to a great degree, such as fruit, wine, fish, deer, etc., became dear and were withdrawn from the consumption of the people, while on the other hand, the production itself, I mean the special sort of produce, was changed according to its greater or minor suitableness for exportation, while formerly it was principally adapted to its consumption in loco. Thus, for instance, in Schleswig-Holstein agricultural land was converted into pasture, because the export of cattle was more profitable, but at the same time the agricultural population was driven away. All the changes very useful indeed for the great landed proprietor, the usurer, the merchant, the railways, the bankers and so forth, but very dismal for the real producer!

It is, to conclude by this my letter (since the time for putting it to post draws nearer and nearer), impossible to find real analogies between the United States and Russia. In the former the expenses of the government diminish daily and its public debt is quickly and yearly reduced; in the latter public bankruptcy is a goal more and more appearing to become unavoidable. The former has freed itself (although in a most infamous way, for the advantage of the creditors and at the expense of the men peuple*) of its paper money; the latter has no more flourishing fabric than that of paper money. In the former the concentration of capital and the gradual expropriation of the masses is not only the vehicle, but also the natural offspring (though artificially accelerated by the civil war) of an unprecedented rapid industrial development, agricultural progress, etc.; the latter reminds you rather of the time of Louis XIV and Louis XV, where the financial, commercial, industrial superstructure, or rather the façades of the social edifices, looked (although they had a much more solid foundation than in Russia) like a satyre upon the stagnant state of the bulk of production (the agricultural one) and the famine of the producers. The United States have at present overtaken England in the rapidity of economical progress, though they lag† still behind in the extent of acquired wealth; but at the same time the masses are quicker, and have greater political means in their hands, to resent the form of a progress accomplished at their expense. I need not prolong antitheses.

A propos. Which do you consider the best Russian work on credit and banking?

*Danielson (Nicolai-on) Nikolai Frantsevich (1844-1918), Russian economist, Narodnik; translator of Capital; he completed the translation begun by G. A. Lopatin of the first volume, which was published in 1872. In this connection Danielson entered into correspondence with Marx. Danielson was one of the chief theoreticians of the Narodniks, who contested the necessity and possibility of the development of capitalism in Russia. In the first years of his activity Lenin conducted a sharp struggle against these false theories and against Danielson as their chief defender. In his first work, What the ‘Friends of the People’ Are and How they Fight against the Social-Democrats, Lenin writes of Danielson: "Nicolai-on’s fundamental error is his failure to understand the class struggle, this necessary part of capitalism.” “... This lack of understanding makes Nicolai-on into a utopian, for a socialist by ignoring the class struggle in capitalist society, so ipso [thereby] ignores the whole real content of the social-political life of that society, and in order to realise his desires he inevitably takes refuge in the sphere of innocent dreams. This lack of understanding turns him into a reactionary, for the appeal to ‘society’ and to the ‘state,’ i.e., to the ideologists and politicians of the bourgeoisie, confuses the socialist and leads him to take the worst enemies of the proletariat as his allies; it only obstructs the workers’ struggle for emancipation instead of increasing its strength and clarity and the greater organisation of this struggle.” (Lenin, Collected Works, Russian edition, Vol. I, pp. 202-3.)

With this letter compare also Lenin’s Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism (Chap. VII) where the part played by railways in the imperialist epoch of capitalism is examined.

* Small people.
† M.S. Lack.
control, i.e., responsible. On these points you will therefore have to come to an understanding with the supervisory committee." An early and if possible telegraphic reply desired.

Thus instead of an answer to his legitimate questions Hirsch receives the information that he is to edit the paper under a supervisory committee seated in Zürich, whose views differ very essentially from his own and whose members are not even named to him!

Justly indignant at this treatment, Hirsch prefers to come to an understanding with the Leipzig people. His letter of August 2 to Liebknecht must be known to you, as Hirsch expressly required that you and Vier Eck should be informed. Hirsch is even willing to submit to a supervisory committee in Zürich, up to the point of agreeing that it should have the right to make written observations to the editor and to appeal to the decision of the Leipzig control committee.

In the meantime Liebknecht writes on July 28 to Hirsch:
"Of course, the undertaking is financed, as the whole Party - (including) Höchberg stands behind it. But I am not troubling myself about details."

Liebknecht's next letter again contains nothing about the finances, but the assurance instead that the Zürich committee is not an editorial committee at all but is only entrusted with the management and finances. Again on August 14 Liebknecht writes the same to me and demands that we persuade Hirsch to accept. Even on August 20 you yourself are so little informed of the true facts of the case that you write to me: "He (Höchberg) has no more voice in the editing of the paper than any other well-known Party comrade."

At last on August 11 Hirsch gets a letter from Vier Eck in which it is admitted that the three residing in Zürich are to take the foundation of the paper in hand as an editorial committee and with the agreement of the three Leipzig members to choose an editor. . . . So far as I recollect, the decisions communicated to us also stated that the (Zürich) organisation committee mentioned in (2) should take over the political as well as the financial responsibility in relation to the Party! . . . From this position of affairs it seems to me to follow

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* The Social-Democratic Party had now become illegal in Germany by the operation of Bismarck's Socialist Law (1878-90). [Ed. Eng. ed.]
that... there can be no question of taking over the editorship without the co-operation of the three domiciled in Zürich who have been commissioned by the Party to start the paper." Here at last Hirsch had at least something definite, if only regarding the relation of the editor to the Zürich people. They are an editorial committee; they also have the political responsibility; without their co-operation no one can take over the editorship. In short, an indication is simply given to Hirsch that he should come to an understanding with the three people in Zürich whose names are still not given him.

To complete the confusion, however, Liebknecht writes a postscript to Vierreck's letter: "S[inger] from B[erlin] has just been here and reported: the supervisory committee in Zürich is not, as Vierreck thinks, an editorial committee but essentially a management committee financially responsible to the Party, i.e., to us, for the paper; naturally it is also the right and the duty of its members to discuss the editing with you (a right and a duty which belong, incidentally, to every Party member): they have not the authority to act as your guardians."

The three Zürich and the one Leipzig committee members—the only one present at the negotiations—insist that Hirsch shall be under the official control of the Zürich people. A second Leipzig member directly denies this. And Hirsch is expected to come to a decision before the gentlemen are agreed among themselves? That Hirsch had the right to be informed of the decisions come to, which contained the conditions he was expected to submit to, was thought of all the less because it never once seems to have occurred to the Leipzigers to get authentic information themselves about these decisions. How else could the above contradiction have been possible?

If the Leipzigers cannot agree as to the powers conferred upon the Zürichers, the Zürichers themselves are perfectly clear about them.

Schramm to Hirsch, August 14: "If you had not written at the time that you would do just the same in a similar case (to the Kayser case) and thus indicated the prospect of a similar style of writing, we should not waste a word over it.

But in view of your declaration we must reserve to ourselves the right of having a decisive vote in the acceptance of articles for the new paper."

The letter to Bernstein in which Hirsch is stated to have said this was dated July 26, that is to say long after the conference in Zürich at which the plenary powers of the three Zürichers were established. But the Zürichers are already revelling so much in the sense of their absolute bureaucratic power that in answer to this later letter of Hirsch they already claim further authority to decide upon the acceptance of articles. The editorial committee is already a censorship committee.

It was not until Höchberg came to Paris that Hirsch learned from him the names of the members of the two committees. If therefore the negotiations with Hirsch fell through, what was the reason?

(a) The obstinate refusal both of the Leipzig and the Zürich people to give him any concrete information as to the financial basis of the paper and therefore as to the possibility of maintaining the paper in existence, if only for a year. He first learnt the amount of the sum subscribed from me here (after your communication to me). It was therefore hardly possible to draw any other conclusion from the information already given (the Party + Höchberg) than that the paper was either already mainly financed by Höchberg or else would soon be completely dependent on his subsidies. And this latter possibility is still far from being excluded. The sum of 800 marks (£40), if I am reading correctly, is exactly the same as the Association here had to contribute to Freiheit in the first half year.

(b) The repeated assurances of Liebknecht, since proved totally false, that the Zürichers were to have no official control of the editing at all and the comedy of errors which arose from this.

(c) The certainty finally attained that the Zürichers were not only to control, but themselves to censor the editing and that the part allotted to Hirsch was that of a dummy.

When he thereupon refused the offer one can only say he was right. The Leipzig committee, as we heard from Höchberg, has been further strengthened by the addition of two
members who do not live there; so it can only intervene rapidly if the three Leipzigers are unanimous. This completely transfers the real centre of gravity to Zürich, and in the long run Hirsch would no more have been able to work with the people there than would any other editor of really proletarian and revolutionary views. On this later.

(a) The proposed line of the paper.
Bernstein has already informed Hirsch on July 24 that the differences he had had as a Laterne man with individual comrades would make his position difficult.
Hirsch replies that in his opinion the general line of the paper must be the same as that of the Laterne, i.e., one which avoids prosecution in Switzerland and does not cause unnecessary alarm in Germany. He asks who the comrades are and continues: "I only know one, and I can promise you that in a similar case of breach of discipline I should treat him in exactly the same way."

To which Bernstein, conscious of his new official dignity as censor, replies: As to the line of the paper, the view of the supervisory committee is in fact that the Laterne should not be its model; in our opinion the paper should not be so much taken up with political radicalism but rather kept socialist in principle. Cases like the attack on Kayser, which was disapproved of by every comrade without exception (!) must be avoided in all circumstances."

And so on and so on. Liebknecht calls the attack on Kayser "a blunder" and Schramm considers it so dangerous that he thereupon puts Hirsch under censorship.

Hirsch again writes to Höchberg, saying that a case like that of Kayser "cannot occur if an official party organ is in existence whose clear statements and well-intentioned indications cannot be so brazenly thrown to the winds by a deputy."

Viereck, too, writes that "a dispassionate attitude and the ignoring so far as possible of any differences which have occurred . . . are laid down" for the new paper, it is not to be an "enlarged Laterne" and Bernstein "could at most be reproached for a too moderate tendency, if that is a reproach at a time when we cannot after all sail under our full colours."
And what is this Kayser case, this unforgivable crime which Hirsch is supposed to have committed? Kayser is the only one among the Social-Democratic deputies who spoke and voted in the Reichstag for protective tariffs. Hirsch accuses him of having committed a breach of Party discipline because Kayser:
(1) Voted for indirect taxation, the abolition of which is expressly demanded in the Party programme;
(2) Voted supplies to Bismarck, thus breaking the first fundamental rule of all our Party tactics: not a farthing to this government.

On both points Hirsch is undeniably right. And after Kayser had trampled underfoot on the one hand the Party programme, to which the deputies are, so to speak, sworn by a Congress decision, and on the other hand the very first and most imperative fundamental rule of Party tactics, and voted money to Bismarck as thanks for the Socialist Law, Hirsch in our opinion was absolutely right to let fly at him as roughly as he did.

We have never been able to understand why this attack on Kayser could have aroused such violent wrath in Germany. Höchberg now informs me that the "fraction" gave Kayser permission to come out as he did and that this permission is considered to exonerate Kayser.

If this is the position of affairs it is really a bit strong. In the first place Hirsch could know no more of this secret decision than the rest of the world. Then the discredit for the Party, which previously could be diverted on to Kayser alone, is made all the greater by this business, as is also the service performed by Hirsch in openly exposing the disgusting phraseology and even more disgusting vote of Kayser to the whole world and thus saving the honour of the Party. Or is German Social-Democracy really infected by the parliamentary disease and does it believe that through election by the people the Holy Ghost is poured out upon the elected, fraction meetings are transformed into infallible Councils and fraction decisions into unassailable dogmas?
It is true that a blunder has been committed, not however by Hirsch, but by the deputies who covered Kayser by their resolution. If those whose special duty it is to pay attention to the maintenance of Party discipline themselves break Party discipline so glaringly by a decision of this kind, so much the worse. Still worse, however, when people advance to the belief that it was not Kayser by his speech and vote or the other deputies by their resolution who violated Party discipline, but Hirsch, because despite the decision, which, moreover, was still unknown to him, he attacked Kayser.

For the rest, it is clear that on the tariff question the Party took up the same confused and indecisive attitude as it had done hitherto on almost all economic questions which have become practical ones, e.g., the imperial railways. This is due to the fact that the Party organs, especially Vorwärts [Forward], instead of thoroughly discussing these questions have preferred to concern themselves with the construction of the future order of society. When, after the Socialist Law, the tariff question suddenly became a practical one, the most varied shades of opinion arose and there was not a single person on the spot who possessed the prerequisite for the formation of a clear and correct judgment: knowledge of the conditions of German industry and its position on the world market. Among the electorate it was inevitable that tendencies in favour of protection should appear here and there and there was a wish to take these into consideration too. The only way of getting out of this confusion, by taking the question in a purely political way (as was done in the Laterne) was not decisively adopted; thus it was inevitable that in this debate the Party should have come out for the first time in a hesitating, uncertain and confused manner and finally, with and through Kayser, thoroughly discredited itself.

The attack on Kayser is now made the occasion for preaching to Hirsch in every key that the new paper must on no account copy the "excesses" of the Laterne and should not be so much taken up with political radicalism as kept to a dispassionate line, socialist in principle. And this by Vierreck as much as by Bernstein, who, just because he is too moderate, seems to the former to be the right man, because one cannot after all sail under one's full colours at present.

But why emigrate at all, if not in order to be able to sail under one's full colours? There is nothing to prevent this abroad. The German Press, Assembly and Penal Laws do not exist in Switzerland. It is therefore not only possible but a duty to say things there which could not be said at home, under the ordinary German laws, even before the Socialist Law. For here we stand not only before Germany but before Europe, and it is a duty, so far as the Swiss laws permit of it, to state to Europe the methods and aims of the German Party without concealment. Anyone who wants to bind himself by German laws in Switzerland would only prove that he was worthy of these German laws and in fact had nothing to say which was not permissible in Germany before the Exceptional Laws. Nor should any consideration be paid to the possibility that the editors will be temporarily cut off from a return to Germany. He who is not ready to risk this is not fit for such an exposed post of honour.

And further. The Exceptional Laws have banned and outlawed the German Party precisely because it was the only serious opposition party in Germany. If, in an organ published abroad, the Party shows its gratitude to Bismarck by giving up this rôle of the only serious opposition party, by coming out nice and docile and accepting the kick with a dispassionate attitude, it only proves that it deserved the kick. Of all the German papers produced in emigration abroad since 1830, the Laterne is certainly one of the most moderate. But if even the Laterne was too bold—then the new organ can only compromise the Party in the eyes of its sympathisers in non-German countries.

(3) *The Manifesto of the three Zürichers.*

In the meantime Höchberg's *Yearbook* has reached us, containing an article: "The Socialist Movement in Germany in Retrospect," which, as Höchberg himself tells me, has been written by these same three members of the Zürich Commission. Here we have their authentic criticism of the movement up till now
and with it their authentic programme for the line of the new organ, in so far as this depends on them.

