the productive class. Works such as those of Flerovsky and those of their teacher, Chernyshevsky, really do the Russians honour and prove that their country is also beginning to participate in the general movement of our century.

Monteil, Amas Alexis (1769-1850) French historian who defended the ideas of the great French Revolution. His chief work was his "*Histoire des Français des divers États.*" [History of the French in their Different Orders.]

Herzen, Alexander (1812-70). Russian author and revolutionary who "played a great part in the preparation of the Russian revolution." (Lenin.) He belonged to the generation of revolutionaries of the landowning class in the first half of the nineteenth century. "Herzen came close to dialectical materialism and stopped short—before historical materialism." (Lenin.) After the defeat of the Revolution of 1848, in "that period of history when the revolutionary spirit of bourgeois democracy was already dead and the revolutionary consciousness of the socialist proletariat was not yet mature" (Lenin), Herzen became a sceptic. He had been living abroad since the end of the 'forties and did not believe in the revolutionary movement in Russia, though in the free Russian press which he had established abroad he supported every revolutionary manifestation in Russia. "Herzen was the founder of 'Russian' socialism, of 'Narodnikism.'" (Lenin.) Marx criticised Herzen for idealising the Russian village commune and failing to see the signs of its decay.

139. Marx to Engels


Your introduction is very good.* I know of nothing which should be altered or added. With your treatment of 1866 I agree word for word. The double thrust at Wilhelm [Liebknecht] with the People's Party and Schweitzer with his bodyguard of ruffians is very pretty!...†

* Introduction to second edition of Engels' *Peasant War in Germany*, 1870.
† The thrust against Wilhelm Liebknecht is the passage where Engels calls the National Liberals and the People's Party "the two opposite poles of the same narrow-mindedness." The thrust against Schweitzer—the passage in which Engels says that the only serious opponent of revolution remaining in Germany is—the Prussian government.

What amuses me very much among other things in Flerovsky is his polemic against the direct dues paid by the peasantry. It is a regular reproduction of Marshal Vauban and Boisguillebert. He feels too that the situation of the country people has its analogy in the period of the old French monarchy (after Louis XIV). Like Monteil, he has a great feeling for national characteristics—"the honest Kalmuck," "the Mordwin, poetical despite his dirt" (he compares him to the Irish), the "agile, lively, epicurean Tartar," "the talented Little Russian," etc. Like a good Russian he teaches his fellow countrymen what they should do to turn the hatred which all these races have for them into its opposite. As an example of this hatred he instances among other things a genuinely Russian colony which has emigrated from Poland to Siberia. These people only know Russian and not a word of Polish, but they regard themselves as Poles and devote a Polish hatred to the Russians, etc.

From his book it follows irrefutably that the present conditions in Russia can no longer be maintained, that the emancipation of the serfs only, of course, hastened the process of disintegration and that a fearful social revolution is approaching. Here too one sees the real basis of the schoolboy nihilism which is at present the fashion among Russian students, etc. In Geneva, by the by, a new colony of exiled Russian students has been formed whose programme proclaims opposition to Pan-Slavism, which is to be replaced by the International.

In a special section Flerovsky shows that the "Russification" of the alien races is a sheer optimistic delusion, even in the East.

140. **Marx to Engels**


I enclose a letter from the Russian colony in Geneva. We have admitted them and I have accepted their commission.

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*Quoted in Russian.
141. Marx to Meyer and Vogt*

[London] 9 April, 1870.

After occupying myself with the Irish question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) cannot be delivered in England but only in Ireland. On December 1, 1869, the General Council issued a confidential circular drawn up by me in French (for the reaction upon England only the French, not the German, papers are important), on the relation of the Irish national struggle to the emancipation of the working class and therefore on the attitude which the International Workingmen's Association should take towards the Irish question.

I will here only give you quite shortly the decisive points.

Ireland is the bulwark of the English landed aristocracy. The exploitation of this country is not only one of the main sources of their material wealth, it is their greatest moral strength. They, in fact, represent the domination of England over Ireland. Ireland is therefore the great means by which the English aristocracy maintains its domination in England itself.

If, on the other hand, the English army and police were withdrawn to-morrow, you would at once have an agrarian revolution in Ireland. But the overthrow of the English aristocracy in Ireland involves and has as a necessary consequence its overthrow in England. And this would fulfill the prerequisite for the proletarian revolution in England. The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England itself, because the land question has hitherto been the exclusive form of the social question in Ireland, because it is a question of existence, of life and death, for the immense majority of the Irish people and because it is at the same time inseparable from the national question. Quite apart from the passionate character of the

* Two German members of the North American section of the International living in New York. Both took part in the 1848 Revolution. See Letter 117, Note. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

Irish and the fact that they are more revolutionary than the English.

As for the English bourgeoisie, they have in the first place a common interest with the aristocracy in transforming Ireland into a mere pasture land which provides the English market with meat and wool at the cheapest possible prices. Hence they are interested in reducing, by expropriation and forcible emigration, the Irish population to such a small number that English capital, invested in land leased for farming, can function with "security." They have the same interest in clearing the estate of Ireland as they had in clearing the agricultural districts of England and Scotland. The £6000-£8000 absentee and other Irish revenues which at present flow annually to London have likewise to be taken into account.*

But the English bourgeoisie has also much more important interests in the present Irish regime. Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of farming, Ireland supplies its own surplus to the English labour market and thus forces down wages and lowers the moral and material position of the English working class. And most important of all: every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working-class population divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own coin. He regards the English worker as both sharing in the guilt for the English domination in Ireland and at the same time serving as its stupid tool.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified

* "£6000-£8000"—apparently refers to the average income of an absentee landlord. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. It is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And of this that class is well aware.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. The antagonism between English and Irish is the hidden basis of the conflict between the United States and England. It makes any honest and serious co-operation between the working classes of the two countries impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge of the social conflict by their mutual threats and if need be by war with one another.

England, as the metropolis of capital, as the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the time being the most important country for the workers’ revolution, and moreover the only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain point of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen’s Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent.

Hence the task of the “International” is everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. The special task of the Central Council in London is to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or human sympathy but the first condition of their own emancipation.”

“In his pamphlet on The Self-Determination of Nations, Lenin writes: “The policy of Marx and Engels in the Irish question furnished a powerful example, which has retained its highly practical significance up to the present day, of the attitude which the proletariat of oppressing nations must adopt towards nationalist movements. . . . If the Irish and English proletariat had not accepted Marx’s policy and had not issued the slogan

of the separation of Ireland this would have been the worst opportunism on their part, forgetfulness of the tasks of democrats and Socialists, a concession to English reaction and the English bourgeoisie.”

Marx and Engels developed the main lines of the national policy of the revolutionary proletariat in the period of pre-imperialist, pre-monopolistic capitalism, and gave a number of important examples of the correct application of these fundamental principles, always taking the whole of the national and international conditions and factors into consideration. The task of Communists in the period of imperialism consists in the correct application of these fundamental principles under the changed conditions of imperialistic capitalism, including the existence of a proletarian state which demonstrates how the proletariat solves the national question in practice. In its struggle for emancipation the attitude of the proletariat towards the movement for national liberation is not one of indifference, like that of Rosa Luxemburg even in 1915; the proletariat supports the national movement in the most determined and active way because that movement is objectively revolutionary and leads to rebellion against imperialism in the very place where it has its “greatest reserve and most important source of strength,” thus furthering the proletarian revolution. Hence Stalin writes: “Lenin is absolutely right when he says that the national movement of the oppressed countries must be regarded not from the standpoint of formal democracy, but from that of the real results of the struggle against imperialism, i.e., not in isolation but on a world scale.”

142. MARX TO ENGELS

[London], 18 May, 1870.

Our members in France are giving the French government ocular proof of the difference between a secret political society and a genuine workers’ organisation. No sooner had the government jailed all the members of the Paris, Lyons, Rouen, Marseilles, etc., committees (some of them fled to Belgium and Switzerland) than twice the number of committees announced themselves as their successors with the most daring
and provocative declarations in the newspapers (and as an additional precaution they added their private addresses as well). At last the French government has done what we have so long wanted it to do and transformed the political question, Empire or Republic, into a question of life or death for the working-class.

143. Marx to Engels


But the paper* is also interesting on account of the leading article by old Delescluze. Despite his opposition to the government, the most complete expression of chauvinism—because France alone is the home of ideas—(of the ideas it has got about itself). The only thing that annoys these republican chauvinists is that the real expression of their idol—L. Bonaparte the long-nosed Stock Exchange shark—does not correspond to their fancy picture. The French need a thrashing. If the Prussians win, the centralisation of the state power will be useful for the centralisation of the German working class. German predominance would also transfer the centre of gravity of the workers' movement in Western Europe from France to Germany, and one has only to compare the movement in the two countries from 1866 till now to see that the German working class is superior to the French both theoretically and organisationally. Their predominance over the French on the world stage would also mean the predominance of our theory over Proudhon's, etc.

Finally, I am also enclosing the criticism of my book† in Hildebrand's Journal of Economy and Statistics. My physical state scarcely disposes me to merriment, but I have cried with laughter over this essay—bona fide tears of mirth. With the reaction and the downfall of the heroic age of philosophy in Germany the "petty bourgeois", inborn in every German citizen, has again asserted himself—in philosophic drivel worthy of Moses Mendelssohn, would-be clever and superior peevish

* La Révol, a democratic French newspaper.
† Capital, Volume I, 1867. Hildebrand's Zeitschrift für Ökonome und Statistik.

144. Marx to Engels


The Empire is made, i.e., the German Empire. It seems as if all the trickery that has been perpetrated since the Second Empire has finally resulted in carrying out, by hook and crook, though neither by the path intended nor in the way imagined, the "national" aims of 1848—Hungary, Italy, Germany! It seems to me that this sort of movement will only come to an end as soon as the Prussians and the Russians come to blows. This is by no means improbable. The press of the Moscovite party (I have seen a lot of it at Borkheim's) has attacked the Russian government just as violently for its friendly attitude to Prussia as the French papers representing Thiers' point of view attacked Boustrapa* in 1866 for his flirtation with Prussia. Only the tsar, the German-Russian party and the official St. Petersburg Journal sounded a note hostile to France. But the last thing they expected was such a decided Prussian-German success. Like Bonaparte in 1866, they thought that the belligerent powers would weaken each other by a long struggle so that Holy Russia could intervene as supreme arbiter and dictate to them.

But now! If Alexander does not want to be poisoned, something must be done to appease the national party. Russia's prestige will obviously be even more "injured" by a German-Prussian Empire than the prestige of the Second Empire was by the North German Confederation.

Russia therefore—just as Bonaparte did in 1866-70—will intrigue with Prussia in order to get concessions in relation to Turkey, and all this trickery, despite the Russian religion of the Hohenzollerns, will end in war between the tricksters. However silly German Michael may be, his newly fortified national sentiment will hardly allow him to be pressed into the service

* Napoleon III.
of Russia without any remaining reason whatever, or so much as a pretext (especially now when he can no longer be lectured into putting up with everything in order that German unity may first be achieved). Qui viva verra [who lives longest will see most]. If our Handsome William* lives on for a bit we may yet witness his proclamations to the Poles. When God wants to do something especially great, says old Carlyle, he always chooses out the stupidest people for it.

What troubles me at the moment is the state of affairs in France itself. The next great battle can hardly fail to turn against the French. And then? If the defeated army retreats to Paris, under the leadership of Boustruph, the result will be a peace of the most humiliating kind, perhaps with the restoration of the Orleans. If a revolution breaks out in Paris, the question is whether they have the means and the leadership to offer a serious resistance to the Prussians. One cannot conceal from oneself that twenty years of the Bonapartist farce have produced enormous demoralisation. One is hardly justified in reckoning on revolutionary heroism. What do you think about it?

*Engels, writing as a military expert, had sixty articles on the Franco-Prussian War published by the bourgeois Pall Mall Gazette; these articles attracted great attention. In his article of August 8, 1870, he wrote:

"The French army has lost all initiative. Its movements are dictated less by military considerations than by political necessities. Here are 300,000 men almost within sight of the enemy. If their movements are to be ruled, not by what is done in the enemy's camp, but by what happens or may happen in Paris, they are half beaten already. Nobody, of course, can foretell with certainty the result of the general battle which is now impending, if not going on; but this much we may say, that another week of such strategy as Napoleon III has shown since Thursday is alone sufficient to destroy the best and largest army in the world."

* Kaiser Wilhelm I.

145. ENGELS TO MARX
Manchester, 15 August, 1870.

The position seems to me to be this: Germany has been driven by Badinguet [Napoleon III] into a war for her national existence. If Badinguet defeats her, Bonapartism will be strengthened for years to come and Germany broken for years, perhaps for generations. In that case there can be no more question of an independent German working-class movement either, the struggle to restore the national existence will absorb everything, and at best the German workers will be dragged in the wake of the French. If Germany wins, French Bonapartism will at any rate be smashed, the endless row about the establishment of German unity will at last be got rid of, the German workers will be able to organise themselves on a national scale quite different from that hitherto, and the French workers, whatever sort of government may succeed this one, are certain to have a freer field than under Bonapartism. The whole mass of the German people of every class have realised that this is first and foremost a question of national existence and have therefore at once flung themselves into it. That in these circumstances a German political party should preach total obstruction a la Wilhelm [Liebknecht] and place all sorts of secondary considerations before the main consideration, seems to me impossible.