Right at the beginning we read:

"The movement which Lassalle regarded as an eminently political one, to which he summoned not only the workers but all honest democrats, at the head of which were to march the independent representatives of science and all who were imbued with a true love for humanity, was diminished under the presidency of Johann Baptist Schweitzer into a one-sided struggle for the interests of the industrial workers."

I will not examine whether or how far this is historically accurate. The special reproach here brought against Schweitzer is that he diminished Lassalleanism, which is here taken as a bourgeois democratic-philanthropic movement, into a one-sided struggle for the interests of the industrial workers, by deepening its character as a class struggle of the industrial workers against the bourgeoisie. He is further reproached with his "rejection of bourgeois democracy." And what has bourgeois democracy to do with the Social-Democratic Party? If it consists of "honest men" it cannot wish for admittance, and if it does nevertheless wish to be admitted this can only be in order to start a row.

The Lassallean party "chose to conduct itself in the most one-sided way as a workers' party." The gentlemen who write that are themselves members of a Party which conducts itself in the most one-sided way as a workers' Party, they are at present invested with offices and dignities in this Party. Here there is an absolute incompatibility. If they mean what they write they must leave the Party, or at least resign their offices and dignities. If they do not do so, they are admitting that they are proposing to utilise their official position in order to combat the proletarian character of the Party. If therefore the Party leaves them their offices and dignities it will be betraying itself.

In the opinion of these gentlemen, then, the Social-Democratic Party should not be a one-sided workers' Party but an all-sided Party of "everyone imbued with a true love of humanity." It must prove this above all by laying aside its crude proletarian passions and placing itself under the guidance of educated, philanthropic bourgeoisie in order to "cultivate good taste" and "learn good form" (page 85). Then even the "disreputable behaviour" of many leaders will give way to a thoroughly respectable "bourgeois behaviour." (As if the externally disreputable behaviour of those here referred to were not the least they can be reproached with!) Then, too, "numerous adherents from the circles of the educated and propelled classes will make their appearance. But these must first be won if the agitation conducted is to attain tangible successes."

German Socialism has "attached too much importance to the winning of the masses and in so doing has neglected energetic (!) propaganda among the so-called upper strata of society." And then "the Party still lacks men fitted to represent it in the Reichstag." It is, however, "desirable and necessary to entrust the mandate to men who have the time and opportunity to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the relevant materials. The simple worker and small self-employed man...has the necessary leisure for this only in rare and exceptional cases." So elect bourgeois!

In short: the working class of itself is incapable of its own emancipation. For this purpose it must place itself under the leadership of "educated and propelled" bourgeoisie who alone possess the "time and opportunity" to acquaint themselves with what is good for the workers.

And secondly the bourgeoisie is on no account to be fought against but—to be won over by energetic propaganda.

But if one wants to win over the upper strata of society, or only its well-disposed elements, one must not frighten them on any account. And here the three Zürichers think they have made a reassuring discovery:

"Precisely at the present time, under the pressure of the Socialist Law, the Party is showing that it is not inclined to pursue the path of violent bloody revolution but is determined...to follow the path of legality, i.e., of reform." So if the 500,000 to 600,000 Social-Democratic voters—between a tenth and an eighth of the whole electorate and distributed over the whole width of the land—have the sense not to run their heads against a wall and to attempt a "bloody revolution" of one against
ten, this proves that they also forbid themselves to take advantage at any future time of a tremendous external event, a sudden revolutionary upsurge arising from it, or even a victory of the people gained in a conflict resulting from it. If Berlin should ever again be so uneducated to have a March 18, the Social Democrats, instead of taking part in the fight as "riff-raff with a mania for barricades" (page 88), must rather "follow the path of legality," act pacifically, clear away the barricades and if necessary march with the glorious army against the rough uneducated one-sided masses. Or if the gentlemen assert that this is not what they meant, what did they mean then?

But still better follows.

"The more quiet, objective and well-considered the Party is, therefore, in the way it comes out with criticism of existing conditions and proposals for changes in them, the less possible will a repetition become of the present successful strategy (when the Socialist Law was introduced) by which the conscious reaction has intimidated the bourgeoisie by fear of the Red bogey." (Page 88.)

In order to relieve the bourgeoisie of the last trace of anxiety it must be clearly and convincingly proved to them that the Red bogey is really only a bogey, and does not exist. But what is the secret of the Red bogey if it is not the bourgeoisie's dread of the inevitable life-and-death struggle between it and the proletariat? Dread of the inevitable decision of the modern class struggle? Do away with the class struggle and the bourgeoisie and "all independent people" will "not be afraid to go hand in hand with the proletariat." And the ones to be cheated will be precisely the proletariat.

Let the Party therefore prove by its humble and repentant attitude that it has once and for all laid aside the "improprieties and excesses" which provoked the Socialist Law. If it voluntarily promises that it only intends to act within the limits of the Socialist Law, Bismarck and the bourgeoisie will surely have the kindness to repeal this then superfluous law!

"Let no one misunderstand us"; we do not want "to give up our Party and our programme, but think that for years hence we shall have enough to do if we concentrate our whole strength and energy upon the attainment of certain immediate aims which must in any case be achieved before the realisation of the more far-reaching ends can be thought of." Then the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and workers who are "at present frightened away . . . by the far-reaching demands will join us in masses."

The programme is not to be given up but only postponed—to an indefinite period. One accepts it, though not really for oneself and one's own lifetime but posthumously as an heirloom to be handed down to one's children and grandchildren. In the meantime one devotes one's "whole strength and energy" to all sorts of petty rubbish and the patching up of the capitalist order of society, in order at least to produce the appearance of something happening without at the same time scoring the bourgeoisie. There I must really praise the Communist, Miquel, who proved his unshakable belief in the inevitable overthrow of capitalist society in the course of the next few hundred years by heartily carrying on swindles, contributing his honest best to the crash of 1873 and so really doing something to assist the collapse of the existing order.

Another offence against good form was also the "exaggerated attacks on the company promoters," who were after all "only children of their time"; "the abuse of Strousberg and similar people . . . would therefore have been better omitted." Unfortunately everyone is only a "child of his time" and if this is a sufficient excuse nobody ought ever to be attacked any more, all controversy, all struggle on our part ceases; we quietly accept all the kicks our adversaries give us because we, who are so wise, know that these adversaries are "only children of their time" and cannot act otherwise. Instead of repaying their kicks with interest we ought rather to pity these unfortunates.

Then again the Party's support of the Commune had the disadvantage, nevertheless, "that people who were otherwise well disposed to us were alienated and in general the hatred of the bourgeoisie against us was increased." And further, "the Party is not wholly without blame for the introduction of the
October Law, for it had increased the hatred of the bourgeoisie in an unnecessary way."

There you have the programme of the three censors of Zürich. In clarity it leaves nothing to be desired. Least of all to us, who are very familiar with the whole of this phraseology from the 1848 days. It is the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie who are here presenting themselves, full of anxiety that the proletariat, under the pressure of its revolutionary position, may "go too far." Instead of decided political opposition, general compromise; instead of the struggle against the government and the bourgeoisie, an attempt to win and to persuade; instead of defiant resistance to ill-treatment from above, a humble submission and a confession that the punishment was deserved. Historically necessary conflicts are all re-interpreted as misunderstandings, and all discussion ends with the assurance that after all we are all agreed on the main point. The people who came out as bourgeois democrats in 1848 could just as well call themselves social-democrats now. To them the democratic republic was unattainably remote, and to these people the overthrow of the capitalist system is equally so, and therefore has absolutely no significance for practical present-day politics; one can mediate, compromise and philanthropise to one's heart's content. It is just the same with the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. It is recognised on paper because its existence can no longer be denied, but in practice it is hushed up, diluted, attenuated.

The Social-Democratic Party is not to be a workers' party, is not to burden itself with the hatred of the bourgeoisie or of anyone else; should above all conduct energetic propaganda among the bourgeoisie; instead of laying stress on far-reaching aims which frighten the bourgeoisie and are not, after all, attainable in our generation, it should rather devote its whole strength and energy to those small petty-bourgeois patching-up reforms which by providing the old order of society with new props may perhaps transform the ultimate catastrophe into a gradual, piecemeal and, so far as is possible, peaceful process of dissolution. These are the same people who under the pretence of indefatigable activity not only do nothing themselves but also try to prevent anything happening at all except chatter; the same people whose fear of every form of action in 1848 and 1849 obstructed the movement at every step and finally brought about its downfall; the same people who see a reaction and are then quite astonished to find themselves at last in a blind alley where neither resistance nor flight is possible; the same people who want to confine history within their narrow petty-bourgeois horizon and over whose heads history invariably proceeds to the order of the day.

As to their socialist content this has been adequately criticised already in the [Communist] Manifesto, chapter X, "German or True Socialism." When the class struggle is pushed on one side as a disagreeable "crude" phenomenon, nothing remains as a basis for socialism but "true love of humanity" and empty phraseology about "justice."

It is an inevitable phenomenon, rooted in the course of development, that people from what have hitherto been the ruling classes should also join the militant proletariat and contribute cultural elements to it. We clearly stated this in the [Communist] Manifesto. But here there are two points to be noted:

First, in order to be of use to the proletarian movement these people must also bring real cultural elements to it. But with the great majority of the German bourgeois converts that is not the case. Neither the Zukunft [Future] nor the Neue Gesellschaft [New Society] have contributed anything which could advance the movement one step further. Here there is an absolute lack of real cultural material, whether concrete or theoretical. In its place we get attempts to bring superficially adopted socialist ideas into harmony with the most varied theoretical standpoints which these gentlemen have brought with them from the university or elsewhere, and of which, owing to the process of decomposition in which the remnants of German philosophy are at present involved, each is more confused than the last. Instead of thoroughly studying the new science themselves to begin with, each of them preferred to trim it to fit the point of view he had already, made a private science of his own without more ado and at once came forward with the claim that he was
ready to teach it. Hence there are about as many points of view among these gentry as there are heads; instead of producing clarity in a single case they have only produced desperate confusion—fortunately almost exclusively among themselves. Cultural elements whose first principle is to teach what they have not learnt can be very well dispensed with by the Party.

Secondly. If people of this kind from other classes join the proletarian movement, the first condition is that they should not bring any remnants of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., prejudices with them but should whole-heartedly adopt the proletarian point of view. But these gentlemen, as has been proved, are stuffed and crammed with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas. In such a petty-bourgeois country as Germany these ideas certainly have their own justification. But only outside the Social-Democratic workers' Party. If these gentlemen form themselves into a Social-Democratic Petty-Bourgeois Party they have a perfect right to do so; one could then negotiate with them, form a bloc according to circumstances, etc. But in a workers' party they are an adulterating element. If reasons exist for tolerating them there for the moment, it is also a duty only to tolerate them, to allow them no influence in the Party leadership and to remain aware that a break with them is only a matter of time. The time, moreover, seems to have come. How the Party can tolerate the authors of this article in its midst any longer is to us incomprehensible. But if the leadership of the Party should fall more or less into the hands of such people then the Party will simply be castrated and proletarian energy will be at an end.

As for ourselves, in view of our whole past there is only one path open to us. For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history, and in particular the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social revolution; it is therefore impossible for us to co-operate with people who wish to expunge this class struggle from the movement. When the International was formed we expressly formulated the battle-cry: the emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself. We cannot therefore co-operate with people who say that the workers are too uneducated to emancipate themselves and must first be freed from above by philanthropic bourgeois and petty bourgeois. If the new Party organ adopts a line corresponding to the views of these gentlemen, and is bourgeois and not proletarian, then nothing remains for us, much though we should regret it, but publicly to declare our opposition to it and to dissolve the solidarity with which we have hitherto represented the German Party abroad. But it is to be hoped that things will not come to that.

Engels wrote this letter in the name of himself and Marx to the members of the leading group of German Social-Democracy. It is among the most important documents in which the revolutionary proletarian line of Marx and Engels is revealed. Here we see what a consistent struggle was conducted by the founders of scientific Communism against opportunism in the German Social-Democratic movement. Marx and Engels had already long been following with growing mistrust the increasing influence of petty-bourgeois elements in the Party leadership and the insufficient fight put up by the Party against them. The open and organised emergence of the group around Höchberg, in connection with the foundation of the Social-Demokrat in Zürich, caused Marx and Engels to intervene. Especially the publication of the Zürich Yearbook for Socialist Science and Politics with the article "The Socialist Movement in Germany in Retrospect" (signed with three asterisks, as the disguise of Höchberg, Bernstein and Schramp) induced Marx and Engels to define their fundamental attitude to the opportunist danger in the German Party and to place before the Party leadership with the greatest sharpness the choice between a break with opportunism on their part or a break with the Party on the part of Marx and Engels. In his letter to Marx on September 9, 1879, Engels puts the question of the necessity for intervention: "I shall really have to answer Bebel at last... the Yearbook... fortunately enables us simply to give these people definitely the reasons why it is absolutely impossible for us to co-operate with an organ in which Höchberg has anything..."
whatever to say. . . I think you will also be of the opinion that after this business we should do well to frame our standpoint at least to the Leipzigers [the Party Executive]. If the new Party organ sings Höchberg’s tune it may become necessary to do this publicly. If you will send me the things . . . I will draft a letter to Bebel and send it you.” Marx answered on September 10 and insisted that the most decided tone should be taken towards Leipzig. “Liebknecht has no judgment. The letters prove what they should refute, namely, our original view that the thing was given away in Leipzig, while the Zürichers proceeded according to the conditions laid down for them. . . . I fully share your opinion that there is no more time to be lost in announcing bluntly and ruthlessly our view of the Yearbook drivel. . . . If they carry on in the same way with their Party organ we must publicly repudiate them. In these matters there is no longer any question of good nature.”

**Hirsch, Carl** (1841-1900), German Social-Democrat, journalist, former Lassallean. In 1868 he edited the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* [Democratic Weekly] with Liebknecht; in 1870 he was editor of the Social-Democratic *Bauern und Bürgerfreund* [The Peasants' and Citizens' Friend]. During Liebknecht’s imprisonment in the winter of 1870-71 Hirsch replaced him as editor of the *Volksstät*. In 1874 he settled in Paris where he took part in the workers’ movement. After his expulsion from Paris he went to Belgium where he published a weekly called the *Lateine* (1878-79) in which he sharply criticised the opportunist attitude of a section of the German Social-Democratic leaders. In the ’eighties he lived in Paris. (See Letter 174.)

**Bernstein, Eduard** (1847-1932), German Social Democrat, bank clerk. He joined the Eisenachers at the beginning of the ’seventies. Was strongly under Dühring’s influence 1874-78. In 1878 was Höchberg’s private secretary and one of the authors of the article *Rückblicken auf die sozialistische Bewegung in Deutschland* [The Socialist Movement in Germany in Retrospect] one of the earliest documents of reformism in German Social-Democracy. In 1880, together with Bebel, he came to London to negotiate with Marx and Engels, and from then onwards corresponded with Engels. At the end of 1880 he was made editor of the *Sozial Demokrat* and remained in this position until the repeal of the Socialist Law (1890) when the *Sozial Demokrat* also ceased to appear. Under the influence and guidance of Engels he was able to give the paper a revolutionary proletarian character. In 1888, after his expulsion from Switzerland, he transferred himself, with the editorship of the *Sozial Demokrat*, to London. With Kautsky he assisted Engels in deciphering Marx’s manuscripts. At the beginning of the ’nineties, influenced by English trade unionism and also by bourgeois economic literature, he began to deviate to reformism again; after Engels’ death he came out with an open criticism of the foundations of Marxism in his *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus* [Pre-requisites of Socialism], 1898, which became the gospel of German and international revisionism. In 1901, in order to strengthen the Social-Democratic Right wing, the imperial government allowed Bernstein to return to Germany. He was elected to the Reichstag and took over the direction of the revisionist periodical *Socialistische Monatsheft* [Socialist Monthly]. During the imperialist war he was a social-pacifist. The influence of his theories, officially rejected by the Party decisions of 1899 (Hanover) and 1903 (Dresden), constantly increased among the Party and trade union bureaucracy and after the imperialist war became the official creed of German Social-Democracy. In his edition of the Marx-Engels Correspondence Bernstein specially omitted the passages in which the founders of Marxism criticised Lassalle and Lassalleanism.

**Viereck, Louis** (1851-1921), German Social-Democrat, opportunist. At the end of the ’seventies an adherent of Dühring. From 1880 he edited the *Süddeutsche Post* [South German Post] in München; this was suppressed in 1884. At the end of the ’eighties he emigrated to America where he left the labour movement. During the imperialist war he was a German chauvinist and carried on propaganda for Germany in America.

**Schramm, Karl August**, German economist. Insurance inspector. Liberal. Took part in the Social-Democratic movement from the ’seventies onwards. Expelled from Berlin 1878. Came out in 1884-86 with a criticism of Marxism in which he represented Marx as a degenerate follower of Rodbertus and Lassalle. Later he withdrew from the Social-Democratic movement.

**Kayser, Max** (1859-89), German Social-Democrat, active in the Berlin and Dresden organisations from 1871. Reichstag deputy from 1878, attached himself to the Right wing of the Social Democratic fraction and represented an opportunist
point of view on the tariff (1878) and steamship subsidies (1885) questions.

Strousberg, Bethel-Henri (1823-88). Big German financier who was specially active in the years of the great company swindles (1871-73).

171. Engels to J. P. Becker

London, 1 April, 1880

Here things are just as they were in 1850 again.* The Workers' Assoc. is splitting up into all sorts of parties—Most here, Rackow there—and we have trouble enough in preventing ourselves from being dragged into the whirl. It is all a storm in a teacup, which may in some ways have a very good influence on those who take part in it by contributing to their further education, but so far as the course of the world is concerned it is more or less indifferent whether a hundred German workers here declare themselves for one side or the other. If they could exercise any influence on the English—but there is absolutely no question of that. Most, in his confused anxiety to do something, can neither keep quiet nor accomplish anything whatever; the people in Germany simply will not see that because Most has been expelled from the country the moment for revolution is now here. Freiheit, by main force, is to become the most revolutionary paper in the world, but this is not achieved by just repeating the word revolution in every line. Fortunately it does not much matter what is in the paper or not. The same is true of the Zürich organ, which one day preaches revolution and the next declares that a revolution by force would be the greatest misfortune, which is afraid on the one hand of being outdone by Most's big words and on the other that the workers may take its own big words seriously. So it is a choice between the empty shrieking of Freiheit and the narrow philistinism of the Social Demokrat.

I am afraid our friends in Germany are mistaken about the kind of organisation which should be maintained under present conditions. I have nothing against the fact that the chief members of Parliament are taking the lead in the absence of any other leadership. But they can neither demand nor enforce the strict obedience which the old Party leadership—elected for this purpose—could insist upon. Least of all in the present circumstances, without a press, without mass meetings. The looser the organisation is now in appearance the stronger it will be in reality. But instead of this the old system is to be maintained, final decisions are in the hands of the party leadership (although there is no congress to correct it or if necessary to dismiss it), and anybody who attacks one of them is a heretic. And with it all the best of them know themselves that there are all sorts of incapable and in other ways not quite sound people among them, and they must surely be very limited if they do not realise that it is not they who have the command of their organ but Höchberg, thanks to his money-bags, and with him his fellow-philistines Schramm and Bernstein. In my opinion the old Party, together with its former organisation, has come to an end. If, as is to be expected, the European movement soon gets going again, the great mass of the German proletariat will enter it and then the 500,000 men of the year 1878 will join the trained and educated kernel of this mass; but then too the old "strict organisation" handed down by Lassallean tradition will become a brake which might hold back a cart but cannot be applied to an avalanche.

Moreover these people are doing nothing but things well-calculated to break up the Party. First the Party is supposed constantly to provide for the old agitators and editors, thanks to which it gets saddled with a whole crowd of papers with nothing whatever in them beyond what can be read in every bourgeois gossip rag. And the workers are expected to cooperate with this indefinitely! Secondly, they come out in the Reichstag and the Saxon Landtag in such a tame way, for the most part, that they discredit themselves and the Party before the whole world, making "positive proposals" to the existing government as to how to do things better in small questions of detail, etc. And the workers, who have been declared outside the law, who are delivered over bound hand and foot to the

* Engels is referring to the German colony in London, this time of exiles under the Socialist Law. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
caprices of the police, are expected to regard this as proper representation! Thirdly, the philistine petty-bourgeois tone of the Social Demokrat, which they sanction. In every letter they tell us not on any account to believe reports of any division or differences of opinion having broken out in the Party, but everybody who comes from Germany assures one that the people are completely bewildered by this behaviour on the part of their leaders and by no means in agreement with it. Indeed, considering the character of our workers, which has so splendidly maintained itself, anything else would be impossible. It is the peculiar characteristic of the German movement that all the mistakes of the leadership are invariably made good again by the masses, and so it will no doubt be this time too.

*Engels in a letter to Bernstein (October 20, 1888) makes a very important remark about working class parties and the dialectic of their development:

"It seems that every worker's party, in a great country, can only develop itself by internal struggle, and this is based on the laws of dialectical development in general. The German Party became what it is in the struggle between the Eisenachers and Lassalleans, and this tussle itself played a chief part. Unity only became possible when the gang of ruffians whom Lassalle had deliberately cultivated as tools had worked themselves out, and there too it was accomplished with much too much haste on our side. In France, those people who while indeed sacrificing the Bakuninist theory are still carrying on the Bakuninist methods of struggle and at the same time trying to sacrifice the class character of the movement to their own particular ends, must also first work themselves out before unity is possible again. To try to preach unity in such circumstances would be sheer folly. Moral sermons are useless as treatment for infantile diseases, which, under present-day conditions, have got to be gone through some time anyhow." [Compare pages 327, 402.]

BECKER, JOHANN PHILIPP (1809–86). German revolutionary; prominent member of the First International. Leader of the Geneva section. He began early on to take part in the revolutionary movement, participating in the Hamburg Festival of May 27, 1832, and playing a leading part in the Baden rising of 1849. He was a typical partisan and also took part in the Italian revolution on the side of Garibaldi. Becker was a Communist whose whole soul was devoted to the workers' movement. From 1866 onwards he was editor of the Vorbote, the organ of the Geneva section of the International. After his death Engels wrote of Becker that "he was one of those rare people who have only to follow their instinct in order always to act correctly." Since he lived as an émigré and had a large family Becker suffered from poverty. Marx, who greatly valued Becker, wrote in one of his letters: "Be assured, dear friend, that nothing is more painful to me than to be obliged to watch helplessly and passively the struggle of a man like yourself. I admire your tenacity, your fiery zeal and your activity. The ancients, I think it was Æschines, say that one should desire to acquire worldly goods in order to spring to the help of one's friends in time of need. What deep human wisdom lies in this saying!" (See also Note to Letter 185.)

172. MARX TO DANIELSON*

London, 19 February, 1881.

I have read with the greatest interest your article, which is in the best sense of the word "original." Hence the boycotting—if you break through the webs of routine thought, you are always sure to be "boycotted" in the first instance; it is the only arm of defence which in their first perplexity the routiniers know how to wield. I have been "boycotted" in Germany for many, many years, and am still so in England, with that little variation that from time to time something so absurd and asinine is launched against me that I would blush to take any public notice of it. But try on! The next thing to do—in my opinion—is to take up the wonderfully increasing indebtedness of the landlords, the upper-class representatives of agriculture, and show them how they are "crystallised" in the retort under the control of the "new pillars of society."

I am very anxious to see your polemics with the "Slow."

As soon as I shall sail in more quiet waters I shall enter more

* This letter was written in English.
fully upon your Esquisse [sketch]. For the present I cannot omit one observation. The soil being exhausted and getting not the elements—by artificial and vegetable and animal manure, etc.—to supply its wants, will, with the changing favour of the seasons, of circumstances independent of human influence—still continue to yield harvests of very different amounts, though, summing up a period of years, as for instance, from 1870-80, the stagnant character of the production presents itself in the most striking character. Under such circumstances the favourable climatic conditions pave the way to a famine-year by quickly consuming and setting free the mineral fertilizers still potent on the soil, while vice-versa, a famine-year, and still more a series of bad years following it, allow the soil-inherent minerals to accumulate anew, and to work efficiently with returning favour of the climatic conditions. Such a process goes, of course, everywhere on, but elsewhere it is checked by the modifying intervention of the agriculturist himself. It becomes the only regulating factor where man has ceased to be a "power"—for want of means.

So we have 1870 as an excellent harvest in your country, but that year is a climax-year, and as such immediately followed by a very bad one; the year 1871, the very bad harvest, must be considered as the starting point for a new little cycle, till we come to the new climax-year 1874, which is immediately followed by the famine-year 1875; then the upwards movement begins again, ending in the still worse famine-year 1880. The summing up of the years during the whole period proves that the average annual production remained the same and that the mere natural factors have alone produced the changes, comparing the single years and the smaller cycles of years.

I wrote you some time ago, that if the great industrial and commercial crisis England has passed through, went over without the culminating financial crash at London, this exceptional phenomenon was only due to French money. This is now seen and acknowledged even by English routinists. Thus the Statist (January 29, 1881) says: "The money market has only been easy as it has been during the past years through an accident. The Bank of France in the early autumn permitted its stock of gold bullion to fall from £30 millions to £22 millions . . . . Last autumn undoubtedly there was a very narrow escape." (!)

The English railway system rolls on the same inclined plane as the European Public Debt system. The ruling magnates amongst the different railway-nets directors contract not only—progressively—new loans in order to enlarge their network, i.e., the "territory," where they rule as absolute monarchs, but they enlarge their respective networks in order to have new pretexts for engaging in new loans which enable them to pay the interest due to the holders of obligations, preferential shares, etc., and also from time to time to throw a sop to the much ill-used common shareholders in the shape of somewhat increased dividends. This pleasant method must one day or another terminate in an ugly catastrophe.

In the United States the railway kings have become the butt of attacks, not only, as before this, on the part of the farmers and other industrial "entrepreneurs" of the West, but also on the part of the grand representative of commerce—the New York Chamber of Commerce. The Octopodus railway king and financial swindler Gould has, on his side, told the New York commercial magnates: You now attack the railways, because you think them most vulnerable considering their present unpopularity; but take heed: after the railways every sort of corporation (means in the Yankee dialect joint stock company) will have its turn; then, later on, all forms of associated capital; finally all forms of capital; you are thus paving the way to—Communism whose tendencies are already more and more spreading among the people. M. Gould "a le flair bon.***

In India serious complications, if not a general outbreak, is in store for the British government. What the English take from them annually in the form of rent, dividends for railways useless to the Hindus; pensions for military and civil service men, for Afghanistan and other wars, etc., etc.—what they take from them without any equivalent and quite apart from what they appropriate to themselves annually within India, speaking only of the value of the commodities the Indians have gratuitously and annually to send over to England—it amounts to more than the

* Monsieur Gould has a keen scent.
total sum of income of the sixty millions of agricultural and industrial labourers of India! This is a bleeding process, with a vengeance! The famine years are pressing each other and in dimensions till now not yet suspected in Europe! There is an actual conspiracy going on wherein Hindus and Mussulmans co-operate; the British government is aware that something is “brewing,” but this shallow people (I mean the governmental men), stultified by their own parliamentary ways of talking and thinking, do not even desire to see clear, to realise the whole extent of the imminent danger! To delude others and by deluding them to delude yourself—this is: parliamentary wisdom in a nutshell! Tant mieux! *

173. Marx to Domela Nieuwenhuis

London, 22 February, 1881

The “question” of the forthcoming Zürich Congress about which you inform me seems to me—a mistake. The thing to be done at any definite given moment of the future, the thing immediately to be done, depends of course entirely on the given historical conditions in which one has to act. But this question is in the clouds and therefore is really the statement of a phantom problem to which the only answer can be—the criticism of the question itself. No equation can be solved unless the elements of its solution are involved in its terms. Moreover the embarrassments of a government which has suddenly come into being through a people’s victory have nothing specifically “socialist” about them. On the contrary. The victorious bourgeois politicians at once feel themselves embarrassed by their “victory” while the socialist can at least take action without any embarrassment. One thing you can at any rate be sure of: a socialist government does not come into power in a country unless conditions are so developed that it can above all take the necessary measures for intimidating the mass of the bourgeoisie sufficiently to gain time—the first desideratum [prerequisite]—for lasting action.

Perhaps you will point to the Paris Commune; but apart

* So much the better.
However, the change of medical advisers is a distraction for her and for the first period—which does not as a rule last long—she is full of praise for the new Æsculapius. Longuet's eyeglasses turned up directly after you left, they were in fact reposing in your bedroom. Hirsch has been selected to bring them across, but this gossipmonger seems unable to tear himself away from London at a time when there is a lot to pry out. The "great" Most affair alone is an inexhaustable spring of fresh (if by no means joyously sparkling) water for this Hirsch. He is threatening now not to leave until April 18. And then he has found a companion in Kautsky—at whom he scowled so darkly; Engels too has taken a much milder view of this Kauz* since he has proved himself a very talented drinker. When this charmer first appeared at my place—I mean little Kauz—the first question which escaped me was: are you like your mother? Not in the very least, he assured me, and I silently congratulated his mother. He is a mediocrity with a small-minded outlook, supervise (only 26), very conceited, industrious in a certain sort of way, he busies himself a lot with statistics but does not read anything very clever out of them, belongs by nature to the tribe of the philistines but is otherwise a decent fellow in his own way. I turn him over to friend Engels as much as possible.