Added to this is the fact that Badinguet would never have been able to conduct this war without the chauvinism of the mass of the French population: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and the imperialistic, Haussmannist* building workers' proletariat derived from the peasants, which Bonaparte created in the big towns. Until this chauvinism is knocked on the head, and that properly, peace be-

* Haussmann: French official and Prefect of the Seine under Napoleon III; many new streets were made and new buildings erected at his direction—Boulevard Haussmann. Engels (in his work The Housing Question II. 5) explains that what he calls "Haussmannism" took the form under Napoleon III of "breaking up the closely built working-class districts by long, straight, wide streets and enclosing them on each side with big luxury buildings, both with the strategical aim of making barricades fighting more difficult and with the object of forming a special Bonapartist building-workers' proletariat dependent on the government, and thus transforming the city into a pure luxury city." [Ed. Eng. ed.]
between Germany and France is impossible. One might have expected that a proletarian revolution would have undertaken this work, but since the war is already there, nothing remains for the Germans but to do it themselves and quickly.

Now come the secondary considerations. For the fact that this war was ordered by Lehmann [Wilhelm I] Bismarck & Co., and must minister to their temporary glorification if they conduct it successfully, we have to thank the miserable state of the German bourgeoisie. It is certainly very unpleasant but cannot be altered. But to magnify anti-Bismarckism into the sole guiding principle on this account would be absurd. In the first place, Bismarck, as in 1866, is at present doing a bit of our work for us, in his own way and without meaning to, but all the same he is doing it. He is clearing the ground for us better than before. And then we are no longer at the year 1815. The South Germans are bound now to enter the Reichstag and this will develop a counterpoise to Prussianism. Then there are the national duties which will fall to Prussia and which, as you wrote, will from the outset forbid the Russian alliance. In general to try à la Liebknecht to set the clock back on all that has happened since 1866 is senseless. But we know our model South Germans. There is nothing to be done with these fools.

I think our people can:

1. Join the national movement—you can see from Kugelmann's letter how strong it is—in so far as and for so long as it is limited to the defence of Germany (which does not exclude an offensive, in certain circumstances, before peace is arrived at).

2. At the same time emphasise the difference between German-national and dynastic-Prussian interests.

3. Work against any annexation of Alsace and Lorraine—Bismarck is now revealing the intention of annexing them to Bavaria and Baden.

4. As soon as a non-chaudunistic republican government is at the helm in Paris, work for an honourable peace with it.

5. Constantly stress the unity of interest between the German and French workers, who did not approve of the war and are also not making war on each other.

(6) Russia, as in the International Address.

Wilhelm's assertion that because Bismarck is a former accomplice of Badinguet's the correct position is to remain neutral, is amusing. If that were the general opinion in Germany, we should soon have the Confederation of the Rhine and the noble Wilhelm should just see what sort of a part he would play in that, and what would happen to the workers' movement. A people that gets nothing but kicks and blows is indeed the right one to make a social revolution, and in Wilhelm's beloved X-petty states moreover!...

... The debacle in France seems to be awful. Everything squandered, sold, swindled away. The chassepots are badly made and fall when brought into action, there are no more there, the old flintlocks have got to be hunted out again. Nevertheless a revolutionary government, if it comes soon, need not despair. But it must leave Paris to its fate and carry on the war from the South. There would then still be a possibility of its holding out until arms have been bought and new armies organised with which the enemy would be gradually forced back again to the frontier. This would really be the true end of the war, both countries reciprocally furnishing proof that they are unconquerable. But if this does not happen quickly the game is up. Moltke's operations are a model—old Wilhelm seems to give him a perfectly free hand—and the four battalions are already joining the main army, while the French ones are not yet in existence.

If Badinguet is not out of Metz yet it may go badly with him....

Wilhelm [Liebknecht] has obviously calculated on a victory for Bonaparte simply in order to get his Bismarck defeated. You remember how he was always threatening him with the French. You, of course, are on Wilhelm's side too!

\*Lenin cited this letter in his controversy with Plekhanov in 1915 when he branded the social patriotism of the latter. In his article, *Russian Sudakums*, Lenin, in demonstrating the difference between dialectics and sophistry, writes: "In 1870
Engels wrote to Marx that Wilhelm Liebknecht was mistaken in making anti-Bismarckism his sole leading principle. Plechanov was glad when he found that quotation: The same is true, he argues, in relation to our anti-tsarism. But try to replace sophistry (i.e., the method of clinging to the outward similarity of cases without a connection between the events, by dialectics (i.e., by the study of all the concrete circumstances of an event and of its development). The unification of Germany was necessary, and Marx recognised this both before and after 1848. As early as 1859 Engels directly summoned the German people to a war for unification. When revolutionary unity failed, Bismarck achieved unity in a counter-revolutionary, Junker fashion. Anti-Bismarckism as the sole principle became absurd since the necessary unification was an accomplished fact." (Lenin, Collected Works, English edition, Vol. XVIII, p. 113.)

The Address of the General Council of the International on July 23, 1870, declared: "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, then victory and defeat will be equally harmful. All the disasters which befell Germany after the so-called wars of liberation will be revived with intensified violence... In the background of this suicidal struggle lowers the mysterious figure of Russia. It is an evil omen that the signal for the present war was given at the very moment when the Russian government had completed its strategical railways and had already concentrated troops in the direction of the Pruth. Whatever sympathy the Germans can rightfully claim in a defensive war against a Bonapartist attack, they would as quickly lose if they allowed the German government to summon the aid of the Cossacks or even so much as to accept it. Let them remember that for decades after its war of independence against the first Napoleon, Germany lay helpless at the feet of the tsar."

146. Marx to Engels

Ramsgate, 17 August, 1870.

... in such an important matter—it is not a question of Wilhelm [Liebknecht] but of instructions as to the line of the
This letter refers to the fundamental differences of opinion which had broken out among the German Social-Democrats* with regard to their attitude to the Franco-Prussian war. On July 24. The party Committee, whose centre was in Brunswick (Wolfenbüttel), issued a manifesto calling upon the German workers to support Prussia so long as the war remained a defensive one on the part of Prussia. This attitude provoked a sharp criticism from Liebknecht, who, since he regarded the Franco-Prussian war as a dynastic war between Bonaparte and Prussia, stood for the complete neutrality of the Party. In consequence of the conflict which arose between the Committee and Liebknecht, who was editor of the Volksstaat (the Party organ), the Committee appealed to Marx for enlightenment. Marx sent the materials he had received from the Committee to Engels with the letter printed above.

The Address of the General Council of the First International (July 23, 1870) declares: “On the German side the war is a defensive war. But who brought Germany into a position where she was forced to defend herself? Who gave Louis Bonaparte the possibility of making war on Germany? Prussia! It was Bismarck who conspired with this same Louis Bonaparte in order to break down popular opposition at home and annex Germany to the Hohenzollern dynasty. If the battle of Sedan [Koniggratz] had been lost instead of won, French battalions would have overrun Germany as allies of Prussia.”

The following declaration was made by Bebel and Liebknecht in the Reichstag when the voting of war credits took place:

“... The present war is a dynastic war, undertaken in the interests of the Bonaparte dynasty, just as the war of 1866 was undertaken in the interests of the Hohenzollern dynasty. We cannot grant the financial resources demanded by the Reichstag for the conduct of the war, because this would be a vote of confidence in the Prussian government, which prepared the present war by its course of action in 1866. It is equally impossible for us to refuse the money demanded, for this might be taken as a justification of the vicious and criminal policy of Bonaparte. As opponents on principle of every war, as social-republicans and members of the International Workingmen’s Association, which fights against all oppressors without distinction of nationality and strives to unite all the oppressed in one great bond of brotherhood, we can neither directly nor indirectly declare ourselves for the present war, and we therefore abstain from voting, with an expression of our confident hope that the nations of Europe, enlightened by the present disastrous events, will make every sacrifice to win their own rights of self-determination and to abolish the present rule of the sword and the class as the cause of all the evils of state and society.”

147. Marx to Sorge

London, 1 September, 1870.

The miserable behaviour of Paris during the war—still allowing itself to be ruled by the mamelukes of Louis Bonaparte and of the Spanish adventurer Eugenie after these appalling defeats—shows how greatly the French need a tragic lesson in order to regain their manhood.

What the Prussian fools do not see is that the present war is leading just as inevitably to a war between Germany and Russia as the war of 1866 led to the war between Prussia and France. That is the best result I expect from it for Germany. Typical “Prussianism” has had and never can have any existence except in alliance with and subjection to Russia. And a war No. 2 of this kind will act as the midwife to the inevitable social revolution in Russia.

148. Engels to Marx

Manchester, 4 September, 1870.

“Was schert mich Weib, was schert mich Kind,
Ich trage höhres Verlangen;
Lass sie beteln gehn, wenn sie hungrig sind—
Mein Kaiser, mein Kaiser gefangen!”*

World history is surely the greatest of poets, it has even succeeded in parrying Heine. My Emperor, my Emperor a

* What care I for wife or child, I have higher yearnings: if they are hungry let them go and beg—my Emperor, my Emperor is a captive!”
captive! And of the "stinking Prussians," what is more. And poor William* stands by and assures everybody for the hundredth time that he is really quite innocent of the whole business and that it is a pure act of God. William appears just like the schoolboy: "Who created the world?" "Please teacher, I did—but indeed I will never do it again!"

And then the miserable Jules Favre comes along and proposes that Palikao, Trochu and a few Arcadians shall form the government. There never was such a lousy crew. But all the same it is to be expected now that when this becomes known in Paris something or other will happen. I cannot believe that this douche of news, which must surely be known to-day or to-morrow, will produce no effect. Perhaps a government of the Left, which after some show of resistance will conclude peace.

The war is at an end. There is no more army in France. As soon as Bazaine has capitulated, which will no doubt happen this week, half the German army will move in front of Paris and the other half across the Loire to sweep the country of all armed detachments, . . .

The Alsace swindle—apart from its purely Teutonic features—is mainly of a strategical nature and aims at getting the line of the Vosges and German Lorraine as border-country. (Language frontier: If you draw a straight line from Donon or Schirmeck in the Vosges to one hour east of Longwy, where the Belgian—Luxemburg and French frontiers meet, it is almost exactly the language frontier; and from Donon down the Vosges to the Swiss frontier.) Northwards from Donon the Vosges are not so high and steep as in the South. Only the asses of the Staatsanzeiger and Brass & Co.* could suppose that France will be "throttled" by the snipping off of this narrow strip with its one and a quarter million or so inhabitants. The screams of the philistines for "guarantees" are altogether absurd, but they tell because they suit the rubbish of the Court people. . . . In Saarbrücken the French did as much damage as they could. Of course the bombardment only lasted a few hours and not as in Strasbourg day and night for weeks. . . .

The defence of Paris, if nothing extraordinary happens in the course of it, will be an entertaining episode. These perpetual little panics of the French—which all arise from fear of the moment when they will really have to learn the truth—give one a much better idea of the Reign of Terror. We think of this as the reign of people who inspire terror; on the contrary, it is the reign of people who are themselves terrified. Terror consists mostly of useless cruelties perpetrated by frightened people in order to reassure themselves. I am convinced that the blame for the Reign of Terror in 1793 lies almost exclusively with the over-nervous bourgeois, demeaning himself as a patriot, the small petty bourgeois beside themselves with fright* and the mob of riff-raff who know how to profit from the terror. These are just the classes in the present minor terror too.†

* Kaiser Wilhelm I.
† Staatsanzeiger, the official organ of the Prussian Government. Brass & Co., publishers of the Nordische Allgemeine Zeitung, Bismarckian.
‡ The war, as continued after the Emperor Napoleon III had been taken prisoner, changed its character. In his article of September 17, 1870, for the Pall Mall Gazette, Engels wrote:
† At the present day, when the immense military strength of Germany, organised upon the Prussian system, is carrying everything before it, people begin to ask themselves who is in future, and how, to fight the Prussians. And when a war in which Germany, at the beginning, merely defended her own against French chauvinisme appears to be changing gradually, but surely, into a war in the interests of a new German chauvinisme, it is worth while to consider that question. . . . If the war be continued to that bitter end for which the German Philistines are now shooting, the dismemberment of France, we may depend upon it that the French will adopt that principle. They have been so far a warlike but not a military nation. . . ."

After the defeat of Sedan the monarchy was overthrown in

* Haustrichübben.
† See Note on the Jacobins, Letter 206.
‡ See Note to Letter 144.
Paris. A Government of National Defence was organised whose task it was to conduct the struggle against the occupation of further parts of France. On November 11, 1870, Engels wrote in the Pall Mall Gazette:

“During the last six weeks the character of the war has undergone a remarkable change. The regular armies of France have disappeared; the contest is carried on by levies whose very rawness renders them more or less irregular. Wherever they attempt to come out in masses in the open, they are easily defeated; wherever they fight under shelter of barricaded and loop-holed villages and towns they find they can offer a serious resistance. They are encouraged in this kind of fighting, in night surprises, and other coups of petty warfare, by proclamations and orders of the Government, who also command the people of the district in which they operate to support them in every possible way.”

Against this petty warfare the Germans had recourse to the most intense terror (burning down of villages, slaughter of men taken in arms, etc.) In this connection Engels recalls the methods of armed resistance employed by the masses in the German wars of liberation, the “old half-revolutionary Landsturm Ordnung” [law of 1818] which “is drawn up... in this spirit of uncompromising national resistance, to which all means are justifiable and the most effective are the best. But then all this was to be done by the Prussians against the French, and if the French act in the same way towards the Prussians that is quite a different thing. What was patriotism in the one case becomes brigandage and cowardly assassination in the other.”

149. ENGELS TO MARX

Manchester, 12 September, 1870.