The day before yesterday the Dogberry Club was here; yesterday, in addition to the two Maidland girls—and for a moment Lankester and Dr. Donkin—an invasion from Hyndman and spouse, who both have too much staying power. I don't dislike the wife, for she has a brusque, unconventional and decided way of thinking and speaking, but it is funny to see how admiringly her eyes fasten upon the lips of her self-satisfied garrulous husband. Mother was so tired (it was nearly 10.30 p.m.) that she withdrew. But she was amused by some byplay. For Tussy has discovered a new Wunderkind among the Dogberries, a certain Radford; this youth is already a barrister at law, but despises the jus [law] and is working in the same line as Waldhorn. He looks well, a cross between Irving and the late Lassalle (though he has nothing in common with the

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* Queer fellow, a pun on Kautsky's name. For Kautsky, see page 400.
cynically oily, obtrusive, ducal manners of the latter) an intelligent and somewhat promising boy. Well this is the point of the story—Dolly Maitland pays fearful court to him so that mother and Tussy are signalling to each other all through supper. Finally Mr. Maitland arrived as well, fairly sober, and also had a wordy duel with his instructive table companion—Hyndman—about Gladstone, in whom the spiritualist Maitland believes. I—rather annoyed by a bad throat—felt glad when the whole lot vanished. It is a strange thing that one cannot well live altogether without company, and that when you get it, you try hard to rid yourself of itself.*

Hartmann is working hard as a common workman in Woolwich; the difficulty of talking to him in any language at all increases. The Russian refugees in Geneva are demanding that he should repudiate Rochefort, and publicly. This he will not and cannot do, and it is also impossible, if only on account of the exaggerated letter which the Petersberg Committee wrote to Rochefort and which he on his side published in the Intransigeant. The Genevans have in fact long been trying to persuade Europe that it is really they who direct the movement in Russia; now when this lie, spread by themselves, is seized upon by Bismarck and Co. and becomes dangerous to them, they declare the opposite and vainly attempt to convince the world of their innocence. Actually they are mere doctrinaires, confused anarchist socialists, and their influence upon the Russian “theatre of war” is zero.

Have you followed the trial of the assassins† in Petersburg? They are sterling people through and through, sans pose melodramatique [no melodramatic pose], simple, businesslike, heroic. Shouting and doing are irreconcilable opposites. The Petersberg Executive Committee, which acts so energetically, issues manifestos of refined “moderation.” It is far removed from the schoolboy way in which Most‡

* This and the preceding sentence, besides a number of words and phrases in this letter, were written by Marx in English. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
† The Russian revolutionaries of the Narodnaya Volya [People’s Will] who had succeeded in their plot to kill the Emperor Alexander II on March 1, 1881, [Ed. Eng. ed.]
‡ Most. See page 945.

and other childish whimperers preach tyrannicide as a “theory” and “panacea” (that was done by such innocent Englishmen as Disraeli, [Walter] Savage Landor, Macaulay and Stanfield the friend of Mazzini); on the contrary they try to teach Europe that their modus operandi [method of action] is a specifically Russian and historically inevitable method about which there is no more reason to moralise—for or against—than there is about the earthquake in Chios.

This affair was the occasion of a fine row in the House of Commons. (You know that to please Bismarck and Gortchakov these miserable Gladstonians have embarked on an attack upon the freedom of the press in England, in the person of the wretched Most, an attack in which they are scarcely likely to succeed.) Lord Churchill (a cheeky Tory youngster of the Marlborough family) questioned Sir Charles Dilke and Basset, both understrappers in the Cabinet, regarding financial subsidies to the Freiheit. These were flatly denied and Churchill was obliged to name his authority. He then named the inevitable Mr. Maltman Barry! I am enclosing you a cutting about this affair from the Weekly Despatch (Dilke’s paper, edited by the “philosophical Radical,” Ashton Dilke, brother of the great “Dilke”) and a statement by Maltman Barry in the Daily News. Dilke is obviously lying; a miserable creature, this swaggerer who has nominated himself as the future “President of the British Republic” and who, for fear of losing his job, allows Bismarck to dictate to him which papers he is to favour with £1 and which not. If it were only known as well that immediately after Hartmann’s arrival in London Ashton Dilke invited him to a luncheon! But Hartmann refused the invitation because he would not allow himself to be “exhibited.”

About the Comist renegade Masse, by the way. Justice* does him far too much honour and handles him with kid gloves. To this strange clique—of English Liberals and their even worse sub-species the so-called Radicals—it really seems a crime that, contrary to all tradition and in breach of agreement,

* Clemenceau’s French radical bourgeois paper; Charles Longuet worked on its editorial staff.
Justice fails to treat these shams and humbugs in the traditional manner and to maintain the legend about them current in the Continental liberal press! When one considers the utterly shameless way in which the London press attacks the Socialist Party in every European country and how difficult it is, supposing one ever regards it as worth the trouble, to answer a word, to get even a few lines of reply into that press—then it is really going rather far to recognise the principle that if a Parisian paper entangles itself in a criticism of the “great” Gladstone, that arch hypocrite and casuist of an antiquated school, it is then obliged to put whole columns at the disposal of Herr Maxse and his prose in order that he may repay Gladstone in kind for the advancement received from him.

Assuming that the policy of Gladstone (the Coercion and Arms Acts man) with regard to Ireland were as correct as it is false, would this be a reason for talking about the “generosity” or “magnanimity” of this man? As if there were any question of this sort of thing between England and Ireland! It should really be explained to Maxse that Pecksmitian phrases of this kind have the rights of citizenship in London but not in Paris!

Let Longuet read Parnell’s speech in Cork in to-day’s Times; there he will find the heart of what there is to be said about Gladstone’s new Land Act; and here it should not be overlooked that by his shameful preliminary measures (including the annulment of freedom of speech for members of the House of Commons) Gladstone prepared the conditions under which the evictions in Ireland are now proceeding on a mass scale, while the Act is mere shadow boxing, since the Lords—who get everything they want from Gladstone and no longer need to tremble at the Land League—will doubtless either reject it or else castrate it so much that the Irish themselves will eventually vote against it.

† Marx–Longuet, Jenny (1844-83), Marx’s eldest daughter, married to Charles Longuet. In 1870 she took action in the Irish struggles by publishing in a French paper revelations of the treatment of the Irish political prisoners by the English bourgeoisie; by this means she forced the Gladstone government to conduct an investigation into the question. She wrote under the name of “J. Williams.”

Johnny, Harra, Mr. “Tea.” The Longuets’ children, of whom Marx was very fond. The eldest, “Johnny,” is the well-known French centrist and “patriot,” Jean Longuet. At the French Socialist Party Congress at Tours in 1920 where the majority decided to found the Communist Party of France he remained with the minority which split off.

Longuet, Charles (1833-1901), French journalist, Proudhonist. Delegate to the Lausanne Congress of the First International (1867); member of the Commune and editor of its official organ; after the fall of the Commune he fled to London. In 1880 he returned to France and was elected a member of the Paris City Council. Longuet worked on the editorial staff of the bourgeois radical paper La Justice.

Hyndman, Henry Mayers (1842-1922). English Social-Democrat. Up to 1880, when he got to know Marx, Hyndman was a “democrat” of an indefinite type who had connections and sympathies with the Tories. “He achieved his turn to socialism after reading Capital (in the French translation) during one of the numerous voyages he made to America between 1874 and 1880.” (Lenin.) [See Letter 176.] He was, in Lenin’s words, “a bourgeois philistine, who belonging to the best of his class, eventually struggles through to socialism but never quite sheds bourgeois conceptions and prejudices.” He was not capable of making the Social-Democratic Federation, which he founded in 1881, into a mass organisation. In a letter to Sorge (May 12, 1894), Engels writes that Hyndman’s Social-Democratic Federation had succeeded “in reducing the Marxian theory of development to a rigid orthodoxy, which the workers are not to work their way up to by their own class feeling but to swallow instantly without development, as an article of faith.” Engels, writing to Bebel on August 30, 1883 (Letter 188) mentions Hyndman’s extreme chauvinism, which was a marked characteristic throughout his political life. In 1914 he was an ardent patriot; after the October Revolution in Russia he was a supporter of intervention. (For Hyndman, the S.D.F., etc., see Letters 176, 188, 197, 200, 207.)

Hartmann, Leo (1850-1913). Russian revolutionary. Member of the revolutionary petty-bourgeois Socialist Party Narod-
naya Volya (People’s Will) in whose terrorist activities he took a prominent part. After the failure of the attempt on the Tsar’s train he fled to Paris, where, at the request of the Russian government, he was arrested by the French police. His deportation to Russia was however prevented by the energetic efforts of the Russian émigrés and the French radical press. He then went to London where he occupied himself a great deal with inventions, and later to America. He was on friendly terms with Marx and Engels.

Barry, Maltman (1842-1909). Journalist, member of the First International, later attached himself to the Conservatives. [See Letter 225.]

Rochefort, Henri (1831-1913). French journalist and politician, one of the leaders of the left Republican movement under the Empire; sentenced to imprisonment on account of his sympathetic attitude to the Commune, he fled to London. After the amnesty he returned to Paris in 1880 and took over the direction of the radical paper Intransigeant. Later became a nationalist and monarchist.

Parnell, Charles (1846-91). Leader of the Irish bourgeois Nationalist Party and of the Irish Land League. Leader of his Party in the House of Commons. The Irish Land League fought (1879-81) against the evictions of tenants from their farms, chiefly using the weapon of boycott. The League was prohibited in 1881.

175. Marx to Sorge

London, 30 June, 1881.

Theoretically the man [Henry George] is utterly backward! He understands nothing about the nature of surplus value and so wanders about in speculations which follow the English model but have now been superseded even among the English, about the different portions of surplus value to which independent existence is attributed—about the relations of profit, rent, interest, etc. His fundamental dogma is that *everything would be all right* if ground rent were paid to the state. (You will find payment of this kind among the *transitional measures* included in *The Communist Manifesto* too.) This idea originally belonged to the bourgeois economists; it was first put forward (apart from a similar demand at the end of the eighteenth century) by the earliest *radical* followers of Ricardo, soon after his death. I said of it in 1847, in my work against Proudhon: “We can understand that economists like Mill” (the elder, not his son John Stuart, who also repeats this in a somewhat modified form) “Cherbuliez, Hilditch and others have demanded that rent should be paid to the state in order that it may serve as a substitute for taxes. This is a frank expression of the hatred which the *industrial capitalist* dedicates to the *landed proprietor*, who seems to him a useless and superfluous element in the general total of bourgeois production.”

We ourselves, as I have already mentioned, adopted this appropriation of ground rent by the state among numerous other *transitional measures*, which, as we also remarked in the *Manifesto*, are and must be contradictory in themselves.

But the first person to turn this *desideratum* [requirement] of the *radical* English bourgeois economists into a *socialist panacea*, to declare this procedure to be the solution of the antagonisms involved in the present method of production, was *Collins*, a former old Hussar officer of Napoleon’s, born in Belgium, who in the latter days of Guizot and the first of Napoleon the Less, favoured the world from Paris with some fat volumes about this “discovery” of his. Like another discovery he made, namely, that while there is no God there is an “immortal” human soul and that animals have “no feelings.”

For if they had feelings, that is souls, we should be cannibals and a realm of righteousness could never be founded upon earth. His “anti-landownership” theory together with his theory of the soul, etc., have been preached every month for years in the Parisian *Philosophie de l’Avenir* [Philosophy of the Future] by his few remaining followers, mostly Belgians. They call themselves “rational collectivists” and have praised Henry George. After them and besides them, among other people, the Prussian banker and former lottery owner Samten from East Prussia, a shallow-brained fellow, has eked out this “socialism” into a thick volume.

All these “socialists” since Collins have this much in common that they leave wage labour and therefore capitalist production
in existence and try to bamboozle themselves or the world into believing that if ground rents were transformed into a state tax all the evils of capitalist production would disappear of themselves. The whole thing is therefore simply an attempt, decked out with socialism, to save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one.

This cloven hoof (at the same time ass's hoof) is also unmistakably revealed in the declarations of Henry George. And it is the more unpardonable in him because he ought to have put the question to himself in just the opposite way: How did it happen that in the United States, where, relatively, that is in comparison with civilised Europe, the land was accessible to the great mass of the people and to a certain degree (again relatively) still is, capitalist economy and the corresponding enslavement of the working class have developed more rapidly and shamelessly than in any other country!

On the other hand George's book, like the sensation it has made with you, is significant because it is a first, if unsuccessful, attempt at emancipation from the orthodox political economy.

H. George does not seem, for the rest, to know anything about the history of the early American anti-renters,* who were rather practical men than theoretical. Otherwise he is a talented writer (with a talent for Yankee advertisement too) as his article on California in the *Atlantic* proves, for instance. He also has the repulsive presumption and arrogance which is displayed by all panacea-mongers without exception.

*George, Henry (1839-97). American bourgeois economist, earlier a sailor, gold-digger and printer. He was the founder of the petty-bourgeois land reform movement. See further Letters 202, 203 and Notes.

* Settlers in New York State in the 'thirties and 'forties of the 19th century who refused to pay rent for their land and shot down the sheriffs' officers who came to enforce payment. The no-renters numbered thousands and turned the scale at several elections.

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176. Marx to Sorge

London, 15 December, 1881.

The English have recently begun to occupy themselves more with *Capital*, etc. Thus in the last October (or November, I am not quite sure) number of the *Contemporary* there is an article on socialism by John Rae. Very inadequate, full of mistakes, but "fair" as one of my English friends told me the day before yesterday. And why fair? Because* John Rae does not suppose that for the forty years I am spreading my pernicious theories, I was being instigated by "bad" motives. "Seine Grossmuth muss ich loben."† The fairness of making yourself at least sufficiently acquainted with the subject of your criticism seems a thing quite unknown to the penmen of British philistinism.

Before this, in the beginning of June, there was published by a certain Hyndman (who had before intruded himself into my house) a little book: *England for All*. It pretends to be written as an *exposé* of the programme of the "Democratic Federation" —a recently formed association of different English and Scotch radical societies, half bourgeois, half proletaires. The chapters on Labour and Capital are only literal extracts from, or circumlocutions of, the *Capital*, but the fellow does neither quote the book, nor its author, but to shield himself from exposure remarks at the end of his preface: "For the ideas and much of the matter contained in Chapters II and III, I am indebted to the work of a great thinker and original writer, etc., etc." Vis-à-vis myself, the fellow wrote stupid letters of excuse, for instance, that "the English don't like to be taught by foreigners," that "my name was so much detested, etc." With all that, his little book—so far as it pillers the *Capital*—makes good propaganda, although the man is a "weak" vessel, and very far from having even the patience—the first condition of learning anything—of studying a matter thoroughly. All those amiable middle-class writers—if not specialists—have an itching to make money or name or political capital immediately out of any new thoughts they may have got at by any

* From here onwards this letter was written in English.
† "I must praise his magnanimity."
favourable windfall. Many evenings this fellow has pilfered from me, in order—to take me out and to learn in the easiest way.

Lastly there was published on the first December last (I shall send you a copy of it) in the monthly review, Modern Thought, an article: “Leaders of Modern Thought”; No. XXIII—Karl Marx. By Ernest Belfort Bax.

Now this is the first English publication of the kind which is pervaded by a real enthusiasm for the new ideas themselves and boldly stands up against Brit. Philistinism. That does not prevent that the biographical notices the author gives of me are mostly wrong, etc. In the exposition of my economic principles and in his translations (i.e., quotations of the Capital) much is wrong and confused, but with all that the appearance of this article, announced in large letters by placards on the walls of Westend London, has produced a great sensation. What was most important for me, I received the said number of Modern Thought already on the 9th of November, so that my dear wife had the last days of her life still cheered up. You know the passionate interest she took in all such affairs.

†BAX, ERNEST BELFORT (1854-1926). Took part in the foundation of the Social Democratic Federation and collaborated in its organ, Justice, and in the monthly, To-Day, which he first tried to run independently but owing to lack of funds had to make over to Hyndman in 1884. Broke with Hyndman at the end of 1884 and together with Morris and Eleanor Marx-Aveling etc. helped to form the Socialist League, which, however, later fell under anachist influence. Later resumed his relations with Hyndman and shared his chauvinistic position. Engels wrote of Bax and Aveling (to Kautsky 26 June and 20 October 1884) that they had “the best intentions and learn a lot too, but everything is confused and by themselves these literary people can do nothing,” “they are both thoroughly sound, intelligent and sincere although needing great assistance.” This was at the period just before the formation of the Socialist League. Later (to Liebknecht 12 May 1886) Engels notes that “Bax and Morris are strongly influenced by the anarchists” and in 1889, see Letter 207, refers to Bax as “only a book-worm.” [Ed. Eng. ed.]

177. ENGELS TO KAUTSKY
London, 12 September, 1882.

You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as what the bourgeois think. There is no workers’ party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers daily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and the colonies. In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population, Canada, the Cape, Australia, will all become independent; on the other hand the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated, India, Algiers, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions, must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop I am difficult to say. India will perhaps, indeed very probably, produce a revolution, and as the proletariat emancipating itself cannot conduct any colonial wars, this would have to be given full scope; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g., in Algiers and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing for us. We shall have enough to do at home. Once Europe is reorganised, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semi-civilised countries will follow in their wake of their own accord. Economic needs alone will be responsible for this. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organisation, we to-day can only advance rather idle hypotheses, I think. One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing. Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds.
The business in Egypt has been contrived by Russian diplomacy. Gladstone is to take Egypt (which he has not got yet by a long way and if he had it he would still be a long way from keeping it) in order that Russia may take Armenia, which according to Gladstone would be a further liberation of a Christian country from the Mohammedan yoke. Everything else about the affair is a sham, humbug, pretext. Whether the humbug will succeed will soon be seen.

In September 1882 the Egyptian army was destroyed at Tel-el-Kebir by the British, who then occupied Cairo. This was the final stage in Britain’s forcible seizure of Egypt.

Kautsky, Karl (born 1854), German Social-Democrat, one of the best-known theoreticians of the Second International. By birth a Czech. He graduated at the University of Vienna and in 1874 joined the Austrian Social-Democratic Party, in which he attached himself to the “Left” semi-anarchist wing; at this time he began working in connection with the Democratic and Social-Democratic press, especially with the Volkstaat; he was still completely under the influence of Lassalle and the bourgeois economists at this period. In 1879 he associated himself with the “Left” opportunist Freiheit of Most* but in the same year, at the invitation of the reformist Höchberg,† he settled in Zürich in order to collaborate in Höchberg’s periodicals. In the spring Kautsky was commissioned by Höchberg to go to London, where he made the acquaintance of Marx and Engels. (See Letter 174.) From 1883 onwards he was the editor of Neue Zeit, in 1885 he settled in Stuttgart. From the beginning of the ‘eighties he began to make an approach to Marxism. Engels in his letters criticised the theoretical mistakes in Kautsky’s works and his vacillations as editor of the Neue Zeit. (See Letter 195.) Kautsky later wrote a series of Marxist works, but even in his best works he made a number of important mistakes; he was never a consistent dialectical materialist and was equally far from ever adopting a revolutionary Marxist position on the question of the proletarian dictatorship. At the end of the ’nineties he led the fight against the revisionism of Bernstein (Note to Letter 170) in the course of which, however, he manifested great vacillations. Later he was the theoretical leader of centrisms, the high priest of the “orthodoxy” of the Second International which attenuated Marxism and served as a cloak for revisionism. In the years of the first imperialist war Kautsky was a social pacifist. After the October Revolution he became the leading champion of the struggle against Marxism-Leninism and as a sworn foe of the proletarian revolution preached intervention against the Soviet Union. Since then he has published a great number of pamphlets and large Volumes in which he adulterates and distorts Marxism in the crudest way.

178. Engels to Bebel
London, 28 October, 1882.

I read [Vollmar’s] second article rather hurriedly, with two or three people talking the whole time. Otherwise the way he represents the French Revolution to himself would have led me to detect the French influence and with it my Vollmar too, no doubt. You have perceived this side quite correctly. He at last is the dreamed-of realisation of the phrase about the “one reactionary mass.” All the official parties united in one lump here, all the Socialists in one column there—great decisive battle. Victory all along the line at one blow. In real life things do not happen so simply. In real life, as you also remark, the revolution begins the other way round by the great majority of the people and also of the official parties massing themselves together against the government, which is thereby isolated, and overthrowing it; and it is only after those of the official parties whose existence is still possible have mutually and successively accomplished one another’s destruction that Vollmar’s great division takes place and with it the prospect of our rule. If, like Vollmar, we wanted to start straight off with the final act of the revolution we should be in a miserably bad way.

In France the long expected split has taken place. The original conjunction of Guesde and Lafargue with Malon and
Brousse was no doubt unavoidable when the party was founded, but Marx and I never had any illusions that it could last. The issue is purely one of principle: is the struggle to be conducted as a class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, or is it to be permitted that in good opportunist (or as it is called in the Socialist translation: possibilist) style the class character of the movement, together with the programme, are everywhere to be dropped where there is a chance of winning more votes, more adherents, by this means. Malon and Brousse, by declaring themselves in favour of the latter alternative, have sacrificed the proletariat class character of the movement and made separation inevitable. All the better. The development of the proletariat proceeds everywhere amidst internal struggles* and France, which is now forming a workers' party for the first time, is no exception. We in Germany have got beyond the first phase of the internal struggle, other phases still lie before us. Unity is quite a good thing so long as it is possible, but there are things which stand higher than unity. And when, like Marx and myself, one has fought harder all one's life long against the alleged Socialists than against anyone else (for we only regarded the bourgeoisie as a class and hardly ever involved ourselves in conflicts with individual bourgeois), one cannot greatly grieve that the inevitable struggle has broken out.

* On the "one reactionary mass" Engels wrote on June 12, 1883, to Bernstein: "Here indeed there is an end of the phrase about the one reactionary mass, which is as a rule only suitable for rhetoric (or, on the other hand, for a really revolutionary situation). For the irony of history, working on our side, lies in the very fact that the different elements of this feudal and bourgeois mass wear another out, fight one another and devour one another for our advantage and so form the very opposite of the homogeneous mass which the Knote imagines he has dealt with if he calls them all "reactionaries." On the contrary, all these diverse scoundrels must first mutually smash up, discredit and utterly ruin one another, and prepare the ground for us by proving—one type after the other—their incapacity. It was one of Lassalle's greatest mistakes that as an agitator he utterly forgot the little dialectic he had learnt from Hegel. Here he could never see more than one side, just like Liebknecht, but as for certain reasons the latter by chance saw the right side, he was after all superior to the great Lassalle. And parallel with this is the idea linked up with the idea of the one reactionary mass, that if existing conditions are overthrown, we should come into power. That is nonsense. A revolution is a lengthy process, compare 1642-46 and 1789-93, and in order that conditions may become mature for us and we for them, all the intermediate parties must come into power and do for themselves in turn. And then we shall come—and shall perhaps also get beaten again for the moment. Although if the thing proceeds normally I consider that scarcely possible.”

Vollmar, Georg Heinrich von (born 1850), German Social-Democrat, former officer, who joined the Social-Democrats at the end of the seventies. He edited the Zürich Sozial-Demokrat 1879-80 and was a member of the Reichstag 1881-86 and 1890-1903; during the period of the Socialist Law a supporter of the revolutionary tactics. After the beginning of the nineties he became a reformist leader and ideologist. At the Erfurt Party Congress (1891) he came out in favour of the peaceful transition to socialism by means of "measures of state socialism"; at the Frankfort Party Congress (1894) he brought forward, on behalf of the Bavarian Social-Democrats, a full-blown reformist programme which foreshadowed an alliance with the well-to-do peasantry and a vote for a bourgeois state budget. Vollmar's articles—Repeal of the Socialist Law—mentioned in this letter were published in the Social-Demokrat of August 17 and 24, 1882; they expressed the view that the continuance of the Socialist Law was more favourable for Social-Democracy than its repeal and were couched in a very revolutionary tone, so that Bebel wrote to Engels: "The articles are well written and correct in principle though wrong in tactics. If we use the language recommended by Vollmar we shall be in quod in a month... with from five to ten years round our necks, and if the paper were to try to use this style

* For the "one reactionary mass" compare also page 333.
Married in 1868 Laura, Marx’s second daughter. In 1870-71 he carried on organisational and agitational work in Paris and Bordeaux; after the fall of the Commune he fled to Spain where he fought for the line of the General Council; he then settled in London. After the bloody May Day in Fourmies (1891) he was sentenced to a year’s imprisonment. Lafargue fought against reformism and Milleraudism; he wrote numerous propagandist works in which, despite many mistakes, he defended revolutionary Marxism.

MALON, BENOIT (1841-93). French petty-bourgeois Socialist, one of the founders and theoreticians of reformism. In 1865 a member of the First International. In 1871 a member of the Commune; after its fall he fled to Switzerland. He combated Marxism and stood for an eclectic theory of “integral socialism.”

BOUSSE, PAUL (1854-1913). French petty-bourgeois Socialist. After the fall of the Commune he lived in Switzerland, where he joined the anarchists. In the beginning of the ’eighties he joined the French Workers’ Party and there, as leader of the Possibilist line, soon took up the fight against Marxism.

179. ENGELS TO MARX

London, 8 December, 1882.

In order finally to get clear about the parallel between the Germans of Tacitus and the American Redskins I have made some gentle extractions from the first volume of your Bancroft.* The similarity is indeed all the more surprising because the method of production is so fundamentally different—here hunters and fishers without cattle-raising or agriculture, there nomadic cattle-raising passing into agriculture. It just proves how at this stage the type of production is less decisive than the degree in which the old blood bonds and the old mutual community of the sexes within the tribe have been dissolved. Otherwise the Thlinkeets in the former Russian America could

* Hubert Howe Bancroft (1821-1918). American historian. Author of The Native Races of the Pacific States (five volumes, 1874-76) and of the History of the Pacific States from Central America to Alaska, which began to appear in 1888. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
not be the exact counterpart of the Germanic tribes—even more so really than your Iroquois. Another riddle solved there is how the fact that the women are burdened with the main mass of the work is quite consistent with great respect for women. Moreover I have found my suspicion confirmed that the Jus Primae Noctis [right to the first night] originally found in Europe among the Celts and the Slavs, is a remnant of the old sexual community: it subsists in two tribes, widely separated and of different races, for the medicine-man as the representative of the tribe. I have learned a great deal from the book, and with regard to the Germanic tribes enough for the time being. Mexico and Peru I must reserve for later on. I have given back the Bancroft but have taken the rest of Maurer’s things, which are therefore now all at my place. I had to look through them on account of my concluding note on the *Mark*, which will be rather long and with which I am still dissatisfied although I have rewritten it two or three times. After all it is no joke to summarise its rise, flourishing and decay in eight or ten pages. If I can possibly get the time I will send it to you in order to hear your opinion. And I myself would like to be quit of the stuff and get back to the natural sciences.

It is funny to see from the so-called primitive peoples how the conception of *holiness* arose. What is originally holy is what we have taken over from the animal kingdom—the bestial; “human laws” are as much of an abomination in relation to this as they are in the gospel to the divine law.

This and the following letters refer to Engels’ article, *The Mark*, in which he gives a short sketch of the history of the German peasant class. *The Mark* was first published in the *Social-Demokrat* (1883) and added as an appendix to Engels’ pamphlet *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*. [Now republished as an appendix to the *Peasant War in Germany.*]
market towns into serfs. But this also caused the ultimate collapse of the trade guild as soon as the competition of foreign manufacture arose. The other reasons which combined with this in holding back German manufacture I will here omit.

181. ENGELS TO MARX

London, 16 December, 1882.

The point about the almost total disappearance of serfdom—legally or actually—in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the most important to me, because formerly you expressed a divergent opinion on this. In the East Elbe region the colonisation proves that the German peasants were free; in Schleswig-Holstein Maurer admits that at that time "all" the peasants had regained their freedom (perhaps rather later than the fourteenth century). He also admits that in South Germany it was just at this period that the bondsmen were best treated. In Lower Saxony more or less the same (e.g., the new Meier [tenant farmers] who were in fact copyholders). He is only opposed to Kindlinger's view that serfdom first arose in the sixteenth century. But that it was newly reinforced after that, and appeared in a second edition, seems to me indubitable. Meitzen gives the dates at which serfs begin to be mentioned again in East Prussia, Brandenburg, Silesia: the middle of the sixteenth century; Hansen gives the same for Schleswig-Holstein. When Maurer calls this a milder form of serfdom he is right in comparison with the ninth and eleventh centuries, when the old Germanic slavery still continued, and right too with regard to the legal powers which the lord also had then and later—according to the law books of the thirteenth century—over his serfs. But compared with the actual position of the peasants in the thirteenth, the fourteenth and, in North Germany, the fifteenth centuries, the new serfdom was anything but an alleviation. Especially after the Thirty Years' War! It is also significant that while in the Middle Ages the degrees of servitude and serfdom are innumerable, so that the Mirror

182. ENGELS TO MARX


My idea of the Podolinsky business is as follows. His real discovery is that human labour has the power of detaining solar energy on the earth's surface and permitting its activity longer than would be the case without it. All the economic conclusions he draws from this are wrong. I have not got the thing by me but recently read it in Italian in the Plebe.† The question is: how can a given quantity of energy in a given quantity of food leave behind it a greater quantity of energy than itself? I solve it in this way. Assume that the amount of food daily necessary for one person represents an amount of energy expressed as 10,000 H.U. (heat units). These 10,000 H.U. remain for ever = 10,000 H.U. and in practice, as is well known, lose in the course of their transformation into other forms of energy, through friction, etc., a part of their availability. In the human body this is even considerable. The physical work performed in economic labour can never therefore = 10,000 H.U. but is always less.

But this does not mean that physical labour is economic labour; far from it. The economic labour performed by the 10,000 H.U. in nowise consists of the reproduction of the same 10,000 H.U., wholly or partially, in this or that form. On the contrary, most of these are lost in the increased heat and radiation of the body, etc., and what remains available of them are the fertilising potentialities of the excrements. The economic labour which a man performs by the employment of these 10,000 H.U. consists rather in the fixation for a greater or less time of new H.U. radiated to him from the sun, which have

* Der Sachenpiegel—the legal code of the period.
† Sergei Podolinsky, an Ukrainian Socialist.
‡ Official organ of the Italian section of the First International.
only this labour connection with the first 10,000 H.U. Whether, however, the new quantity of H.U. fixated by the application of the 10,000 H.U. of daily nourishment reaches 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 or 1,000,000 H.U., depends solely on the degree of development attained by the means of production.