If anything at all could be done in Paris, a rising of the workers before peace is concluded should be prevented. Bismarck will soon be in a position to make peace, either by taking Paris or because the European situation obliges him to put an end to the war. However the peace may turn out, it must be concluded before the workers can do anything at all. If they were victorious now—in the service of national defence—they would have to inherit the legacy of Bonaparte and of the present Iousy Republic, and would be needlessly crushed by the German armies and thrown back another twenty years. They themselves can lose nothing by waiting. The possible changes of frontier are in any case only provisional and will be reversed again. To fight for the bourgeoisie against the Prussians would be madness. Whatever the government may be which concludes peace, the fact that it has done so will eventually make its existence impossible, and in internal conflicts there will not be much to fear from the army, returned home after imprisonment. After the peace all the chances will be more favourable to the workers than they ever were before. But will they not let themselves be carried away again under the pressure of the external attack, and proclaim the Social Republic on the eve of the storming of Paris? It would be appalling if as their last act of war the German armies had to fight out a battle with the Parisian workers at the barricades. It would throw us back fifty years and delay everything so much that everybody and everything would get into a false position—and the national hatred and the domination by phrases which would then arise among the French workers!

It is a damnably bad thing that in the present situation there are so few people in Paris who are ready to dare to see things as they really are. Where is one man there who even dares to think that France’s active power of resistance is broken where this war is concerned, and that with it the prospects of repelling the invasion by a revolution fall to the ground too! Just because people do not want to hear the real truth I am afraid that things may still come to this. For the apathy of the workers before the fall of the Empire will no doubt have changed by now.

150. MARX TO BEESLY*

[London] 19 October, 1870.

As to Lyons, I have received letters not fit for publication. At first everything went well. Under the pressure of the...

“International” section, the Republic was proclaimed before Paris had taken that step. A revolutionary government was at once established—*La Commune*—composed partly of workmen belonging to the “International,” partly of Radical middle class Republicans. The *octrois* [internal customs dues] were at once abolished, and rightly so. The Bonapartist and Clerical intrigues were intimidated. Energetic means were taken to arm the whole people. The middle class began if not really to sympathise with, at least to quietly undergo, the new order of things. The action of Lyons was at once felt at Marseilles and Toulouse, where the “International” sections are strong.

But the asses, Bakunin and Cluseret, arrived at Lyons and spoiled everything. Belonging both to the “International,” they had, unfortunately, influence enough to mislead our friends. The Hotel de Ville was seized for a short time—a most foolish decree on the abolition de l’État [abolition of the state] and similar nonsense were issued. You understand that the very fact of a Russian—represented by the middle class papers as an agent of Bismarck—pretending to impose himself as the leader of a *Comité du Salut de la France* [Committee for the Safety of France] was quite sufficient to turn the balance of public opinion. As to Cluseret, he behaved both as a fool and a coward. These two men have left Lyons after their failure.

At Rouen, as in most industrial towns of France, the sections of the International, following the example of Lyons, have enforced the official admission into the “committees of defence” of the working-class element.

Still, I must tell you that according to all information I receive from France, the middle class on the whole prefers Prussian conquest to the victory of a Republic with Socialist tendencies.

*Beesly, Edward Spencer (1891-1915).* Professor of history and political economy at University College, London. A follower of August Comte (see Note to Letter 88) and “as such obliged to justify all sorts of crochets, but otherwise a very capable and courageous man.” (Marx to Kugelmann, 6 April, 1871)
Unity-Empire and Unity-Parliament in Berlin appear not to exist at all for the outside world. Every breath of wind that stirs in Paris excites more interest.

You must carefully follow what is happening in the Danubian Principalities.* If the revolution in France is temporarily defeated—the movement there can only be suppressed for a short time—there will be a new business of war for Europe beginning in the East, and Rumania will offer the orthodox tsar the first pretext for it. So look out on that side.

*In 1911 Lenin wrote in an article in commemoration of the Paris Commune:

"Only the workers remained true to the Commune to the end. The bourgeois republicans and the petty bourgeois generally fell away from it... Forsaken by its allies of the days before and supported by no one, the Commune was bound inevitably to suffer a defeat. The whole bourgeoisie of France, all the landlords, stockholders, factory owners, all the big and little thieves, all the exploiters, united together against it... But the chief thing which the Commune lacked was time, the freedom to look around and apply itself to the realisation of its programme. Hardly had it set to work before the government seated in Versailles, with the support of the whole bourgeoisie, opened military operations against Paris. Thus the Commune had above all to think about self-defence. And right to the very end, which came on May 21-28, it had no time to think seriously of anything else." (Lenin. Collected Works, Russian Edition. Vol. XV, pp. 158-9.)

The Central Committee was the highest organ of the National Guard, which consisted chiefly of workers.

Place Vendôme. On March 22 a "train of gentlemen" tried to take the headquarters of the National Guard behind the Place Vendôme by a surprise attack; the attack was repulsed but the attackers were not pursued and were thus enabled to escape to Versailles.

*Moldavia and Wallachia, now part of Rumania.
In State and Revolution (Chap. III. 1) Lenin wrote:

"In these words, 'to smash the bureaucratic-military state machine' is contained, briefly formulated, the principal lesson of Marxism in regard to the question of the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the state. And it is just this lesson which has not only been completely forgotten but also directly distorted by the prevailing Kautskyan 'interpretation' of Marxism!...

"It is interesting to note especially two places in Marx's argument above quoted. Firstly, he confines his conclusions to the Continent. This was comprehensible in 1871, when England was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without militarism and, in a large measure, without a bureaucracy. Hence Marx excluded England, where a revolution, and even a people's revolution, at that time appeared and was possible without the preliminary condition of the destruction of the 'ready-made state machine.'

"Now, in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this limitation of Marx no longer holds. Both England and America, the greatest and last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty' in the sense of the absence of militarism and bureaucracy, have slid completely into the general European, dirty, bloody swamp of bureaucratic military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves and which crush everything under them. Now, both in England and in America, the 'smashing and destruction of the 'ready-made state machinery' (brought there in 1914-17 to 'European-general imperialist perfection) is the 'preliminary condition' of any real people's revolution." (Lenin. Collected Works. Russian Edition, Vol. I, XXI, p. 345)

153. MARX TO KUGELMANN

London, 17 April, 1871.

How you can compare petty-bourgeois demonstrations à la June 13, 1849, etc., with the present struggle in Paris is quite incomprehensible to me.

World history would indeed be very easy to make, if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances. It would on the other hand be of a very mystical nature, if "accidents" played no part. These accidents themselves fall naturally into the general course of development and are compensated for, again, by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very dependent upon such "accidents" which include the "accident" of the character of those who at first stand at the head of the movement.

The decisive, unfavourable accident this time is by no means to be found in the general conditions of French society, but in the presence of the Prussians in France and their position right before Paris. Of this the Parisians were well aware. But of this the bourgeois canaille of Versailles were also well aware. Precisely for that reason they presented the Parisians with the alternative of taking up the fight or succumbing without a struggle. In the latter case the demoralisation of the working class would have been a far greater misfortune than the fall of any number of "leaders." The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase with the struggle in Paris. Whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained.†

154. MARX TO FRANCKEL AND VARLIN†


Would it not be useful to put the documents which compromise the Versailles canaille [blackguards] in a safe place? A precaution of this kind could not do any harm. I hear in a letter from Bordeaux that four Internationalists were elected at the last municipal elections. The ferment is beginning in the provinces. Unfortunately the action there is only local and "pacific." I have written several hundred letters on behalf of your cause to every corner of the world in which we have branches. The working class, for the rest, was on the side of the Commune from the beginning. Even the bourgeois papers in England have given up their first ferocity. I have succeeded in slipping some favourable paragraphs into them from time to time.

*Letters to Dr. Kugelmann, page 125.
†This letter was written in French.
The Commune seems to me to be wasting too much time in trivialities and personal quarrels. One can see that there are other influences besides that of the workers. None of this would matter if you had time to make up for the time lost.

It is absolutely necessary that whatever you want to do outside Paris, in England or elsewhere, you should do quickly. The Prussians will not hand over the forts to the Versailles government, but after the final conclusion of peace (May 26) will allow it to invest Paris with its gendarmes. Since Thiers and Co. had, as you know, stipulated for a large commission for themselves in the treaty they concluded by Pouyer Quertier, they refused to accept the help from the German bankers which Bismarck offered them. Had they accepted it, they would have lost their commission. The preliminary condition for the realisation of their treaty being the subjugation of Paris, they have asked Bismarck to postpone their payment of the first instalment until after the occupation of Paris. Bismarck has accepted this condition. Prussia, being herself in very urgent need of the money, will therefore give the Versailles government every possible facility for hastening the occupation of Paris. So take care!

Franckel, Leo (1844-96). Hungarian Socialist, a worker in the jewellery trade. Was living in France at the end of the sixties and was one of the founders of the Lyons section of the First International and one of the leaders of the Paris Commune, in which he was made Minister of Labour. In this capacity Franckel appealed to Marx for advice in framing the laws for the protection of labour. After the fall of the Commune Franckel lived in London, where he was Corresponding Secretary for Hungary on the General Council; later he was active in the German and Hungarian workers' movement; after 1889 he returned to France; he was one of the founders of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party.

Varlin, Louis Eugene (1839-71). French bookbinder, founder of the Co-operative Society of Bookbinders; one of the most active adherents of the First International; he was a member of the Paris Commune and was killed in the street fighting.

Pouyer-Quertier, Augustin Thomas (1820-91). French statesman, owner of a cotton mill in Rouen. With Jules Favre he took part as an emissary in the Paris peace negotiations: "a passionate and even servile supporter of the Second Empire, he had never discovered anything wrong with it except its conclusion of the Trade Treaty with England which injured his own interests as a manufacturer...." "A man who regarded the counter-revolution as a means of forcing down wages in Rouen, and the cession of the French provinces as a means of forcing up the price of his goods in France." (Marx.)

155. Marx to Beesly*
London, 12 June, 1871.

Lafargue, his family and my daughter are in the Pyrenees, but on the French side of the Spanish frontier. As Lafargue was born in Cuba he was able to get a Spanish passport. I wish, however, that he would definitely settle on the Spanish side, as he played a leading rôle in Bordeaux.

Despite my admiration for your article in the Beehive, I am almost sorry to see your name in that paper. (And, by the way, you will allow me to observe that as a Party man I have a thoroughly hostile attitude towards Comte's philosophy, while as a scientific man I have a very poor opinion of it, but I regard you as the only Comist, either in England or France, who deals with historical turning-points (crises) not as a sectarian but as an historian in the best sense of the word.) The Beehive calls itself a workers' paper but it is really the organ of the renegades, sold to Sam Morley and Co.† During the last Franco-Prussian war the General Council of the International was obliged to sever all connection with this paper.

* Beesly (see Letter 156) gave this letter for publication in the German Vorwärts, (March 31, 1900) and it has here been re-translated from the German translation as the English original has not been traced. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
† For the Beehive, etc., see Note to Letter 71. Samuel Morley (1809-86) a woollen manufacturer (J. and R. Morley) was one of the wealthiest Englishmen of his time and the employer of thousands of workers. Supporter of Cobden and Bright and later of Gladstone. M.P. 1868-85. Promoted formation of Agricultural Labourers' Union. Famous as a "philanthropist." [Ed. Eng. ed.]
and publicly to declare that it was a sham workers’ paper. The big London papers, however, with the exception of the London local paper, *The Eastern Post*, refused to print this declaration. In such circumstances your co-operation with the *Hive* is a further sacrifice you are making to the good cause.

A woman friend of mine will be going to Paris in three or four days. I am giving her the proper passes for some members of the Commune, who are still living hidden in Paris. If you or one of your friends have any commissions there please write to me.

What comforts me is the nonsense which the *Petite Presse* publishes every day about my writings and my relations to the Commune; this is sent me each day from Paris. It shows that the Versailles police is very hard put to it to get hold of genuine documents. My relations with the Commune were maintained through a German merchant who travels between Paris and London all the year round. Everything was settled verbally with the exception of two matters:

First, through the same intermediary, I sent the members of the Commune a letter in answer to a question from them as to how they could handle certain securities on the London Exchange.

Second, on May 11, ten days before the catastrophe, I sent them by the same method all the details of the secret agreement come to between Bismarck and Favre in Frankfurt.

I had this information from Bismarck’s right hand—a man who had formerly (from 1848-53) belonged to the secret society of which I was the leader. This man knows that I have still got all the reports which he sent me from and about Germany. He is dependent on my discretion. Hence his continual efforts to prove his good intentions towards me. It was the same man who gave me the warning I told you about that Bismarck had decided to have me arrested if I visited Dr. Kugelmann in Hanover again this year.

If only the Commune had listened to my warnings! 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 beforehand that they would otherwise be caught in a trap; I denounced Pyat, Grouset and Vesinier to them; I demanded that they should at once send to London all the documents compromising the members of the National Defence, so that by this means the savagery of the enemies of the Commune could to some extent be held in check — thus the plan of the Versailles people would have been brought to nothing.

If these documents had been discovered by the Versailles people they would not have published forged ones.

The address of the International* will not be published before Wednesday. I will then at once send you a copy. Material for four to five sheets has been compressed into two. Hence arose numerous corrections, revisions and misprints. Hence also the delay.

156. MARX TO BOLTE†

London, 23 November, 1871.

The *International* was founded in order to replace the Socialist or semi-Socialist sects by a real organisation of the working class for struggle. The original Statutes and the Inaugural Address show this at the first glance. On the other hand the Internationalists could not have maintained themselves if the course of history had not already smashed up the sectarian system. The development of the system of Socialist sects and that of the real workers' movement always stand in inverse ratio to each other. So long as the sects are (historically) justified, the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historic movement. As soon as it has attained this maturity all sects are essentially reactionary. Nevertheless what history has shown everywhere was repeated within the International. The antiquated makes an attempt to re-establish and maintain itself within the newly achieved form.

*The Civil War in France in 1871.*

† Bolte (U.S.A.), Member of the former Central Committee and at this time member of the Provisional Federal Council of the International in New York.
And the history of the International was a continual struggle on the part of the General Council against the sects and amateur experiments which attempted to assert themselves within the International itself against the genuine movement of the working class. This struggle was conducted at the Congresses, but far more in the private dealings of the General Council with the individual sections.

In Paris, as the Proudhonists (Mutualists) were co-founders of the Association, they naturally had the reins in their hands there for the first years. Later, of course, collectivist, positivist, etc., groups were formed in opposition to them.

In Germany—the Lassalle clique. I myself went on corresponding for two years with the notorious Schweitzer and proved irrefutably to him that Lassalle’s organisation is nothing but a sectarian organisation and as such hostile to the organisation of the genuine workers’ movement striven for by the International. He had his “reasons” for not understanding this.

At the end of 1868 the Russian, Bakunin,* entered the International with the aim of forming inside it a second International called the “Alliance of Social-Democracy,” with himself as leader. He—a man devoid of theoretical knowledge—put forward the pretension that this separate body was to represent the scientific propaganda of the International, which was to be made the special function of this second International within the International.

His programme was a superficially scraped together hash of Right and Left—Equality of Classes (!), abolition of the right of inheritance as the starting point of the social movement (St. Simonistic nonsense), atheism as a dogma to be dictated to the members, etc., and as the main dogma (Proudhonist), abstention from the political movement.

This infant’s spelling-book found favour (and still has a certain hold) in Italy and Spain, where the real conditions of the workers’ movement are as yet little developed, and among a few vain, ambitious and empty doctrinaires in French Switzerland and Belgium.

For Mr. Bakunin the theory (the assembled rubbish he has

* See Note, page 165 and Letter 157.
dominated by the German element where theory is concerned (!) and find this domination, i.e., German science, very useful and indeed indispensable.)

In Geneva, under the patronage of the bourgeois Madame Andrée Léo (who at the Lausanne Congress was shameless enough to denounce Ferré to his executioners in Versailles), they have published a paper, *La Révolution Sociale*, which conducts arguments against us in almost literally the same words as the *Journal de Genève*, the most reactionary paper in Europe.

In London they attempted to establish a French section, of whose activities you will find an example in No. 42 of *Qui Vive?* which I enclose. (Also the number which contains the letter from our French Secretary, Seraillier). This section, consisting of twenty people (including a lot of spies), has not been recognised by the General Council, but another much more numerous section has been.

Actually, despite the intrigues of this bunch of scoundrels, we are carrying on great propaganda in France—and in Russia, where they know what value to place on Bakunin and where my book on capital is just being published in Russian...

*N.B. as to political movement*: The political movement of the working class has as its object, of course, the conquest of political power for the working class, and for this it is naturally necessary that a previous organisation of the working class, itself arising from their economic struggles, should have been developed up to a certain point.

On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working class comes out as a class against the ruling classes and attempts to force them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt in a particular factory or even a particular industry to force a shorter working day out of the capitalists by strikes, etc., is a purely economic movement. On the other hand the movement to force an eight-hour day, etc., *law* is a political movement. And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a political movement, that is to say a movement of the class, with the object of achieving its interests in a general form, in a form possessing a general social force of compulsion. If these movements presuppose a certain degree of previous organisation, they are themselves equally a means of the development of this organisation.

Where the working class is not yet far enough advanced in its organisation to undertake a decisive campaign against the collective power, i.e., the political power of the ruling classes, it must at any rate be trained for this by continual agitation against and a hostile attitude towards the policy of the ruling classes. Otherwise it will remain a plaything in their hands, as the September revolution in France showed, and as is also proved up to a certain point by the game Messrs. Gladstone & Co. are bringing off in England even up to the present time.

157. **Engels to Theodor Cuno**

24 January, 1872.

Bakunin, who up till 1868 had intrigued against the International, joined it after he had made a fiasco at the Berne Peace Conference* and at once began to conspire within it against the General Council. Bakunin has a peculiar theory of his own, a medley of Proudhonism and communism, the chief point of which is in the first place that he does not regard capital, and therefore the class contradiction between capitalists and wage earners which has arisen through social development, as the main evil to be abolished—instead he regards the *state* as the main evil. While the great mass of the Social-Democratic workers hold our view that state power is nothing more than the organisation with which the ruling classes, landlords and capitalists have provided themselves in order to protect their social prerogatives, Bakunin maintains that it is the *state* which has created capital, that the capitalist has his capital only by favour of the *state*. As, therefore, the state is the chief evil, it is above all the state which must be done away with and then capitalism will go to hell of itself. We, on the contrary, say: do away with capital, the appropriation of the whole means of production in the hands of the few, and the

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* Berne Conference of the League of Peace and Freedom.
state will fall away of its own. The difference is an essential one. Without a previous social revolution the abolition of the state is nonsense; the abolition of capital is in itself the social revolution and involves a change in the whole method of production. Further, however, as for Bakunin the state is the main evil, nothing must be done which can maintain the existence of any state, whether it be a republic, a monarchy or whatever it may be. Hence therefore *complete abstention from all politics*. To perpetrate a political action, and especially to take part in an election, would be a betrayal of principle. The thing to do is to conduct propaganda, abuse the state, organise, and when *all* the workers are won over, *i.e.*, the majority, depose the authorities, abolish the state and replace it by the organisation of the International. This great act, with which the millennium begins, is called *social liquidation*.

All this sounds extremely radical, and is so simple that it can be learnt by heart in five minutes; that is why this theory of Bakunin’s has also speedily found favour in Spain and Italy, among young lawyers, doctors and other doctrinaires.

But the mass of the workers will never allow themselves to be persuaded that the public affairs of their country are not also their own affairs; they are by nature *political* and whoever tries to make out to them that they should leave politics alone will in the end get left in the lurch. To preach that the workers should in all circumstances abstain from politics is to drive them into the arms of the priests or the bourgeois republicans.

Now as, according to Bakunin, the International is not to be formed for political struggle but in order that it may at once replace the old state organisation as soon as social liquidation takes place, it follows that it must come as near as possible to the Bakunist ideal of the society of the future. In this society there will above all be no *authority*, for authority = state = an absolute evil. (How these people propose to run a factory, work a railway or steer a ship without having in the last resort one deciding will, without a unified direction, they do not indeed tell us.) The authority of the majority over the minority also ceases. Every individual and every community is autono-

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*Engels pointed out in a letter to Bernstein (January 28, 1884) that he and Marx “ prophesied the destruction of the state before the anarchists even existed,” and gives two quotations as evidence. One (from *The Poverty of Philosophy* (final section)):

> “As it develops, the working class will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism and there will be no more political power—properly so-called—since political power is an exact official summary of the antagonisms in civil society.”

The other quotation is from *The Communist Manifesto*:

> “When, in the course of development class distinctions have disappeared ... the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so-called, is merely the organised force of one class for oppressing another.”*  

*For anarchism see also Letter 186.*

**Cuno, Theodor (born 1847). German Social-Democrat. Engineer. Expelled from the country at the beginning of the ’seventies, took part in the organisation of a section of the International in Milan and stood for the line of the General Council. At the Hague Congress (1872) he was chairman of the commission which decided on the expulsion of Bakunin from the First International. Cuno later emigrated to America, where he collaborated in the *New York People’s Paper.*"*

*English translation revised by Engels, 1888.*
In bed this morning the following dialectical ideas on the natural sciences came into my head:

The subject of natural science—moving matter, bodies. Bodies cannot be separated from motion, their forms and kinds can only be known through motion, of bodies apart from motion, apart from any relation to other bodies, nothing can be asserted. Only in motion does a body reveal what it is. Natural science therefore knows bodies by considering them in their relation to one another, in motion. The knowledge of the different forms of motion is the knowledge of bodies. The investigation of these different forms of motion is therefore the chief subject of natural science.*

(1) The simplest form of motion is change of place (in time—to please old Hegel)—mechanical motion.

(a) There is no such thing as the movement of a single body, but relatively speaking, falling can be treated as such. Motion towards a centre common to many bodies. But as soon as an individual body moves in a direction other than towards the centre, while it is still subject to the laws of falling, these undergo modification†

(b) in the laws of orbits and lead directly to the reciprocal motion of several bodies—planetary etc., motion, astronomy, equilibrium—a modification temporarily or apparently in the motion itself. But the real result of this kind of motion is always ultimately—the contact of the moving bodies, they fall into one another.

(c) Mechanics of contact—bodies in contact, ordinary mechanics, levers, inclined planes, etc. But the effects of contact are not exhausted by these. Contact is directly manifested in two forms: friction and impact. Both have the property that at given degrees of intensity and under certain conditions they produce new, no longer merely mechanical effects: heat, light, electricity, magnetism.

* In the margin beside this paragraph Carl Schorlemmer wrote: "Very good; my own view. C.S."
† Marginal note by Carl Schorlemmer: "Quite true."

(2) Physics proper, the science of these forms of movement, after investigation of each individuality, establishes the fact that under certain conditions they pass into one another, and ultimately discovers that all of them—at a given degree of intensity which varies according to the different bodies set in motion—produce effects which transcend physics, changes in the internal structure of bodies—chemical effects.

(3) Chemistry. For the investigation of the previous forms of movement it was more or less indifferent whether this was applied to animate or inanimate bodies. The inanimate bodies even displayed the phenomena in their greatest purity. Chemistry, on the other hand, can only distinguish the chemical nature of the most important bodies in substances which have arisen out of the process of life itself; its chief task becomes more and more to prepare these substances artificially. It forms the transition to the organic sciences, but the dialectical transition can only be accomplished when chemistry has either made the real transition or is on the point of doing so.*

(4) Organism. Here I will not embark on any dialectic for the time being.†

You being seated there at the centre of the natural sciences will be in the best position to judge if there is anything in it.

* In a letter to Bernstein (February 27—March 1, 1883) Engels wrote: "After Marx, Schorlemmer is undoubtedly the most eminent man in the European Socialist Party. When I got to know him twenty years ago he was already a Communist. At that time a poor private assistant to English Professors, he is now a member of the Royal Society (the Academy of Science here) and the first authority in the world on his own speciality, the chemistry of the simpler hydro-carbons (paraffin and its derivatives). The great textbook of chemistry which he published jointly with Roscoe but wrote almost entirely himself [as all chemists know] now takes first place in England and Germany. And he has won this position abroad solely by real

† Marginal note by Carl Schorlemmer: "That's the point."
‡ Marginal note by Carl Schorlemmer: "Neither will I."
scientific work and without making a single concession to humbug, in a struggle with people who exploited him as long as it was possible to do so. With all this he makes no bones about coming out as a Socialist anywhere, reads out points from the Social-Democrat at the lecturers’ dining-table, etc.,* but demands, and rightly so, that he should not be dragged into public, as Vierck has done, in this, that or the other way without his own consent..."

159. ENGELS TO BEBEL

London, 20 June, 1873.

With regard to the attitude of the Party towards Lassalleanism, you can of course judge what tactics should be adopted better than we, especially in particular cases. But there is also this to be considered. When, as in your case, one is to a certain extent in the position of a competitor to the Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiter Verein (General Association of German Workers)† it is easy to pay too much attention to one’s rival and to get into the habit of always thinking about him first. But both the General Association of German Workers and the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party together still only form a very small minority of the German working class. Our view, which we have found confirmed by long practice, is that the correct tactics in propaganda is not to draw away a few individuals and members here and there from one’s opponent, but to work on the great mass which still remains apathetic. The primitive force of a single individual whom we have ourselves attracted from the crude mass is worth more than ten Lassallean renegades, who always bring the seeds of their false tendencies into the Party with them. And if one could only get the masses without their local leaders it would still be all right. But one always has to take a whole crowd of these leaders into the bargain, and they are bound by their previous public utterances, if not by their previous views, and have above all things to prove that they have not deserted their principles but that on the contrary the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party preaches true Lassalleanism. This was the unfortunate thing at Eisenach, not to be avoided at that time, perhaps, but there is no doubt at all that these elements have done harm to the Party and I am not sure that the Party would not have been at least as strong to-day without that addition. In any case, however, I should regard it as a misfortune if these elements were reinforced.

One must not allow oneself to be misled by the cry for “unity.” Those who have this word most often on their lips are those who sow the most dissension, just as at present the Jura Bakuninists in Switzerland, who have provoked all the splits, scream for nothing so much as for unity. These unity fanatics are either the people of limited intelligence who want to stir everything up together into one nondescript brew, which, the moment it is left to settle, throws up the differences again in much more acute opposition because they are now all together in one pot (you have a fine example of this in Germany with the people who preach the reconciliation of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie)—or else they are people who consciously or unconsciously (like Mühlberger, for instance) want to adulterate the movement. For this reason the greatest sectarians and the biggest brawlers and rogues are at certain moments the loudest shouters for unity. Nobody in our lifetime has given us more trouble and been more treacherous than the unity shouters.