This can only be represented arithmetically in the most primitive branches of production: hunting, fishing, cattle-raising, agriculture. In hunting and fishing new solar energy is not even fixated, only what has already been fixated is turned to use. At the same time it is obvious that, assuming the fisher or hunter to be normally nourished, the amount of albumen or fat he gets by hunting or fishing is independent of the amount of these foodstuffs which he consumes.

In cattle raising, energy is fixated in the sense that vegetable matter, which would otherwise rapidly wither, decay and decompose, is systematically transformed into animal albumen, fat, skin, bones, etc., and therefore fixated for a longer time. Here the calculation is already complicated.

Still more so in agriculture, where the energy value of the auxiliary materials, manures, etc., also enters into the calculation.

In industry all calculation comes to an end: in most cases the work added to the product can no longer be expressed in H.U. If, for instance, this is still possible with a pound of yarn because its toughness and capacity for resistance can just, with a lot of fuss and trouble, be reduced to a mechanical formula, here already this appears as an utterly useless piece of pedantry, and in the case of a piece of unbleached cloth, still more in the case of bleached, dyed and printed cloth, becomes absurd. The energy value of a hammer, a screw or a needle calculated according to the cost of production is an impossible quantity. In my opinion it is absolutely impossible to try and express economic relations in physical magnitudes.

What Podolinsky has entirely forgotten is that man as a worker is not merely a fixer of present solar heat but a still greater squanderer of past solar heat. The stores of energy, coal, ores, forests, etc., we succeed in squandering you know better than I. From this point of view even fishing and hunting appear not as the fixation of new sun heat but as the using up and incipient waste of solar energy already accumulated.

Further: what man does deliberately by work, the plant does unconsciously. Plants—and this is an old story already—are the great absorbers and depositors of sun heat in a changed form. By work, therefore, in so far as it fixes sun heat (which in industry and elsewhere is by no means always the case) man succeeds in uniting the natural functions of the energy-consuming animal with those of the energy-collecting plant.

Podolinsky has strayed away from his very valuable discovery into mistaken paths because he was trying to find in natural science a new proof of the truth of socialism, and has therefore confused physics and economics.

183. ENGELS TO MARX

London, 22 December, 1882.

To return once more to Podolinsky; I must make a correction, namely, that storage of energy through work really only takes place in agriculture; in cattle raising the energy accumulated in the plants is simply transferred as a whole to the animals, and one can only speak of storage of energy in the sense that without cattle-raising, nutritious plants wither uselessly, whereas with it they are utilised. In all branches of industry, on the other hand, energy is only expended. The most that has to be taken into consideration is the fact that vegetable products, wood, straw, flax, etc., and animal products in which vegetable energy is stored up, are put to use by being worked upon and therefore preserved longer than when they are left to decay naturally. So that if one chooses one can translate into the physical world the old economic fact that all industrial producers have to live from the products of agriculture, cattle-raising, hunting, and fishing—but there is hardly much to be gained from doing so...

I am glad that on the history of serfdom we "proceed in agreement," as they say in business. It is certain that serfdom and bondage are not a peculiarly medieval-feudal form, we find
them everywhere or nearly everywhere where conquerors have
the land cultivated for them by the old inhabitants—e.g., very
early in Thessaly. This fact has even misled me and many
other people about servitude in the Middle Ages; one was
much too much inclined to base it simply on conquest, this
made everything so neat and easy. See Thierry among others.
The position of the Christians in Turkey during the height
of the old Turkish semi-feudal system was something similar.

This was one of the last letters of Engels to Marx. In 1883
only two letters have been preserved.

In the last years of his life Marx made journeys for his health.
In 1881-82 he went to France, Algiers and Switzerland
as well as to the Isle of Wight. Engels wrote to him on August
26, 1882:

"In the Waald country there is an excellent wine, Ivorne,
which is much to be recommended, especially when old. Then
people drink a red Neuchâtelers, Corzellel, which bubbles a
little, the froth forms a star in the middle of the glass; also very
good. And finally Veltliner (Valtellina), the best wine in
Switzerland. In my time the ordinary Burgundy, Macon and
Beaurois were also very good and not dear. Drink away
gallantly at all these kinds, and if in the long run you get bored
with all the wandering about remember that it is the only way
for you to regain your old form; it can be laid aside a little
while longer, but the day will come when we shall need it only
too badly."

184. ENGELS TO BERNSTEIN

London, 1 March, 1883.

From the outset we have always fought to the very utmost
against the petty-bourgeois and philistine disposition within the
Party, because this disposition, developed since the time of the
Thirty Years' War, has infected all classes in Germany and has

* Marx was at this time at Lausanne in the Swiss canton of Vaud [Waald]. [Ed.
Eng. ed.]
wandering about with nothing to do, that another period of exile to the south of Europe would probably have harmed him in spirit as much as it would have benefited him in health. When the foggy season commenced in London, he was sent to the Isle of Wight. There it did nothing but rain and he caught another cold. Schorlemmer and I were intending to pay him a visit at the New Year when news came which made it necessary for Tussy to join him at once. Then followed Jenny’s death and he had another attack of bronchitis. After all that had gone before, and at his age, this was dangerous. A number of complications set in, the most serious being an abscess on the lung and a terribly rapid loss of strength. Despite this, however, the general course of the illness was proceeding favourably, and last Friday the chief doctor who was attending him, one of the foremost young doctors in London, specially recommended to him by Ray Lankester, gave us the most brilliant hope for his recovery. But anyone who has but once examined the lung tissue under the microscope, realises how great is the danger of a blood vessel being broken if the lung is purulent. And so every morning for the last six weeks I had a terrible feeling of dread that I might find the curtains down when I turned the corner of the street. Yesterday afternoon at 2.30—which is the best time for visiting him—I arrived to find the house in tears. It seemed that the end was near. I asked what had happened, tried to get to the bottom of the matter, to offer comfort. There had been only a slight hemorrhage but suddenly he had begun to sink rapidly. Our good old Lenchen, who had looked after him better than a mother cares for her child, went upstairs to him and then came down. He was half asleep, she said, I might come in. When we entered the room he lay there asleep, but never to wake again. His pulse and breathing had stopped. In those two minutes he had passed away, peacefully and without pain.

All events which take place by natural necessity bring their own consolation with them, however dreadful they may be. So in this case. Medical skill might have been able to give him a few more years of vegetative existence, the life of a helpless being, dying—to the triumph of the doctors’ art—not suddenly,
worlds with its mighty thoughts. We all owe what we are to him; and the movement as it is to-day is the creation of his theoretical and practical work. If it had not been for him, we should all still be groping in a maze of confusion." And to Bernstein Engels wrote on the same day: "What the worth of this man was to us, both theoretically and in all decisive moments in practice as well, only one who has long been together with him can realise. His mighty vision will be buried with him for years to come. It was something of which we others are not capable. The movement will go on its way, but it will lack that calm, timely, considered intervention which has saved it from so many tedious errors in the past." Finally, in a letter to J. Ph. Becker on March 15, 1883, Engels writes: The greatest mind in our Party had ceased to think, the strongest heart that I have ever known had ceased to beat. It was in all probability a case of internal haemorrhage. You and I are now almost the last of the old guard of 1848. Well, we'll remain in the breach! The bullets are whistling, our friends are falling around us, but this is not the first time we two have seen this. And if a bullet hits one of us, let it come—I only ask that it should strike fair and square and not leave us long in agony."*

186. ENGELS TO VAN PATTEN

[London] 18 April, 1883.

Since 1845 Marx and I have held the view that one of the ultimate results of the future proletarian revolution will be the gradual dissolution of the political organisation known by the name of state. The main object of this organisation has always been to secure, by armed force, the economic oppression of the labouring majority by the minority which alone possesses wealth. With the disappearance of an exclusively wealth-possessing minority there also disappears the necessity for the power of armed oppression, or state power. At the same time, however, it was always our view that in order to attain this and the other far more important aims of the future social revolution, the working class must first take possession of the organised political power of the state and by its aid crush the resistance

* From The Fourteenth of March, 1883.

of the capitalist class and organise society anew. This is to be found already in The Communist Manifesto of 1847, Chapter II, conclusion.

The anarchists put the thing upside down. They declare that the proletarian revolution must begin by doing away with the political organisation of the state. But after its victory the sole organisation which the proletariat finds already in existence is precisely the state. This state may require very considerable alterations before it can fulfil its new functions. But to destroy it at such a moment would be to destroy the only organism by means of which the victorious proletariat can assert its newly-conquered power, hold down its capitalist adversaries and carry out that economic revolution of society without which the whole victory must end in a new defeat and in a mass slaughter of the workers similar to those after the Paris Commune.

Does it require my express assurance that Marx opposed this anarchist nonsense from the first day it was put forward in its present form by Bakunin? The whole internal history of the International Workingmen's Association is evidence of this. From 1867 onwards the anarchists were trying, by the most infamous methods, to conquer the leadership of the International; the main hindrance in their way was Marx. The five-year struggle ended, at the Hague Congress of September 1872, with the expulsion of the anarchists from the International; and the man who did most to achieve this expulsion was Marx. Our old friend, F. A. Sorge, in Hoboken, who was present as a delegate, can give you further details if you wish.

And now for Johann Most.

If anyone asserts that Most, since he became an anarchist, has had any relations with Marx whatever or has received any kind of assistance from Marx, he has either been deceived or is deliberately lying. After the publication of the first number of the London Freiheit, Most did not visit Marx or me more than once, or at most twice. Equally little did we visit him—we did not even meet him by chance anywhere or at any time. In the end we did not even subscribe to his paper any more, because "there was really nothing" in it. We had the same
contempt for his anarchism and his anarchistic tactics as for
the people from whom he had learnt both.

While he was still in Germany Most published a "popular" account of Marx's *Capital*. Marx was asked to look through it for a second edition. I did this work in common with Marx. We found that it was impossible to do more than expunge Most's very worst blunders unless we were to rewrite the whole thing from beginning to end. Marx also allowed his corrections to be included only on the express condition that his name should never be brought into any connection even with this corrected edition of Johann Most's compilation.

†This letter is the answer to a communication from the Secretary of the Central Labour Union in New York, Philipp van Patten, who had written to Engels on 2 April, 1883:

"When all parties were united in connection with the recent memorial celebration in honour of Karl Marx, many loud declarations were made on the part of Johann Most and his friends that Most had stood in close relation to Marx and had popularised his work, *Capital*, in Germany and that Marx had been in agreement with the propaganda which Most had conducted. We have a very high opinion of the capacities and the activity of Karl Marx, but we cannot believe that he was in sympathy with the anarchistic and disorganising methods of Most, and I should like to hear your opinion as to the attitude of Karl Marx on the question of anarchism versus socialism. Most's ill-advised, stupid chatter has already done us too much harm here, and it is very unpleasant for us to hear that such a great authority as Marx approved of such tactics." (For Most see Letter 162.)

187. ENGELS TO J. P. BECKER

London, 22 May, 1883.

Our lads in Germany are really magnificent fellows, now that the Socialist Law* has freed them from the "educated" gentlemen who had

*Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law 1878-90. Compare Letter 150 and Note-

[Ed. Eng. ed.]

†See Letter 176.

Letter 188. 30 August, 1883

tried before 1878 to schoolmaster the workers from the superior heights of their ignorant university-bred confusion, an attempt to which unfortunately only too many of the leaders lent themselves. That rotten trash has not been entirely got rid of as yet, but all the same the movement has come into a definitely revolutionarv channel again. This is just the splendid thing about our boys, that the masses are far better than almost all their leaders, and now that the Socialist Law is forcing the masses to make the movement for themselves and the influence of the leaders is reduced to a minimum things are better than ever.

188. ENGELS TO BEBEL

Eastbourne, 30 August, 1883.

The Manifesto of the Democratic Federation* in London has been issued by about twenty to thirty little societies which under different names (always the same people) have for the last twenty years at least been repeatedly trying, and always with the same lack of success, to make themselves important. All that is important is that now at last they are obliged openly to proclaim their theory, which during the period of the International seemed to them to be dictated from outside, as their own, and that a crowd of young bourgeois intelligentsia are emerging who, to the disgrace of the English workers it must be said, understand things better and take them up more passionately than the workers. For even in the Democratic Federation the workers for the most part only accept the new programme unwillingly and as a matter of form. The chief of the Democratic Federation, Hyndman, is an arch-conservative and an extremely chauvinistic but not stupid careerist, who behaved pretty shabbily to Marx (to whom he was introduced by Rudolf Meyer) and for this reason was dropped by us personally.†

Do not on any account whatever let yourself be deluded into thinking there is a real proletarian movement going on here.

*The Manifesto of the Democratic Federation, "Socialism made Plain" (1883). The Democratic Federation (founded in 1881) took the name Social-Democratic Federation in 1884. For later references to the S.D.F., Hyndman, etc.; see Index. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

†See Letter 176.
I know Liebknecht tries to delude himself and all the world about this, but it is not the case. The elements at present active may become important since they have accepted our theoretical programme and so acquired a basis, but only if a spontaneous movement breaks out here among the workers and they succeed in getting control of it. Till then they will remain individual minds, with a hotch-potch of confused sects, remnants of the great movement of the 'forties, standing behind them and nothing more. And—apart from the unexpected—a really general workers' movement will only come into existence here when the workers are made to feel the fact that England's world monopoly is broken.

Participation in the domination of the world market was and is the basis of the political nullity of the English workers. The tail of the bourgeoisie in the economic exploitation of this monopoly but nevertheless sharing in its advantages, politically they are naturally the tail of the "great Liberal Party," which for its part pays them small attentions, recognises trade unions and strikes as legitimate factors, has relinquished the fight for an unlimited working day and has given the mass of better placed workers the vote. But once America and the united competition of the other industrial countries have made a decent breach in this monopoly (and in iron this is coming rapidly, in cotton unfortunately not as yet) you will see something here.

"Of the English labour movement as it was towards the close of the great period of industrial monopoly Engels wrote in a letter to Bernstein (June 17, 1879):

"The English labour movement has been revolving (now and) for a series of years in a narrow vicious circle of strikes for wages and shorter working hours, and this not merely as an expedient and a means of propaganda and organisation but as an end in itself.

"As a matter of principle even, and in accordance with their rules, the trade unions exclude all political action, and with it participation in every general activity of the working class as a class. The workers are divided politically into Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, into adherents of Disraeli's (Beaconsfield's) administration and adherents of Gladstone's administration. A (real) workers' movement therefore can only be said to exist here in so far as strikes take place which, whether successful or not, do not bring the movement a step further... The fact should not be concealed that no real workers' movement in the Continental sense exists here at the moment."

In a letter to Marx on August 11, 1881, Engels wrote:

"Yesterday morning I informed Mr. Shipton* that he will get no more leading articles from me. Kautsky had sent me a flat affair about international factory legislation, in a bad translation, which I corrected and sent to Shipton. Yesterday the proof arrived with a letter from Shipton, who found two places "too strong"—one of which he had misunderstood into the bargain—whether I would not soften them down? I did so and replied... if this was too strong for him my far stronger article would be much more so, hence it would be better for us both if I stopped... I could not remain on the staff of a paper which lends itself to writing up these German trade unions, comparable only to those very worst English ones which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the middle class... The most decisive reason of all I did not write him: the absolute lack of effect produced by my articles on the rest of the paper and on the public. If any effect is produced it is a hidden reaction on the part of the secret apostles of free trade. The paper remains the same hotch-potch of every possible and impossible crotchet, and in political details more or less, but predominantly, Gladstonian... The British working man just will not budge, he must be shaken up by events, by the loss of the industrial monopoly. Meanwhile, let him have his own way.

In a letter to Kautsky (November 8, 1884) Engels wrote: "In England and France the transition to large-scale industry is more or less completed. The conditions in which the proletariat is placed have already become stable. Agricultural districts and industrial districts, large-scale industry and domestic industry have been separated and as much consolidated as modern industry itself permits. Even the fluctuations which the ten-

* George Shipton, Secretary of the London Trades Council and editor of the Labour Standard.
† This sentence was written in English.
year cycle of crises brings with it have become normal conditions of existence. The political or directly socialist movements which arose during the period of the industrial revolution—immature as they were—have collapsed, leaving behind them discouragement rather than encouragement: bourgeois capitalist development has shown itself stronger than the revolutionary counter-pressure; for a new revolt against capitalist production a new and powerful impulse is required, either perhaps the dethronement of England from its present dominance of the world market, or a particular revolutionary situation in France.” See Letter 189. In Letter 193 Engels contrasts with the conditions just described the economic stage reached by Germany and its effect on the Labour movement there. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

189. ENGELS TO BEBEL

London, 18 January, 1884.

Here too industry has taken on a different character. The ten-year cycle seems to have been broken down now that, since 1870, American and German competition have been putting an end to English monopoly in the world market. In the main branches of industry a depressed state of business has prevailed since 1868, while production has been slowly increasing, and now we seem both here and in America to be standing on the verge of a new crisis which in England has not been preceded by a period of prosperity. That is the secret of the sudden—though it has been slowly preparing for three years—but the present sudden emergence of a socialist movement here. So far the organised workers—trade unions—remain quite remote from it, the movement is proceeding among “educated” elements sprung from the bourgeoisie, who here and there seek contact with the masses and in places find it. These people are of very varying moral and intellectual value and it will take some time before they sort themselves out and the thing becomes clarified. But that it will all go entirely to sleep again is hardly likely.

letter 190. 14 February, 1884

Engels, who had marked the onset of the “period of prosperity” in England (compare Letter 8) also discerned the beginning and the character of a new period—the period which proved to be the transition to the epoch of imperialism defined by Lenin. See Letters 197 and 199 and cf. page 560.

In the following year, in a letter to Bebel (July 24, 1885), Engels noted how the economic changes were reflecting themselves in the alignment of the political parties. “Here the new franchise will overthrow the whole former party position. The alliance between the Whigs and Tories into one great Conservative Party having as its basis the entire body of landowners, which has hitherto been split up into two camps, and including all the conservative elements of the bourgeoisie: banking, high finance, trade, a section of industry; beside it on the other hand the radical bourgeoisie, i.e., the mass of large-scale industry, the petty bourgeoisie and, for the present still as its tail, the proletariat now re-awakening to political life—this is a revolutionary starting point such as England has not seen since 1689.” [Ed. Eng. ed.]

190. ENGELS TO J. P. BECKER

London, 14 February 1884.

Things are by no means so bad with the agitation in Germany, even if the bourgeois press suppresses most of what is happening and only now and then lets out an involuntary groan of terror that the Party is gaining ground at a tearing rate instead of losing it.

The police have opened up a really splendid field for our people: the ever-present and uninterrupted struggle with the police themselves. This is being carried on everywhere and always, with great success and, the best thing about it, with great humour. The police are defeated—and made to look foolish into the bargain. And I consider this struggle the most useful in the circumstances. Above all it keeps the contempt for the enemy alive among our lads. Worse troops could not be sent into the field against us than the German police; even where they have the upper hand they suffer a moral defeat,
and confidence in victory is growing among our lads every day. This struggle will bring it about that as soon as the pressure is at last relaxed (and that will happen on the day the dance in Russia begins) we shall no longer count our numbers in hundreds of thousands but in millions. There is a lot of rotten stuff among the so-called leaders but I have unqualified confidence in our masses, and what they lack in revolutionary tradition they are gaining more and more from this little war with the police. And you can say what you like, but we have never seen a proletariat yet which has learnt to act collectively and to march together in so short a time. For this reason, even though nothing appears on the surface, we can, I think, calmly await the moment when the call to arms is given. You will see how they muster!

On the proletarian masses and the general conditions of political activity in Germany, Engels wrote to Bernstein on January 25, 1882:

"I have never concealed my opinion that the masses in Germany are much better than the gentlemen who lead them, especially since the uses of the press and agitation had turned the Party for these gentlemen into a milk cow to provide them with butter—and this just when Bismarck and the bourgeoise suddenly slaughtered the cow. The thousand individuals whose existence was thus temporarily ruined have the personal misfortune of not being transferred into a directly revolutionary situation, i.e., into exile. Otherwise very many now bemoaning their fate would have gone over to Most's camp or would be finding the Sozial-Demokrat much too tame after all. The majority of these people stopped in Germany, and had to; they went for the most part to rather reactionary places, remained socially respected, dependent on philistines for their existence, and became to a large extent infected by philistinism themselves. All hope very soon began to centre on them on the repeal of the Socialist Law. It is not surprising that under the pressure of philistinism the delusion, in reality absurd, should have arisen among them that this could be achieved by docility. Germany is a most infamous country for people without much strength of will. The narrowness and pettiness both of bourgeois and of political conditions, the provincialism even of the big towns, the small but constantly accumulating vexations of the struggle with police and bureaucracy, all this has a debilitating effect instead of exciting resistance, and thus many in the great "nursery" become childish themselves. Narrow conditions produce narrow views, so that it takes a lot of understanding and energy before anybody living in Germany can be in a position to see anything except what is in front of his eyes, to bear in mind the great interconnection of world events and not to sink into the self-satisfied "objectivity" which looks no further than its nose and just because of this is really the most limited subjectivity, even though it may be shared by thousands of these subjects.

But the more the development of this tendency to cover up their deficiency in insight and power of resistance by "objective" super-cleverness is a natural one, so much the more decisively must it be combated. And here the working masses themselves offer the best point of support. They alone in Germany live in something approaching modern conditions, all their miseries, small and big, centre in the oppression of capital; and while all other struggles in Germany, whether social or political, are wretched and petty and turn upon miserable trivialities elsewhere long overcome, their struggle is the only great one, the only one which stands on the heights of time, the only one which instead of enfeebling the fighter, endows him with perpetually renewed energy.

Engels to Kautsky


That the Neue Zeit is to come to an end is no misfortune for the Party. It is becoming more and more apparent that the great majority of the literary Party people in Germany belong to the opportunists and cautious goers who, however disagreeable the Socialist Law may be to them from a pecuniary point of view, feel themselves quite in the right atmosphere under it from the literary point of view; they can express themselves quite openly—we are prevented from giving them one in the eye. Hence the mere task of filling a journal of this kind
every mouth demands very great tolerance, which results in its being gradually overrun with philanthropy, humanitarianism, sentimentality and whatever all the anti-revolutionary vices of the Freiwalds, Quarcks, Schippeis, Rosuses, etc. are called. People who do not want to learn anything fundamentally and only make literature about literature and incidentally out of literature (nine-tenths of present-day German writing is writing about other writing), naturally achieve more printed pages per annum than those who grind at something and only want to write about other books when: (1) they have mastered these other books and (2) there is something in them worth the trouble. The preponderance of these former gentlemen which has been produced by the Socialist Law in the literature published in Germany is inevitable while the Law lasts. Against it we have in the literature published abroad a weapon which strikes in a totally different manner.

In 1884 the further publication of Neue Zeit was in question. Neue Zeit was the theoretical organ of German Social-Democracy. Kautsky edited it from 1883 to 1917, the last number appeared in 1923. All the important leaders of the Second International wrote in Neue Zeit, but under Kautsky’s editorship the Bolsheviks were almost entirely shut out from it while much space was granted to the criticism of Bolshevism (both on the part of the Russian Mensheviks and Trotskyists and of Rosa Luxemburg).

Quarck (pseudonym, Freiwald), Schippeis, Rosus. Collaborators in Neue Zeit. Quarck was a “Right” opportunist while Schippeis at first attached himself to the “Left” opportunist tendency of the “Youth”; later he was one of the leading reformists and defenders of the imperialist policy of protective tariffs.

192. ENUKLS TO BEBEI

London, 18 November, 1884.

The whole of the Liberal philistines have gained such a respect for us that they are screaming with one accord: Yes, if the Social-Democrats will put themselves on a legal basis and abjure revolution then we are in favour of the immediate repeal of the Socialist Law. There is no doubt, therefore, that this suggestion will at once be made to you in the Reichstag. The answer you give to it is important—not so much for Germany, where our gallant lads have given it in the elections, as for abroad. A tame answer would at once destroy the colossal impression produced by the elections.

In my opinion the case is like this:

Throughout the whole of Europe the existing political situation is the product of revolutions. The legal basis, historic right, legitimacy, have been everywhere riddled through and through a thousand times or entirely overthrown. But it is in the nature of all parties or classes which have come to power through revolution, to demand that the new basis of right created by the revolution should also be unconditionally recognised and regarded as holy. The right to revolution did exist—otherwise the present rulers would not be rightful—but from now onwards it is to exist no more.

In Germany the existing situation rests on the revolution which began in 1848 and ended in 1866. 1866 was a complete revolution. Just as Prussia only became anything by treachery and war against the German Empire, in alliance with foreign powers (1740, 1756, 1785), so it only achieved the German-Prussian Empire by the forcible overthrow of the German Confederation and by civil war. Its assertion that the others broke the Confederation makes no difference. The others say the opposite. There has never been a revolution yet which lacked a legal pretext—as in France in 1830 when both the king and the bourgeoisie asserted they were in the right. Enough, Prussia provoked the civil war and with it the revolution. After its victory it overthrew three thrones “by God’s grace” and annexed their territories, together with those of the former free city of Frankfurt. If that was not revolutionary I do not know the meaning of the word. And as this was not enough it confiscated the private property of the princes who had been driven out. That this was unlawful, revolutionary therefore, it admitted by getting the action endorsed later by an assembly—
the Reichstag—which had as little right to dispose of these funds as the government.

The German-Prussian Empire, as the completion of the North German Confederation which 1866 forcibly created, is a thoroughly revolutionary creation. I make no complaint about that. What I reproach the people who made it with is that they were only poor-spirited revolutionaries who did not go much further and at once annex the whole of Germany to Prussia. But those who operate with blood and iron, swallow up whole states, overthrow thrones and confiscate private property, should not condemn other people as revolutionaries. If the Party only retains the right to be no more and no less revolutionary than the Imperial Government has been, it has got all it needs.

Recently it was officially stated that the Imperial Constitution was not a contract between the princes and the people but only one between the princes and free cities, which could at any time replace the constitution by another. The government organs which laid this down demanded, therefore, that the governments should have the right to overthrow the Imperial Constitution. No Exceptional Law was enacted against them, they were not persecuted. Very well, in the most extreme case we do not demand more for ourselves than is here demanded for the governments.

The Duke of Cumberland is the legitimate and unquestioned heir to the throne of Brunswick. The right claimed by Cumberland in Brunswick is no other than that by which the King of Prussia is seated in Berlin. Whatever else may be required of Cumberland can only be claimed after he has taken possession of his lawful and legitimate throne.

But the revolutionary German Imperial Government prevents him from doing so by force. A fresh revolutionary action.

What is the position of the parties?

In November 1848 the Conservative Party broke through the new legal basis created in March 1848 without a tremor. In any case it only recognises the constitutional position as a provisionally one and would hail any feudal-absolutist coup d'état with delight.

The Liberal Parties of all shades co-operated in the revolution of 1848-1866, nor would they deny themselves the right to-day to counter any forcible overthrow of the constitution by force.

The Centre recognises the church as the highest power, above the state, a power which might in a given case, therefore, make revolution a duty.

And these are the parties which demand from us that we, we alone of them all, should declare that in no circumstances will we resort to force and that we will submit to every oppression, to every act of violence, not only as soon as it is merely formally legal—legal according to the judgment of our adversaries—but also when it is indirectly illegal.

Indeed no party has renounced the right to armed resistance, in certain circumstances, without lying. None has ever been able to relinquish this ultimate right.

But once it comes to the question of discussing the circumstances for which a party reserves to itself this right, then the game is won. Then one can talk nineteen to the dozen. And especially a party which has been declared to have no rights, a party therefore which has had revolution directly indicated to it from above. Such a declaration of outlawry can be daily repeated in the fashion it has once occurred. To require an unconditional declaration of this kind from such a party is sheer absurdity.

For the rest, the gentlemen can keep calm. With military conditions as they are at present we shall not start our attack so long as there is still an armed force against us. We can wait until the armed force itself ceases to be a force against us. Any earlier revolution, even if victorious, would not bring us to power, but the most radical of the bourgeoisie, and of the petty bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile the elections have shown that we have nothing to expect from yielding, i.e., from concessions to our adversaries. We have only won respect and become a power by defiant resistance. Only power is respected, and only so long as we are a power shall we be respected by the philistine. Anyone who makes him concessions can no longer be a power and is despised by him. The iron hand can make itself felt in a velvet
glove but it must make itself felt. The German proletariat has become a mighty party; may its representatives be worthy of it.

The total Social-Democratic vote at the Reichstag elections had risen from 102,000 in 1871 to 493,000 in 1877, before the enactment of the Socialist Law (1878). In the first years of illegality when the Party had not as yet shown the broad mass of the workers, or had only shown it insufficiently, that it was carrying on the struggle and not submitting to the government, the total vote dropped (1881: 312,000). Then, however, a rapid growth of votes began. In 1884 the Party surpassed its previous highest figure and got 550,000 votes and in 1890, when the law was repealed, the number of Social-Democratic votes was almost one and a half million.