Naturally every party leadership wants to see successes and this is quite good too. But there are circumstances in which one must have the courage to sacrifice momentary success for more important things. Especially a party like ours, whose ultimate success is so absolutely certain, and which has developed so enormously in our own lifetime and under our own eyes, momentary success is by no means always and absolutely necessary. Take the International, for instance. After the Commune it had its colossal success. The bourgeoisie, struck all of a heap, ascribed omnipotence to it. The great mass of the membership believed things would stay like that

* At Owen’s College, Manchester, where, in the following year, 1874, he became Professor of Organic Chemistry, the chair being specially created for him. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
† See Note on Lassalle, Letter 29 and Letters 113, 161.
for all eternity. We knew very well that the bubble must
burst. All the riff-raff attached themselves to it. The sec-
tarians within it began to flourish, and misused the Interna-
tional in the hope that the most stupid and mean actions would be
permitted them. We did not allow that. Well knowing that
the bubble must burst some time all the same, our concern
was not to delay the catastrophe but to take care that the
International emerged from it pure and unadulterated. The
bubble burst at the Hague, and you know that the majority
of Congress members went home sick with disappointment.
And yet nearly all these disappointed people, who imagined
they would find the ideal of universal brotherhood and recon-
ciliation in the International, had far more bitter quarrels at
home than those which broke out at the Hague! Now the
sectarian quarrel-mongers are preaching conciliation and
decrying us as the intolerant and the dictators. And if we had
come out in a conciliatory way at the Hague, if we had hushed
up the breaking out of the split—what would have been the
result? The sectarians, especially the Bakunists, would have
got another year in which to perpetrate, in the name of the
International, much greater stupidities and infamies even;
the workers of the most developed countries would have
turned away in disgust; the bubble would not have
burst but, pierced by pinpricks, would have slowly collapsed,
and the next Congress, which would have been bound to
bring the crisis anyhow, would have turned into the lowest
kind of personal row, because principles had already been sacri-
ficed at the Hague. Then the International would indeed
have gone to pieces—gone to pieces through "unity"! Instead
of this we have now got rid of the rotten elements
with honour to ourselves—the members of the Commune
who were present at the last decisive session say that no session
of the Commune left such a terrible impression upon them
as this session of the tribunal which passed judgment on the
traitors to the European proletariat—we have left them to
expend all their forces in lying, slander and intrigue for ten
months—and where are they? They, the alleged representa-
tives of the great majority of the International, now announce

that they do not dare to come to the next Congress (more
details in an article which is being sent off for the Volksstaat
with this letter). And if we had to do it again we should not,
taking it all together, act any differently—tactical mistakes
are of course always committed.

In any case I think the efficient elements among the Lassal-
leans will fall to you of themselves in course of time and that it
would therefore be unwise to break off the fruit before it is
ripe, as the unity people want.

For the rest, old Hegel has already said: A party proves itself
a victorious party by the fact that it splits and can stand the
split. The movement of the proletariat necessarily passes
through different stages of development; at every stage one
section of people lags behind and does not join in the further
advance; and this alone explains why it is that actually the
"solidarity of the proletariat" is everywhere realised in
different party groupings which carry on life and death feuds
with one another, as the christian sects in the Roman Empire
did amidst the worst persecutions.*

* In the article referred to, which appeared in No. 53 of the
Volksstaat (July 2, 1873) under the title "From the Interna-
tional," Engels wrote: "It is well known that the Jura
Federation was always the soul of all the separatism in the
International. At the Hague Congress† their delegates had
already declared that they represented the real majority of the
International and would prove this at the next Congress. . . .
On April 27 and 28 the Jura Federation held its Congress in
Neuchâtel. From the proceedings it is evident that the Federa-
tion includes eleven Swiss sections, of which nine were represen-
ted. As to what the position of these eleven sections is, how
strong they are, etc., the Committee's report never says a word;
on the other hand it announces that the whole International,
so to speak, has joined in their separatism. Consequently this
enormous majority will appear at the next General Congress
and overthrow the Hague decisions? No, far from it. On the
contrary, the same Committee proposes what is of course

† For the Hague Congress, see pp. 154, 309-31.
immediately agreed to by these ‘autonomous’ delegates, namely: in order that the new Congress shall not again fall into the dangerous aberrations of the Hague Congress, the separatist federations shall recognize a Congress of their own which might perhaps be summoned by the New York General Council.... The decision of the Jura Federation, therefore, means no more than a fresh retreat concealed behind high-sounding phrases.”

EISENACH. In August 1869, as a counterpoise to the Lassallean General Association of German Workers, the German Social-Democratic Workers’ Party, which was led by Bebel and Liebknecht, was founded at Eisenach. See also Note on Bebel below.

JURA BAKUNINISTS. Followers of Bakunin in the region of the Jura Mountains in Switzerland; Bakunin’s followers were very numerous here among the handicraftsmen.

MÜHLEBERGER, ARTHUR. A Württemberg doctor, follower of Proudhon; the anonymous author of a series of articles on the housing question (1872) to which Engels replied in his book, The Housing Question.

BEBEL, AUGUST (1840-1913). One of the founders and chief leaders of German Social-Democracy and of the Second International. By trade a turner. From 1860 onwards Bebel took an active part in the movement of the workers’ educational associations founded by the Liberals; in 1866, he, with Wilhelm Liebknecht, under whose influence he began to approach Marxism, founded the Saxon People’s Party, which united petty bourgeoisie and workers on the basis of an anti-Prussian democratic programme. Bebel was the leader of the proletarian wing of this party, which formed the German Social-Democratic Workers’ Party at Eisenach in 1869. He fought for the revolutionary way of unification for Germany and was an Internationalist during the Franco-Prussian war. Under the influence and guidance of Marx and Engels he took a proletarian-revolutionary line as a Party leader and conducted a fight on two fronts—against the “Right” and the “Left” opportunists and at times against Liebknecht’s conciliatory attitude as well. For the “period in which the proletariat prepares and assembles its forces,” he was “the model of a workers’ leader” (Lenin.) But even in this period Bebel could never finally free himself of the vulgar economic pre-

judges regarding the state (see Lenin’s State and Revolution) and permitted opportunist and conciliatory vacillations which Marx and Engels repeatedly criticised. (E.g., 1877: mistakes in the Dühring question; 1878: confusion and liquidatory tendencies when the Party became illegal; 1891: vacillations on the question of the fight with the remnants of Lassalleanism and with opportunism, etc.).

Bebel had to serve repeated sentences of imprisonment (1870-71 on account of his attitude on the war; 1873-75 for “high treason,” 1878 for insulting Bismarck, etc.). He was the author of a series of agitational books and pamphlets, of which the most important are: Our Aims (1870), The Peasant War in Germany (1876), Woman and Socialism (1879). From 1867 onwards (with one interval 1881-83) Bebel was a member of the Reichstag. After the Party again became legal (1890) Bebel was continuously the chairman of the Party Executive. After Engels’ death he gradually began to deviate to the Right and became the leader of the Centrist tendency in the Party and the Second International.

160. ENGELS TO SORGE

London, 12 (and 17) September, 1874.

With your resignation the old International is entirely wound up and at an end.* And that is well. It belonged to the period of the Second Empire, during which the oppression reigning throughout Europe entailed unity and abstention from all internal polemics upon the workers’ movement, then just reawakening. It was the moment when the common, cosmopolitan interests of the proletariat could be put in the foreground: Germany, Spain, Italy, Denmark had only just come into the movement or were just coming into it. Actually in 1864 the theoretical character of the movement was still very confused everywhere in Europe, that is, among the masses. German Communism did not yet exist as a workers’ party, Proudhonism was too weak to be able to insist on its particular fads, Bakunin’s new trash had not so much as come into being in his own head, even the leaders of the English trade unions

* For the International see Letters 71, 74, 89, 90, 100, 133, 142, 149, 157, 159.
thought the programme laid down in the Preamble to the Statutes gave them a basis for entering the movement. The first great success was bound to explode this naïve conjunction of all fractions. This success was the Commune, which was without any doubt the child of the International intellectually, although the International did not lift a finger to produce it, and for which the International—thus far with full justification—was held responsible.

When, thanks to the Commune, the International had become a moral force in Europe, the row at once began. Every fraction wanted to exploit the success for itself. The inevitable collapse arrived. Jealousy of the growing power of the only people who were really ready to work further along the lines of the old comprehensive programme—the German Communists—drove the Belgian Proudhonists into the arms of the Bakuninists. The Hague Congress was really the end—and for both parties. The only country where something could still be accomplished in the name of the old International was America, and by a happy instinct the executive was transferred there. Now its prestige is exhausted too, and any further effort to galvanise it into new life would be folly and waste of energy. For ten years the International dominated one side of European history—the side on which the future lies—and can look back upon its work with pride. But in its old form it has outlived itself. In order to produce a new International after the fashion of the old one—an alliance of all the proletarian parties in every country—a general suppression of the workers' movement like that which predominated from 1849-64 would be necessary. But for this the proletarian world has become too big, too extensive. I think that the next International—after Marx's writings have had some years of influence—will be directly Communist and will openly proclaim our principles...

In Germany things are going splendidly in spite of all the persecution, and partly just because of the persecution. The Lassalleans have been so much discredited by their representatives in the Reichstag that the Government has had to start persecuting them in order to give this movement once more the appearance of being intended seriously. For the rest, since the elections the Lassalleans have found it necessary to come out in the wake of our people. It is a real piece of luck that Hasselmann and Hasenclever were elected to the Reichstag. They are discrediting themselves there visibly; they will either have to go with our people or else perpetrate tomfooleries on their own. Both will ruin them.

*Lenin writes in his article Karl Marx:

"After the fall of the Paris Commune (1871)—which Marx analysed as a man of action, a revolutionary, with so much penetration, pertinence and brilliance in his work The Civil War in France, 1871—and after the International had been split by the Bakuninists, it became impossible for that organisation to keep its headquarters in Europe. After the Hague Congress of the International (1872) Marx carried through the transfer of the General Council of the International to New York. The First International had accomplished its historic rôle, giving way to an epoch of an infinitely accelerated growth of the labour movement in all the countries of the world, precisely the epoch when this movement grew in breadth and scope, when mass socialist labour parties were created on the basis of individual national states." (Lenin, Collected Works, English edition, Vol. XVIII, p. 19.)

Sorge, Friedrich Albert (1826-1906). German Communist. He took part in the Baden rising of 1849. In the U.S.A., where he lived as an emigrant, he played a prominent part in the German and North American labour movement. Sorge, who was in constant correspondence with Marx and Engels, fought for the line of the General Council in the American sections of the First International. After the transfer of the General Council to New York (1872) Sorge became General Secretary of the International. He resigned this office in 1874.

Hasselmann, Wilhelm (born 1844). Lassalle: One of the representatives of the General Association of German Workers in the negotiations for unity—co-reporter on the programme question at the Unity Congress of the Party at Gotha (1875). Member of the Reichstag 1874-76 and 1878-80. After resigning from the editorial board of Vorwärts he founded an organ of his
own in Elberfeld—*Die Rote Fahne*—in which he attacked the Party leadership from the "Left." He gradually went over to open anarchism and, together with Most, was therefore expelled from the Party at the Wyden Congress (1880). He then emigrated to America.

Hasenclever, Wilhelm (1837-89). Lassallean. President of General Association of German Workers after Schweitzer’s resignation. After the union between the Association and the Eisenachers in Gotha he was a member of the Executive of the united Social-Democratic Party. Editor of the Hamburg Party paper and, in 1876-78, with Liebknecht, of *Vorwärts*. Member of the fraction in the Reichstag 1874-87.

161. Engels to Bebel

London, 18—28 March, 1875.

You ask me what we think of the unification business.* Unfortunately our fate has been the same as yours. Neither Liebknecht nor anyone else has sent us any information and we too, therefore, only know what is in the papers, and there was nothing in them until the draft programme appeared, about a week ago! This has certainly astonished us not a little.

Our Party had so frequently made offers of reconciliation or at least of co-operation to the Lassalleans and had been so frequently and contemptuously repulsed by the Hasenclevers, Hasselmanns and Töckes that any child must have drawn the conclusion: if these gentlemen are now coming and offering reconciliation themselves they must be in a damned tight fix. But considering the well-known character of these people it is our duty to utilise their fix in order to stipulate for every possible guarantee, so that they shall not re-establish their impaired position in the public opinion of the workers at the expense of our Party. They should have been received with extreme coolness and mistrust, and union should have been made dependent on the extent to which they were willing to drop their sectarian slogans and their state aid and to accept in essentials the Eisenach programme of 1869 or a revised edition of it adapted to the position at the present day.

Our Party had absolutely nothing to learn from the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere and therefore in what is decisive for the programme, but the Lassalleans certainly had something to learn from our Party; the first condition of union was that they should cease to be sectarians, Lassalleans, and therefore that the universal panacea of state aid should be, if not entirely relinquished, at any rate recognised as a subordinate and transitional measure of less or equal importance to many other possible ones. The draft programme shows our people are a hundred times superior theoretically to the Lassalleans—but in the same measure removed from being equal to them where political cunning is concerned: the "honest" have been once more cruelly fleeced by the dishonest.

In the first place Lassalle’s high-sounding but historically false phrase is accepted: in relation to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass. This statement is only true in particular and exceptional cases: for instance, in a proletarian revolution like the Commune, or in a country where state and society have not only been moulded by the bourgeoisie in their own image but where the democratic petty bourgeoisie have already followed suit by carrying out this re-casting down to its final consequences. If in Germany, for instance, the democratic petty bourgeoisie belonged to this reactionary mass, how could the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party have gone hand in hand with it—with the People’s Party—for years? How can the *Volksstaat* [People’s State]* take almost the whole of its political contents from the petty-bourgeois democratic Frankfurter Zeitung? And how comes it that no less than seven demands are accepted in this programme which directly and literally coincide with the programme of the People’s Party and petty-bourgeois democracy? I mean the

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* The fusion of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party of Germany (the "Eisenachers," see Notes to Letter 159), led by Liebknecht and Bebel, with the General Association of German Workers (the Lassalleans, cf. Letters 29, 113) took place at the Gotha Unity Congress, May 28-29, 1875. The draft programme for the Congress, to which Engels is referring, had appeared in the organs of the two parties on March 7. Bebel was at this time in prison. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

seven political demands, 1 to 5 and I to II, of which there is not
a single one that is not bourgeois democratic.*

Secondly, the principle that the workers’ movement is an
international movement is completely disavowed in practice
for the present day, and that by people who have upheld this
principle in the most glorious way for five years and under the
most difficult conditions.

The German workers’ position at the head of the European
movement is essentially based on their genuinely international
attitude during the war; no other proletariat would have
behaved so well. And now this principle is to be denied by them
at the very moment when the workers everywhere abroad are
emphasising it, in the same degree as the governments are striv-
ing to suppress every attempt at its realisation in an organisation!

What is left of internationalism to the workers’ movement
then? The faint prospect—not even of the future co-operation
of the European workers for their emancipation—no, of a
future “international brotherhood of nations”—of the bour-
geois Peace League’s “United States of Europe”!

It was of course quite unnecessary to speak of the Interna-
tional as such. But surely the very least would have been
to make no retreat from the programme of 1869 and to say
something to this effect: although the German Workers’ Party
is operating for the time being within the State boundaries
laid down for it (it has no right to speak in the name of the
European proletariat and especially not to say what is false),
it is conscious of its solidarity with the workers of all countries
and will always be ready in the future, as it has been hitherto,
to fulfil the obligations imposed upon it by this solidarity.
Obligations of that kind exist even if one does not exactly
proclaim or regard oneself as a part of the “International”;
for instance, help and abstention from blacklegging in strikes;
care taken that the Party organs keep the German workers
informed about the movement abroad; agitation against the
threat or the outbreak of Cabinet-made wars, behaviour during
such wars similar to that carried out in a model fashion in 1870
and 1871, etc.

* See Note, page 341. “One reactionary mass,” see page 402.

Thirdly, our people have allowed the Lassallean “iron law
of wages” to be foisted upon them, and this is based on a quite
antiquated economic view, namely, that the worker only
receives on the average the minimum of the labour wage, be-
cause, according to Malthus’s theory of population, there are
always too many workers (this was Lassalle’s argument).
Now Marx has proved in detail in Capital that the laws regu-
lating wages are very complicated, that sometimes one predomi-
nates and sometimes another, according to circumstances,
that therefore they are in no sense iron but on the contrary
very elastic, and that the thing can by no means be dismissed
in a few words, as Lassalle imagines. The Malthusian basis
for the law which Lassalle copied from Malthus and Ricardo
(with a falsification of the latter), as it is to be found for
instance in the Arbeiterlesebuch [Workers’ Reader*], page 5, quoted
from another pamphlet of Lassalle, has been refuted in detail
by Marx in the section on the Process of Capital Accumulation.
Thus by adopting Lassalle’s “iron law” we commit ourselves
to a false statement with a false basis.

Fourthly, the programme puts forward as its sole social
demand—Lassalle’s state aid in its most naked form, as
Lassalle stole it from Buchez. And this after Bracke has very
well exposed this demand in its entire nullity and after almost
all, if not all, our Party speakers have been obliged to come
out against this state aid in fighting the Lassalleans! Lower
than this our Party could not abase itself. Internationalism
brought down to Armand Gögg and Socialism to the bourgeois
republican Buchez, who put forward this demand in opposition
to the Socialists, in order to supplant them!

In the best of cases, however, “state aid” in the Lassallean
sense is only one particular measure among many others designed
to attain the end here lamely described as “paving the way for
a solution of the social question”—as if a theoretically unsolved
social question still existed for us! So if we say: the German
workers’ party strives for the abolition of wage labour, and
with it of class differences, by the establishment of co-operative
production on a national scale in industry and agriculture;

* See Note, page 341.
it supports every measure adapted to the attainment of this end!—then no Lassalean can have anything against it.

Fifthly, there is no question about the organisation of the working class as a class by means of the trade unions. And that is a very essential point for this is the real class organisation of the proletariat, in which it carries on its daily struggles with capital, in which it trains itself, and which nowadays even amid the worst reaction (as in Paris at present) can simply no longer be smashed. Considering the importance which this form of organisation has also attained in Germany, it would be absolutely necessary in our opinion to mention it in the programme and if possible to leave open a place for it in the Party organisation.

All this has been done by our people to please the Lassaleans. And what has the other side conceded? That a crowd of rather confused purely democratic demands should figure in the programme, of which several are a mere matter of fashion, as for instance the “legislation by the people” which exists in Switzerland and does more harm than good when it does anything at all. Administration by the people would be something different. Equally lacking is the first condition of all freedom: that all functionaries should be responsible for all their official actions to every citizen before the ordinary courts and according to common law. Of the fact that such demands as freedom for science, freedom of conscience, figure in every bourgeois liberal programme and have a somewhat strange appearance here, I will say nothing more.

The free people’s state is transformed into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens and is therefore a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The “people’s state” has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists too long, although Marx’s book against Proudhon* and later the Communist Manifesto directly declare that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state will dissolve of itself and disappear. As, therefore, the “state” is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, in order to hold down [niedezuhalten] one’s adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a “free people’s state”; so long as the proletariat still uses the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose to replace the word “state” everywhere by the word Gemeinsamkeit [Community], a good old German word which can very well represent the French commune.

“Doing away with all social and political inequality” is also a very questionable phrase in place of “the abolition of all class differences.” Between one country and another, one province and another and even one place and another there will always exist a certain inequality in the conditions of life, which can be reduced to a minimum but never entirely removed. Mountain dwellers will always have different conditions of life from those of people living on plains. The notion of socialist society as the realm of equality is a superficial French idea resting upon the old “liberty, equality, fraternity”—an idea which was justified as a stage of development in its own time and place but which, like all the superficial ideas of the earlier socialist schools, should now be overcome, for they only produce confusion in people’s heads and more precise forms of description have been found.

I will stop, although almost every word in this programme, which has, moreover, been put together in a flat and feeble style, could be criticised. It is of such a character that if it is accepted Marx and I can never give our adherence to the new Party established on this basis, and shall have very seriously to consider what our attitude towards it—in public as well—should be. You must remember that abroad we are made responsible for any and every utterance and action of the German Social-Democratic Workers’ Party. Thus Bakunin in his pamphlet, Politics and Anarchy*—where we have to answer for every thoughtless word spoken or written by Liebknecht

* See Note, page 342.
since the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* [Democratic Weekly] was started. People imagine, indeed, that we issue our orders for the whole business from here, while you know as well as I that we hardly ever interfere in internal Party affairs in the smallest way, and even then only in order to make good, so far as is possible, blunders, and only theoretical blunders, which have in our opinion been committed. But you will see for yourself that this programme marks a turning point which may very easily compel us to refuse any and every responsibility for the Party which recognises it.

As a rule, the official programme of a party is less important that what it does. But a new programme is after all a banner publicly raised, and the outside world judges the party from it. It should therefore on no account involve a step backwards, as this one does in comparison with the Eisenach programme. One should surely also take into consideration what the workers of other countries will say to this programme, what impression will be produced by this bending of the knee to Lassalleanism on the part of the whole German Socialist proletariat.

At the same time I am convinced that a union on this basis will never last a year. Are the best minds in our Party to lend themselves to grinding out repetitions, learnt off by rote, of the Lassallean statements on the iron law of wages and state aid? I should like to see you doing it, for instance! And if they did do this they would be hissed by their audiences. And I am sure the Lassalleans will insist on just these points of their programme like the Jew Shylock on his pound of flesh. The separation will come; but we shall have "made honest men" again of Hasselmann, Hasenclever, Töckle & Co.; we shall come out of the separation weaker and the Lassalleans stronger; our party will have lost its political virginity and will never again be able to come out wholeheartedly against the Lassallean phrases which it will have inscribed for a time on its own banner; and if the Lassalleans then once more say that they are the most genuine, the only workers' party, while our people are bourgeois, the programme will be there to prove it. All the Socialist measures in it are theirs, and all our Party has put into it are the demands of that same petty-bourgeois democracy which is nevertheless also described by it in the same programme as a part of the "reactionary mass."

I had left this letter lying as you are only set free on April 1, in honour of Bismarck's birthday, and I did not want to expose it to the chance of being seized in any attempt to smuggle it in. And now a letter has just come from Bracke, who has also his grave doubts about the programme and wants to know our opinion. I am therefore sending this letter to him to forward, so that he can read it and so that I need not write all this stuff out over again. Moreover, I have also told the unvarnished truth to Ramm—to Liebknecht I only wrote shortly. I cannot forgive him for never telling us a single word about the thing (while Ramm and others thought he had given us exact information) until it was too late, so to speak. But indeed this is what he has always done—hence the large amount of disagreeable correspondence which both Marx and I have had with him—but this time it is really too much and we are certainly not going to co-operate.

Lenin attributed to this letter "exceptionally great importance on the question of the state," as he wrote in his preliminary studies for *State and Revolution*.

"This is probably the most striking and certainly the sharpest passage, against the state, so to speak, in Marx and Engels."

"(1) It is necessary to drop the whole talk about the state."

"(2) The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word."

"(3) The anarchists have "thrown in our faces" the 'People's State' long enough.

"(4) The state "will decompose of itself ('dissolve'). Nota Bene (note well) and disappear "... (compare further on "will wither away"). "with the introduction of the socialist order of society..."

"(5) The state is "a transitional institution"
which is needed in the struggle in the revolution... (needed by the proletariat, of course). . . . (6) The State is needed not for freedom, but to crush (?) Niederhaltung is not crushing, properly speaking, but holding back from restoration, holding in subjection) the adversaries of the proletariat. (7) When there is freedom then there will be no state. (The concepts 'freedom' and 'democracy' are usually treated as identical and are often used interchangeably. Very often the vulgar Marxists with Kautsky, Plekhanov and Co. at their head treat them precisely in this way. In fact, democracy excludes freedom. The dialectic (process of development) is : from absolutism to bourgeois democracy ; from bourgeois democracy to proletariat ; from proletariat to none at all.) (8) "We" (i.e., Engels and Marx) would suggest speaking "everywhere" (in the programme), instead of the "state," of the "community," the "commune"!! N.B.!!! From this it is clear how not only the opportunists, but also Kautsky, have vulgarised, defiled Marx and Engels. The opportunists have not understood a single one of these eight most fertile ideas!! They have grasped only the practical needs of the present : to make use of the political struggle, to make use of the contemporary state for the training, the education of the proletariat, for the "extraction of concessions." This is correct (as against the anarchists), but as yet it is only one-hundredth of Marxism, if it can be so expressed arithmetically.

Kautsky completely suppressed (or forgot, or did not understand) in his propagandist and throughout his publicist work, points 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and the "smashing" of Marx...* (Kautsky had already fallen into opportunism on this whole question).

We are distinguished from the anarchists by (a) the use of the state now and (b) at the time of the proletarian revolution ("the dictatorship of the proletariat")—points of the greatest practical importance, just now.† (And Bukharin also has forgotten them!)

From the opportunists by the deeper, "more eternal" truths concerning (aa) the "temporary" character of the state, (bb) the harm of "talk" about it now, (cc) the dictatorship of the proletariat not having altogether the character of a state, (dd)

* Marx's statement that the bureaucratic-military state machine must be smashed. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
† January—February 1917. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

the contradiction between the state and freedom, (ee) the greater correctness of the idea (conception, programmatic term) "community" in place of state, (ff) the "smashing" of the bureaucratic-military machine. It must also not be forgotten that the dictatorship of the proletariat is directly repudiated by the open opportunists of Germany (Bernstein, Kolb and so forth) and indirectly by the official [Erlfurt] programme and Kautsky, since they say nothing about it in everyday agitation, and tolerate the renegacy of the Kolbs and Co."

Marx wrote an extraordinarily deep and comprehensive criticism of the Gotha draft programme; it is one of the chief documents of Marxism, especially with regard to the theory of the state. On May 5, 1875 he wrote to Bracke:

"Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes. If therefore it was not possible—and the conditions of the time did not permit of it—to go beyond the Eisenach programme, an agreement for action against the common enemy should simply have been concluded. But by drawing up a programme of principles (instead of postponing this until it has been prepared for by a considerable period of common activity) one sets up before the whole world a landmark by which the stature of the party movement is measured. The Lassallean leaders came because conditions forced them to come. If they had been told from the beginning that there would be no bargaining about principles they would have had to be content with a programme of action or a plan of organisation for common action."

The Social-Democratic leaders did not, however, follow Marx's advice and made, as Marx had foreseen, concessions to the Lassalleans on fundamental questions.

The Seven Political Demands of the draft concerned the introduction of universal suffrage, direct legislation by the people, the general arming of the people, democratic administration of justice, repeal of all emergency laws, "extension of rights and liberties" and a uniform progressive income tax.

Workers' Reader. Two speeches made by Lassalle in Frankfurt on May 17-19, 1869. The "other pamphlet" is the Open Letter in Reply to the Central Committee for the Summoning of a General German Workers' Congress in Leipzig (Zurich, 1869). Engels is here referring to the following passage:
"The iron economic law which under present-day conditions, under the domination of supply and demand, determines the wages of labour, is this: that the average wage always remains reduced to the necessary subsistence which is required by a people according to its habits, for the maintenance of existence and reproduction." (Lassalle, Gesammelte Reden u. Schriften, III, S. 58.)

Bakunin's Pamphlet. In this pamphlet Bakunin calls Liebknecht an "agent of Herr Marx" and explains a series of mistakes in Liebknecht's public utterances as due to the direct influence of Marx.

Buache, Philippe (1796-1865). French Catholic "socialist" who in the 'thirties and 'forties of last century propagated the theory of productive co-operatives by the aid of which he hoped to divert the workers from revolutionary struggle. Compare Letter 113.


Tolcke, Wilhelm (1817-93). Lassallean. President of the General Association of German Workers after B. Becker's resignation (1865); he took part in the negotiations for amalgamation with the Eisenachers in 1874-75.

Bracke, Wilhelm (1842-80). German Social-Democrat, bookseller and publisher. He was originally a Lassallean but took part in the foundation of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party in Eisenach in 1869 and was a member of the Party Committee. In 1870, on account of the manifesto issued by the Party Committee against the war, he was arrested and imprisoned in a fortress. He criticised the draft programme submitted to the Gotha Congress; in 1878, owing to illness, he withdrew from Party work.

Ramm. Leipzig Social-Democrat, one of the editors of the Volksstaat.

162. Engels to Marx

Ramsgate, 28 May, 1876.

It is all very well for you to talk. You can lie warm in bed and study ground rent in general and Russian agrarian con-

ditions in particular with nothing to disturb you—but I am to sit on the hard bench, swing cold wine, suddenly interrupt everything again and get after the blood of the boring Dühring. However, there is doubtless nothing else for it, even if I involve myself in a controversy of which it is impossible to see the end; after all, I shall have no peace otherwise, and then friend Most's panegyric on Dühring's Course of Philosophy has shown me exactly where and how to direct the attack. This book will have to be included because on many decisive points it better exposes the weak sides and weak foundations of the arguments put forward in the Economy. I am ordering it at once. There is no actual philosophy in it whatever—formal logic, dialectics, metaphysics, etc.—it is supposed rather to represent a general theory of science in which nature, history, society, state, law, etc., are treated in alleged inner interconnection. So again there is a whole section in which the society of the future, the so-called "free" society, is described in its less economic aspects, and among other things the scheme of education for the primary and secondary schools is already laid down. Here, therefore, one gets the banality in an even simpler form than in the economic book and taking both works together can expose the fellow from this side at the same time. For the noble gentleman's conception of history—that there was nothing but rubbish until Dühring arrived—this book also has the advantage that here one can quote his own crass words. Anyhow, I have him on the hip now. * My plan is ready—j'ai mon plan. First of all I shall deal with the trash in a purely objective and apparently serious way, and then the treatment will become sharper according to the degree in which the proofs of the nonsense on the one hand and of the platitudes on the other begin to pile up, until at last we get to a regular hailstorm. In this fashion Most and Co. are deprived of their excuse about "unkindness" and Dühring gets his deserts all the same. These gentlemen must be shown that there is more than one way by which one can settle accounts with people of this kind.

I hope Wilhelm [Liebknecht] will publish Most's article in

* This sentence was written in English.
the *Neue Welt*, for which it was obviously written. As usual, Most cannot copy and so makes Dühring responsible for the most comic imbecilities in the way of natural science, e.g., the breaking off of the rings (according to Kant's theory)—from the fixed stars!

With Wilhelm it is not merely the lack of manuscripts—that could be got over by other articles on questions of the day, etc., as was done in Hepner's and Blos's time. It is his passion for supplementing the deficiencies of our theory, for having an answer to every philistine's objection and a picture of the society of the future because after all the philistine asks questions about it; and, in addition, for being as independent of us theoretically as possible (in which, owing to his total lack of all theory, he has always succeeded far better than he himself knows). But by all this he puts me into a position in which I cannot but say to myself that Dühring is at any rate an educated man compared with the theoretical bunglers of the *Volkstaat,* and his works are at any rate better than those of these subjectively and objectively obscure gentlemen.

My re-reading of ancient history and my studies in natural science have been of great service to me for Dühring and make the thing much easier for me in many ways. Especially with natural science I find that the ground has become considerably more familiar to me and that, though I have to exercise great caution, I can nevertheless move on it with a certain amount of freedom and security. I am also beginning to see the end of this job too. The thing is beginning to take shape in my head, and bummelling here at the seaside where I can let the details go round in my mind has helped this on a good deal. In this enormous field it is absolutely necessary to interrupt one's regular grind from time to time and to digest what one has gulped down.

Herr Helmholtz has never stopped chasing round the 'thing-in-itself' since 1853 and has still not got clear about it. The man is not ashamed of calmly allowing the nonsense he had printed *before* Darwin to be still reprinted over again.

†This letter was written while Engels was working at his articles against Dühring, which were first printed in the Leipzig *Vorwärts* in 1877 and then published as a book under the title *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* (usually known as *Anti-Dühring*). The first edition was published in 1879.

Most, Johann (1846-1909). German anarchist. A printer. At the beginning of his political activity a Social-Democrat. After 1867 he took part in the workers' movement in Vienna and was one of the leaders of the "Left" semi-anarchist wing there; in the German Social-Democratic Party he was an editor and member of the Reichstag. After the Anti-Socialist Laws (1878) he emigrated to London, where from January 1879 he published the paper *Freiheit* (*Freedom*), which gradually took on an anarchistic character. At the Wyden Party Congress (1886) he was expelled from the Social-Democratic Party. In 1882 he was expelled from England and emigrated to the United States, where he continued to publish *Freiheit*.

Marx wrote of Most in a letter to Sorge (September 19, 1879):

""The worthy Johann Most, a man of the most childish vanity, really believes that world conditions have suffered a vast transformation because this same Most is now housed in London instead of in Germany. The man is not without talent, but he kills his talent by too much writing. Added to which he has no intellectual stability. Every change of wind blows him first in one direction and then in another like a weathercock.""

Most, in his paper *Freiheit*, had criticised the opportunism of the Zürich *Sozial-Demokrat* (Bernstein, Höchberg, etc.) and the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party. In the same letter to Sorge, Marx says that while Bernstein, Höchberg and Schramm criticise Most's paper for being "too revolutionary," he and Engels "reproach him because it (Freiheit) has no revolutionary content but only revolutionary phraseology. We reproach him, not for criticising the German Party leaders, but firstly for making a public row instead of conveying his opinions to them, as we do, in writing, i.e., in letters; and secondly because he only uses this as an excuse for making himself important and putting the idiotic secret conspiratorial plans of Messrs. Weber, Junior and Kaufmann into circulation." (Compare Letter 165.)
163. Marx to Engels


It would certainly be very pleasant if a really scientific socialist journal were to be published. It would provide an opportunity for criticisms or counter-criticisms in which we could discuss theoretical points, expose the utter ignorance of professors and lecturers and at the same time enlighten the minds of the general public—working class or bourgeoise. But Wiede’s periodical cannot possibly be anything but sham-scientific; the same half-educated Knöten* and dilettante literary men who make the *Neue Welt, Vorswärts*, etc., unsafe, necessarily form the majority of his collaborators. Ruthlessness—the first condition of all criticism—is impossible in such company; besides which constant attention has to be paid to making things easily comprehensible, i.e., exposition for the ignorant. Imagine a journal of chemistry where the readers’ ignorance of chemistry is constantly assumed as the fundamental presupposition. And apart from all that, the way the people who are necessarily Wiede’s collaborators have behaved in the Dühring incident imposes the precaution of keeping oneself as separate from these gentlemen as political party conditions allow. Their motto seems to be: Whoever criticises his opponent by abusing him is a man of feeling, but whoever defames his opponent by genuine criticism is an unworthy character.

*A plan had been made to start a theoretical journal for the Party. Liebknecht warned Marx and Engels against Wiede, whose scheme for a journal was a private affair; the official scientific organ of the Party was only to be the Zukunft [Future] which would be published in Berlin. (See Letter 164.)

WIEDE, FRANZ (born 1847). Bourgeois journalist, a Swede by origin, lecturer at Geneva University. His social reformist periodical (*Neue Gesellschaft*) [New Society] was published in Zürich 1877-79.

* See Note, page 87.

164. Marx to Engels

[London] 1 August, 1877.

A few days ago the cheery little hunchback Wedde turned up—only to disappear again to Germany shortly after. He had a pressing commission from Geib to enlist you and me for the Zukunft. I made no secret to him whatever of our intentions of abstaining, to his great sorrow, and of our reasons for this, and explained to him at the same time that when our time allows or circumstances demand that we should again come forward as propagandists, we, as internationalists, are in no wise bound or pledged to attach ourselves to Germany, the beloved Fatherland.

In Hamburg he had seen Dr. Höchberg and ditto Wiede; the latter, he said, was rather tinged with Berlin superficiality and arrogance, but he liked Höchberg, who, however, was still suffering badly from “modern mythology.” For when the little chap (Wedde) was in London for the first time I used the expression “modern mythology” as a designation for the goddesses of “Justice, Freedom, Equality, etc.” who were now all the rage again; this made a deep impression on him, as he has himself done much in the service of these higher beings. He thought Höchberg rather Dühringised—and Wedde has a sharper nose than Liebknecht.

WEDDE, JOHANNES (1843-1890). Social-Democrat, one of the founders of the Social-Democratic papers, Bürgerzeitung (1881) and Hamburger Echo (1887). Expelled from Hamburg in 1887.

GEIB, AUGUST (1842-79). German Social-Democrat, trade union leader, one of the initiators and the chairman of the Eisenach Congress in 1869, Party treasurer from 1872. Member of the Reichstag 1874-76. In 1879 he strongly opposed the illegal organisation of the Party.

HÖCHBERG, KARL (1853-85). Bourgeois author. Son of a merchant. Philanthropist who attached himself to the German Social-Democrats in the second half of the seventies. He put material assistance at the disposal of the Party and tried to draw
the movement into the path of reformism. He published a series
of journals (Zukunft 1877-78; Jahrbücher für Sozialwissenschaft
und Sozialpolitik 1879-82; Staatswirtschaftliche Abhandlungen
1879-82). At the beginning of the period of the Anti-Socialist
Laws he organised around himself in Zürich a group of Social-
Democratic literary men (Bernstein, Schramm, Kautsky, etc.)
and he also tried to get into touch with Engels whom he visited
unexpectedly in London. Engels writing of this to J. Ph.
Becker on September 15, 1879, says: "The poor lad, at bottom
a good fellow, but terribly naive, was thunderstruck when I
explained to him that we could never think of lowering the
proletarian banner which we have held aloft for nearly forty
years, and were equally far from agreeing with the general
petty-bourgeois day-dream of fraternity which we have
now been fighting against for nearly forty years too." (See also
Letters 166, 170.)

165. Marx to Sorge

27 September, 1877.

This crisis* is a new turning point in European history. Russia
has long been standing on the threshold of an upheaval, all the
elements of it are prepared—I have studied conditions there
from the original Russian sources, unofficial and official (the
latter only available to a few people but got for me through
friends in Petersburg). The gallant Turks have hastened the
explosion by years with the thrashing they have inflicted, not
only upon the Russian army and Russian finances, but in a
highly personal and individual manner on the dynasty com-
manding the army (the Tsar, the heir to the throne and six
other Romanovs). The upheaval will begin secundum artem
[according to the rules of the art] with some playing at constitu-
tionalism and then there will be a fine row. If Mother Nature is
not particularly unfavourable towards us we shall still live to
see the fun! The stupid nonsense which the Russian students
are perpetrating is only a symptom, worthless in itself. But
it is a symptom. All sections of Russian society are in complete
disintegration economically, morally and intellectually.

* The Russo-Turkish war and Near Eastern crisis.

This time the revolution will begin in the East, hitherto
the unbroken bulwark and reserve army of counter-revolution.
Herr Bismarck was pleased to see the thrashing, but it ought
to be gone so far. Russia too much weakened could not
hold Austria in check again as she did in the Franco-Prussian
War! And if it were even to come to revolution there, where
would the last guarantee of the Hohenzollern dynasty be?

For the moment everything depends on the Poles (in the
Kingdom of Poland) lying low. If only there are no risings
there at the moment! Bismarck would at once intervene and
Russian chauvinism would once more side with the Tsar.
If on the other hand the Poles wait quietly till there is a con-
flagration in Petersburg and Moscow, and Bismarck then inter-
venes as a saviour, Prussia will find its—Mexico!

I have rammed this home again and again to any Poles I
am in contact with who can influence their fellow-countrymen.

Compared with the crisis in the East, the French crisis is quite
a secondary event. Still it is to be hoped that the bourgeois
republic will be victorious or else the old game will begin
all over again, and a nation can repeat the same stupidities
once too often.

With the reforms of the 'sixties, which gave greater freedom
to the development of capitalist conditions in Russia, class
contradictions became intensified; the tsarist government
tried to restrain the growth of revolutionary tendencies by the
diversion of a war with Turkey—a method which it repeatedly
employed later on (e.g., 1914). After a gallant defence the
Turks were defeated, but Russia could not make use of her
victory because England threatened her with war if she
annexed Constantinople. At the instigation of England a Con-
ference of the various Powers was summoned in Berlin, its task
being to reduce the advantages gained by Russia through her
victory.

In France the monarchist President of the Republic, Mac-
Mahon, attempted in 1877 to prepare for a restoration of the
monarchy and dissolved Parliament. At the elections in Oc-
tober, however, the victory was gained by a republican majority.
London, 19 October, 1877.

A rotten spirit is making itself felt in our Party in Germany, not so much among the masses as among the leaders (upper class and "workers").

The compromise with the Lassalleans has led to compromise with other half-way elements too; in Berlin (e.g., Most) with Dühring and his "admirers," but also with a whole gang of half-mature students and super-wise doctors who want to give socialism a "higher ideal" orientation, that is to say, to replace its materialistic basis (which demands serious objective study from anyone who tries to use it) by modern mythology with its goddesses of Justice, Freedom, Equality and Fraternity. Dr. Höchberg, who publishes the Zukunft [Future] is a representative of this tendency and has "bought himself in" to the party—with the "noblest" intentions, I assume, but I do not give a damn for "intentions." Anything more miserable than his programme of the "future" has seldom seen the light of day with more "modest" "presumption."

The workers themselves when, like Mr. Most and Co. they give up work and become professional literary men, always set some theoretical mischief going and are always ready to attach themselves to mudheads from the alleged "learned" caste. Utopian socialism especially, which for tens of years we have been clearing out of the German workers' heads with so much toil and labour—their freedom from it making them theoretically, and therefore also practically, superior to the French and English—utopian socialism, playing with fancy pictures of the future structure of society, is now raging in a much more futile form, as compared not only with the great French and English utopians, but with—Weitling. Naturally utopianism, which before the time of materialistic-critical socialism concealed the germs of the latter within itself, coming now after the event can only be silly—silly, stale and basically reactionary.

"Weitling, Wilhelm (1808-71). The first German socialist writer to come from the proletariat, a tailor by trade. After his years as a travelling journeyman in Germany (1828-35), he went to Paris and there became a member of the League of the Just, by which he was commissioned to write his pamphlet, Humanity, As It Is and As It Should Be (1848). His chief work, Guaranites of Harmony and Freedom, appeared in 1842. Weitling stands midway between utopian and proletarian socialism. He belonged to the oppressed class and understood the necessity for struggle, but he could not free himself from his utopian views. His theory is an attempt to combine the theory of the utopians with the revolutionary struggle of the working class. But his point of view remained that of the petty bourgeoisie. The basis of his theory is the petty-bourgeois demand for equality. He criticised bourgeois conditions from a moral point of view. In his understanding of history he was inferior to Saint Simon and Fourier.

In August 1844 Marx wrote in his article, Kritische Randglossen [Critical Notes] (Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe Abteilung, I, Bd. 4, S. 18): "As to the degree of education or the capacity for education of the German workers in general, I would recall Weitling's brilliant writings, which often surpass even Proudhon where theory is concerned, greatly inferior though they are in presentation. Where can the bourgeoisie—including their philosophers and learned writers—point to a work relating to the emancipation of the bourgeoisie—their political emancipation—similar to Weitling's Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom? Compare the sober, timid mediocrity of German political literature with this unmeasured and brilliant literary début of the German workers; compare these giant infant boots of the proletariat with the dwarfish outworn political boots of the German bourgeoisie, and one is bound to prophesy an athlete's stature for this German Aschenbrödel [Cinderella]. It must be admitted that the German proletariat is the theoretician of the European proletariat, as the English proletariat is its national economist and the French proletariat its politician. It must be admitted that Germany possesses a classic mission for the social revolution in the same degree as she is incapable of a political one. . . . A philosophical nation can only find its corresponding practice in socialism and can therefore only find the active element of its emancipation in the proletariat."

[See Note to Letter 1.]
honourable critic would have had at least as much reason for inferring from my consideration for this "great Russian critic and man of learning" that I shared his views on the question, as for concluding from my polemic against the "literary man" and Pan-Slavist that I rejected them.

To conclude, as I am not fond of leaving "something to be guessed," I will come straight to the point. In order that I might be qualified to estimate the economic development in Russia to-day, I learnt Russian and then for many years studied the official publications and others bearing on this subject. I have arrived at this conclusion: If Russia continues to pursue the path she has followed since 1861, she will lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a nation, in order to undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime.

The chapter on primitive accumulation does not pretend to do more than trace the path by which, in Western Europe, the capitalist order of economy emerged from the womb of the feudal order of economy. It therefore describes the historic movement which by divorcing the producers from their means of production converts them into wage earners (proletarians in the modern sense of the word) while it converts into capitalists those who hold the means of production in possession. In that history, "all revolutions are epoch-making which serve as levers for the advancement of the capitalist class in course of formation; above all those which, after stripping great masses of men of their traditional means of production and subsistence, suddenly fling them on to the labour market. But the basis of this whole development is the expropriation of the cultivators.

"This has not yet been radically accomplished except in England... but all the countries of Western Europe are going through the same movement," etc. (Capital, French Edition, 1879, p. 315). At the end of the chapter the historic tendency of production is summed up thus: That it itself begets its own negation with the inexorability which governs the metamorphoses of nature; that it itself created the elements of a new economic order, by giving the greatest impulse at once to the productive forces of social labour and

* This letter was written in French.
† N. K. Michailovski, leading theoretician of the revolutionary petty-bourgeois socialist party of the Narodniki.
‡ Herzen.
§ Quoted in Russian.
** Chernyshevsky.

* 1s. The finest chance of escaping capitalist development. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
to the integral development of every individual producer; that capitalist property, resting as it actually does already on a form of collective production, cannot do other than transform itself into social property. At this point I have not furnished any proof, for the good reason that this statement is itself nothing else than the short summary of long developments previously given in the chapters on capitalist production.

Now what application to Russia can my critic make of this historical sketch? Only this: If Russia is tending to become a capitalist nation after the example of the Western European countries, and during the last years she has been taking a lot of trouble in this direction—she will not succeed without having first transformed a good part of her peasants into proletarians; and after that, once taken to the bosom of the capitalist regime, she will experience its pitiless laws like other profane peoples. That is all. But that is not enough for my critic. He feels himself obliged to metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of the marche générale [general path] imposed by fate upon every people, whatever the historic circumstances in which it finds itself, in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which will ensure, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labour, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. (He is both honouring and shaming me too much.) Let us take an example.

In several parts of Capital I allude to the fate which overtook the plebeians of ancient Rome. They were originally free peasants, each cultivating his own piece of land on his own account. In the course of Roman history they were expropriated. The same movement which divorced them from their means of production and subsistence involved the formation not only of big landed property but also of big money capital. And so one fine morning there were to be found on the one hand free men, stripped of everything except their labour power, and on the other, in order to exploit this labour, those who held all the acquired wealth in possession. What happened? The Roman proletarians became, not wage labourers but a mob of do-nothings more abject than the former "poor whites" in the southern country of the United States, and alongside of them there developed a mode of production which was not capitalist but dependent upon slavery. Thus events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historic surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by the universal passport of a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical.

"On the Russian village commune Marx and Engels wrote in the preface to the Russian edition of The Communist Manifesto on January 21, 1882: "The question is now whether the Russian village commune—a form of primitive collective communal property which has indeed already been to a large extent destroyed—can pass immediately into the highest communist form of landed property or whether, on the contrary, it must go through from the beginning the same process of disintegration as that which has determined the historical development of the West. The only possible answer to this question to-day is as follows: If the Russian revolution becomes the signal for the workers' revolution in the West, so that the one supplements the other, then the present form of land ownership in Russia may be the starting-point of an historical development." (See letter 226.)

168. MARX TO W. LIEBNEKCHT


The Russians have achieved one good thing; they have exploded England's "great Liberal Party" and made it incapable of governing for a long time to come, whilst the trouble of committing suicide has been officially accomplished for the Tory Party through the traitors Derby and Salisbury (the latter the real driving force of Russia in the Cabinet).

The English working class had been gradually more and
more deeply demoralised by the period of corruption since 1848 and had at last got to the point when they were nothing more than the tail of the great Liberal Party, i.e., henchmen of the capitalists. Their direction had gone completely over into the hands of the corrupt trade union leaders and professional agitators. These fellows shouted and howled behind Gladstone, Bright, Mundella, Morley and the whole gang of factory owners etc., in majorem gloriæ [to the greater glory] of the Tsar as emancipator of nations, while they never raised a finger for their own brothers in South Wales, condemned to die of starvation by the mine-owners.* Wretches! To crown the whole affair worthily, in the last divisions in the House of Commons (on February 7 and 8, when the majority of the great dignitaries of the "great Liberal Party"—Forster, Lowe, Harcourt, Goschen, Hartington and even [on Feb. 7] the great John Bright himself—left their army in the lurch and bolted away from the division in order not to compromise themselves too much altogether by voting)—the only workers' representatives in the House of Commons and moreover, horrible dictu [horrible to relate] direct representatives of the miners, and themselves originally miners—Burt and the miserable Macdonald—voted with the rump of the "great Liberal Party," the enthusiasts for the Tsar.

But the rapid development of Russia's plans suddenly broke the spell and shattered the "mechanical agitation" (five-pound notes were the main springs of the machinery); at the moment it would be "physically dangerous" for Mottershead, Howell, John Hales, Shipston, Osborne and the whole gang to let their voices be heard in a public meeting of workers; even their "corner and ticket meetings" are forcibly broken up and dispersed by the masses.

*On February 7 and 8 the debate took place in the House of Commons on the vote of supplementary credits for the govern-

ment in case of England's intervention in the Russo-Turkish war. The leaders of the Liberal Party, with Forster and Bright at their head, formerly bitter opponents of the voting of credits and in general of any action directed against Russia, altered their tactics and abstained from voting in the final division, which gave the Conservative Cabinet a considerable majority (328 to 124).

[For the Russian war, see also Note to Letter 165. In the final stages of the war against Turkey, in which the Tsar posed as the "emancipator" of the Southern Slav nations in the Balkans, Russia had completely gained the upper hand, and on Jan. 20 the Russian vanguard had entered Adrianople. The British imperialists were determined to prevent Russia from taking Constantinople or from making a separate peace with Turkey. At the date on which Marx was writing the Mediterranean fleet was waiting in Besika Bay and Turkey had appealed to Britain for intervention. Marx's consistent policy was that the defeat of Russian Tsarism, the bulwark of reaction in Europe, must always be put first, he was therefore in favour of a Turkish victory. "A Russian defeat would have greatly hastened the social revolution in Russia, for which the elements exist on a mass scale, and with it the revolution throughout Europe." (To Liebknecht, 4 Feb. 1878). Ed. Eng. ed.]

THOMAS BURT (1857-1922) and ALEXANDER MACDONALD (1861-81), the first working-class members of the House of Commons, had been elected in 1874. Both were leading officials of the National Union of Miners, of which Macdonald had been the chief founder (1869), remaining its President until his death. Burt (Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confidence Society) became Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (1892-95) under the Liberal Government and was long known as the "father of the House of Commons." Macdonald was a leading member of the "Junta," a promoter of the "new model" and of the use of the trade union machine for parliamentary agitation. [Ed. Eng. ed.]


HOWELL, GEORGE (1833- ). Operative Bricklayers Society, Secretary of the London Trades Council, 1861, and of the
Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. 1872-75. One of the 14 "independent" Labour candidates returned with Keir Hardie in the elections of 1892. Author of many works on trade union history. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

Hales, John. Member of the General Council of the International and Secretary in 1871 during the final period. After the Hague Congress (1872) formed one of the opposition in the "British Federation," which refused to accept the decisions of the Congress. [Ed. Eng. ed.]


169. Marx to Danielson *


In regard to your most remarkable letter I shall confine myself to a few observations.

The railways sprang up first as the couronnement de l'oeuvre† in those countries where modern industry was most developed, England, United States, Belgium, France, etc. I call them the "couronnement de l'oeuvre" not only in the sense that they were at last (together with steamships for oceanic intercourse and the telegraphs) the means of communication adequate to the modern means of production, but also in so far as they were the basis of immense joint stock companies, forming at the same time a new starting point for all other sorts of joint stock companies, to commence by banking companies. They gave in one word, an impetus never before suspected to the concentration of capital, and also to the accelerated and immensely enlarged cosmopolitan activity of loanable capital, thus embracing the whole world in a network of financial swindling and mutual indebtedness, the capitalist form of "international" brotherhood.

On the other hand, the appearance of the railway system in the leading countries of capitalism allowed, and even forced, states where capitalism was confined to a few summits of society, to suddenly create and enlarge their capitalistic superstructure in dimensions altogether disproportionate to the bulk of the social body, carrying on the great work of production in the traditional modes. There is, therefore, not the least doubt that in those states the railway creation has accelerated the social and political disintegration, as in the more advanced states it hastened the final development and therefore the final change, of capitalistic production. In all states, except England, the governments enriched and fostered the railway companies at the expense of the Public Exchequer. In the United States, to their profit, great part of the public land they received as a present, not only the land necessary for the construction of the lines but many miles of land along both sides the lines, covered with forests, etc. They become so the greatest landlords, the small immigrating farmers preferring of course land so situated as to ensure their produce ready means of transport.

The system inaugurated in France by Louis Philippe, of handing over the railways to a small band of financial aristocrats, endowing them with long terms of possession, guaranteeing the interest out of the public pocket, etc., etc., was pushed to the utmost limit by Louis Bonaparte, whose regime, in fact, was essentially based upon the traffick in railway concessions, to some of which he was so kind as to make presents of canals, etc.

And in Austria and Italy above all, the railways were a new source* of unbearable state indebtedness and grinding of the masses.

Generally the railways gave of course an immense impulse to the development of foreign commerce, but the commerce in countries which export principally raw produce increased the misery of the masses. Not only that the new indebtedness, contracted by the government on account of the railways, increased the bulk of imposts weighing upon them, but from the moment every local production could be converted into cosmopolitan gold, many articles formerly cheap, because invidible

* This letter was written in English.
† Crowning work.
* "M.S. course."