On November 11, 1884, Engels wrote to Bernstein:

"As to the result of the second ballots I only hear a little and that late. I hope that a great many of them have turned out well, because the more new elements that come into the fraction now the better. The worst (the "educated" ones) are already elected, the additional ones are mostly workers and they cannot but improve the company. The Socialist Law stands condemned. The state and the bourgeoise have discredited themselves hopelessly in relation to us. But they live on none the less merrily for that, and anyone who thought the Law must come to an end because of this might be badly disappointed. . . . To do away with the Law a decision will always be necessary, and they will hardly bring themselves to that. In the most favourable case there will be penal clauses which will cost us greater sacrifices than the Socialist Law. We shall now have to make positive proposals for legislation. If they are resolute ones, i.e., formulated without any consideration for petty-bourgeois prejudices, then they will be very good. . . . The 1884 elections are for us what 1866 was for the German phalanx. At that date, without doing anything to bring it about, indeed against his own will, he suddenly became a 'great nation.' Now, however, by our own hard work and heavy sacrifices, we have become a 'great party.' Noblesse oblige! We cannot draw the mass of the nation over to us without this mass gradually developing itself. Frankfort, Münch and

Königsberg cannot suddenly become so definitely proletarian as Saxony, Berlin and the mining industrial districts. Here and there the petty-bourgeois elements among the leaders will temporarily find in the masses the background lacking to them hitherto. What has up till now been a reactionary tendency among individuals may now reproduce itself as a necessary element of development—locally—among the masses. This would necessitate a change of tactics in order to lead the masses further without by so doing leaving the bad leaders on top . . . for the time being, in fact, we shall get compliments right and left and these will not everywhere fall upon stony ground."

193. ENGELS TO BEBEL

London, 11 December, 1884.

About our proletarian masses I have never been deceived. This secure progress of their movement, confident of victory and for that very reason cheerful and humorous, is a model which cannot be surpassed. No European proletariat would have stood the test of the Socialist Law so brilliantly and have responded after six years of suppression with such a proof of increased strength and consolidated organisation; no nation would have achieved this organisation in the way it has been achieved without any conspiratorial humbug. And since I have seen the election manifestoes of Darmstadt and Hanover my fear that concessions might have become necessary in the new places (constituencies) has also vanished. If it was possible to speak in such a truly revolutionary and proletarian way in these two towns, then everything is won.

Our great advantage is that with us the industrial revolution is only just in full swing, while in France and England, so far as the main point is concerned, it is closed. There the division into town and country, industrial district and agricultural district is so far concluded that it only changes slowly. The great mass of the people grow up in the conditions in which they have later to live, are accustomed to them; even the fluctuations and crises have become something they take practically for granted. Added to this is the remembrance of the unsucces-
ful attempts of former movements. With us, on the other hand, everything is in full flow. Remnants of the old peasant industrial production for the satisfaction of personal needs are being supplanted by capitalist domestic industry, while in other places capitalistic domestic industry is already succumbing in its turn to machinery. And the very nature of our industry, limping behind at the very end, makes the social upheaval all the more fundamental. As the great mass production articles, both mass commodities and articles of luxury, have already been appropriated by the French and English, all that remains for our export industry is chiefly small stuff, which, however, also runs into masses all the same, and is at first produced by domestic industry and only later, when the production is on a mass scale, by machines. Domestic industry (capitalistic) is introduced by this means into much wider regions and clears its way all the more thoroughly. If I except the East Elbe district of Prussia, that is to say East Prussia, Pomerania, Posen and the greater part of Brandenburg, and further Old Bavaria, there are few districts where the peasant has not been swept more and more into domestic industry. The region industrially revolutionised, therefore, becomes larger with us than anywhere else.

Furthermore. Since for the most part the worker in domestic industry carries on his little bit of agriculture, it becomes possible to depress wages in a fashion unequalled elsewhere. What formerly constituted the happiness of the small man, the combination of agriculture and industry, now becomes the most powerful means of capitalist exploitation. The potato patch, the cow, the little bit of agriculture make it possible for the labour power to be sold below its price; they oblige this to be so by tying the worker to his piece of land, which yet only partially supports him. Hence it becomes possible to put our industry on an export basis owing to the fact that the buyer is generally presented with the whole of the surplus value, while the capitalist's profit consists in a deduction from the normal wage. This is more or less the case with all rural domestic industry, but nowhere so much as with us.

Added to this is the fact that our industrial revolution, which was set in motion by the revolution of 1848 with its bourgeois progress (feeble though this was), was enormously speeded up (1) by getting rid of internal hindrances in 1866 to 1870, and (2) by the French milliards, which were ultimately to be invested capitalistically. So we achieved an industrial revolution which is more deep and thorough and spatially more extended and comprehensive than that of the other countries, and this with a perfectly fresh and intact proletariat, undemoralised by defeats and finally—thanks to Marx—with an insight into the causes of economic and political development and into the conditions of the impending revolution such as none of our predecessors possessed. But for that very reason it is our duty to be victorious.

As to pure democracy and its rôle in the future I do not share your opinion. Obviously it plays a far more subordinate part in Germany than in countries with an older industrial development. But that does not prevent the possibility, when the moment of revolution comes, of its acquiring a temporary importance as the most radical bourgeois party (it has already played itself off as such in Frankfort) and as the final sheet-anchor of the whole bourgeois and even feudal regime. At such a moment the whole reactionary mass falls in behind it and strengthens it; everything which used to be reactionary behaves as democratic. Thus between March and September 1848 the whole feudal-bureaucratic mass strengthened the liberals in order to hold down the revolutionary masses, and, once this was accomplished, in order, naturally, to kick out the liberals as well. Thus from May 1848 until Bonaparte's election in France in December, the purely republican party of the National,* the weakest of all the parties, was in power, simply owing to the whole collective reaction organised behind it. This has happened in every revolution: the tamest party still remaining in any way capable of government comes to power with the others just because it is only in this party that the defeated see their last possibility of salvation. Now it cannot be expected that at the moment of crisis we shall already have the majority of the electorate and therefore of the nation behind us.

* See The Eighteenth Brumaire, Chapter II. [Ed. Eng. ed.]
The whole bourgeois class and the remnants of the feudal landowning class, a large section of the petty bourgeoisie and also of the rural population will then mass themselves around the most radical bourgeois party, which will then make the most extreme revolutionary gestures, and I consider it very possible that it will be represented in the provisional government and even temporarily form its majority. How, as a minority, one should not act in that case, was demonstrated by the social-democratic minority in the Paris revolution of February 1848. However, this is still an academic question at the moment.

Now of course the thing may take a different turn in Germany, and that for military reasons. As things are at present, an impulse from outside can scarcely come from anywhere but Russia. If it does not do so, if the impulse arises from Germany, then the revolution can only start from the army. From the military point of view an unarmed nation against an army of to-day is a purely vanishing quantity. In this case—if our twenty to twenty-five-year-old reserves which have no vote but are trained, came into action—pure democracy might be leap over. But this question is still equally academic at present, although I, as a representative, so to speak, of the great general staff of the Party, am bound to take it into consideration. In any case our sole adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis will be the whole collective reaction which will group itself around pure democracy, and this, I think, should not be lost sight of.

If you are bringing forward motions in the Reichstag, there is one which should not be forgotten. The state lands are mostly let out to big farmers; the smallest portion of them is sold to peasants, whose holdings are, however, so small that the new peasants have to resort to working as day labourers on the big farms. The demand should be made that the great demesnes which are not yet broken up should be let out to co-operative societies of agricultural labourers for joint farming. The Imperial Government has no state lands and will therefore no doubt find a pretext for shelving such a proposition put in the form of a motion. But I think this firebrand must be thrown among the agricultural day labourers. Which can indeed be done in one of the many debates on state socialism. This and this alone is the way to get hold of the agricultural workers: this is the best method of drawing their attention to the fact that later on it is to be their task to cultivate the great estates of our present gracious gentlemen for the common account. And this will give friend Bismarck, who demands positive proposals from you, enough for some time.

Engels wrote of democracy in a letter to Bernstein (March 24, 1884):

"This conception [of democracy] changes with every demos [people] and so does not get us a step further. In my opinion what should be said is this: the proletariat too requires democratic forms for the seizure of political power, but, like all political forms, these serve it as means. But if we want to make democracy an aim to-day, then we must support ourselves upon the peasants and petty bourgeoisie, that is upon classes in process of dissolution, which as soon as they try to maintain themselves artificially are reactionary in relation to the proletariat. Further, it must not be forgotten that the logical form of bourgeois domination is precisely the democratic republic, which has only become too dangerous owing to the development already attained by the proletariat, but which, as France and America show, is still possible as purely bourgeois rule. To speak therefore of the 'principle of liberalism' as 'having become definitely past history' is really only irrelevant; the liberal constitutional monarchy is an adequate form of bourgeois domination: (1) at the beginning, when the bourgeoisie have not quite finished with the absolute monarchy, and (2) at the end, when the proletariat has already made the democratic republic too dangerous. And yet the democratic republic always remains the last form of bourgeois domination, that in which it is broken to pieces." (See also Note, page 486.)
as I am concerned I know too little about the actual situation in Russia to presume myself competent to judge the details of the tactics demanded by this situation at a given moment. Moreover, the internal and intimate history of the Russian revolutionary party, especially that of the last years, is almost entirely unknown to me. My friends among the Narodovoltsy have never spoken to me about it. And this is an indispensable element towards forming one’s opinion.

What I know or believe about the situation in Russia impels me to the opinion that the Russians are approaching their 1789. The revolution must break out there in a given time; it may break out there any day. In these circumstances the country is like a charged mine which only needs a fuse to be laid to it. Especially since March 13.* This is one of the exceptional cases where it is possible for a handful of people to make a revolution, i.e., with one small push to cause a whole system, which (to use a metaphor of Plekhanov’s) is in more than labile equilibrium, to come crashing down, and thus by one action, in itself insignificant, to release uncontrollable explosive forces. Well now, if ever Blanquism—the phantasy of overturning an entire society through the action of a small conspiracy—had a certain justification for its existence, that is certainly in Petersburg. Once the spark has been put to the powder, once the forces have been released and national energy has been transformed from potential into kinetic energy (another favourite image of Plekhanov’s and a very good one)—the people who laid the spark to the mine will be swept away by the explosion, which will be a thousand times as strong as themselves and which will seek its vent where it can, according as the economic forces and resistances determine.

Supposing these people imagine they can seize power, what does it matter? Provided they make the hole which will shatter the dyke, the flood itself will soon rob them of their illusions. But if by chance these illusions resulted in giving them a superior force of will, why complain of that? People who boasted that they had made a revolution have always seen the next day that

* March 1, 1881, (Old Style) The day on which the Tsar Alexander II was assassinated.
they had no idea what they were doing, that the revolution made did not in the least resemble the one they would have liked to make. That is what Hegel calls the irony of history, an irony which few historic personalities escape. Look at Bismarck, the revolutionary against his will, and Gladstone who has ended in quarrelling with his adored Tsar.

To me the most important thing is that the impulse should be given in Russia, that the revolution should break out. Whether this fraction or that fraction gives the signal, whether it happens under this flag or that flag matters little to me. If it were a palace conspiracy it would be swept away to-morrow. There where the position is so strained, where the revolutionary elements are accumulated to such a degree, where the economic situation of the enormous mass of the people becomes daily more impossible, where every stage of social development is represented, from the primitive commune to modern large-scale industry and high finance, and where all these contradictions are violently held together by an unexampled despotism, a despotism which is becoming more and more unbearable to the youth in whom the national worth and intelligence are united—there, when 1789 has once been launched, 1793 will not be long in following.*

ZASULICH, Vera J. (1851-1919). Russian socialist; as a young student joined the Narodniki. In 1880 she emigrated and from then onwards worked with Plekhanov. Together with him she was one of the founders of the first Marxist group in the Russian workers’ movement (the Emancipation of Labour group—1885) which began the struggle against the Narodniki for the creation of a proletarian revolutionary party. Zasulich was commissioned by the Emancipation of Labour group to translate a number of Marx’s works into Russian. With Lenin and Plekhanov she was a member of the editorial board of Iskra. After the split in the Russian Social-Democratic Party (1903) she soon went over to the Mensheviks. During the imperialist war she was a social chauvinist. She maintained a hostile attitude to the October revolution.

* 1793. See Note on the Jacobins, page 439.

PLEKHANOV, G. V. (1856-1918). The leading Marxist in the Russian workers’ movement before Lenin. After the split in the movement he soon went over to the Mensheviks. Even though at times he later moved away from them and approached the Bolsheviks again, he always stood near the Mensheviks, nevertheless. With the imperialist war he became a “defender of the Fatherland.” He was hostile to the October Revolution. Plekhanov wrote a series of basic Marxist works, especially on philosophical questions. In his book, Our Differences, he took up the struggle against the petty bourgeois socialism of the Narodniki and fought for the leading role of the working class in the Russian revolutionary movement. At the end of the ‘nineties he fought against revisionism (Bernstein). Lenin said of Plekhanov’s philosophical writings: “It is impossible to become a real and conscious Communist without studying everything Plekhanov wrote on philosophy, studying it directly, for it is the best thing in the whole international Marxist literature.” At the same time, however, Lenin fought most sharply against Plekhanov’s important mistakes (e.g., in the theory of the state and in the questions of dialectical materialism) and against his later betrayal of socialism.

195. ENGELS TO J. P. BECKER
伦敦, 15 June, 1885

Here in England things are going quite well, though not in the form originated in Germany. Since 1848 the English Parliament has undoubtedly been the most revolutionary body in the world and the next elections will open a new epoch, even if this does not reveal itself so very quickly. There will be workers in Parliament, in increasing numbers and each one worse than the last. But that is necessary in England. All the scoundrels who played the part of respectable bourgeois radicals here at the time of the International must show themselves in Parliament for what they are. Then the masses will turn socialist here too. Industrial over-production will do the rest.

The row in the German Party has not surprised me. In a petty-bourgeois country like Germany the Party is bound also to have a petty bourgeois “educated” Right wing, which it shakes
off at the decisive moment. Petty bourgeois socialism in Germany dates from 1844 and was already criticised in The Communist Manifesto. It is as immortal as the German petty-bourgeois himself. So long as the Socialist Laws are in force I am not in favour of our provoking the split, because our weapons are unevenly matched. But if the gentlemen provoke a split themselves by suppressing the proletarian character of the Party and trying to replace it by a stick-in-the-mud* aesthetic-sentimental philanthropy without force or life, then we must just take it as it comes!

196. ENGELS TO BEBEL

London, 24 July, 1885.

You have exactly hit off Kautsky’s decisive weakness. His youthful inclination towards hasty judgment has been still more intensified by the wretched method of teaching history in the universities—especially the Austrian ones. The students there are systematically taught to do historical work with materials which they know to be inadequate but which they are supposed to treat as adequate, that is, to write things which they themselves must know to be false but which they are supposed to consider correct. That has naturally made Kautsky thoroughly cocky. Then the literary life—writing for pay and writing a lot. So that he has absolutely no idea of what really scientific work means. There he has thoroughly burnt his fingers a few times, with his history of population and later with the articles on marriage in primitive times. In all friendship I rubbed that well into him too and spare him nothing in this respect: on this side I criticise all his things mercilessly. Fortunately, however, I can comfort him with the fact that I did exactly the same in my impudent youth and only first learnt the way one has got to work from Marx. It helps quite considerably, too.

* Knotig, see Note on Knoten, page 87. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

Letter 197. 28 October, 1885

The chronic depression in all the decisive branches of industry also still continues unbroken here, in France and in America. Especially in iron and cotton. It is an unheard-of situation, though entirely the inevitable result of the capitalist system: such colossal over-production that it cannot even bring things to a crisis! The over-production of disposable capital seeking investment is so great that the rate of discount here actually fluctuates between 1 and 1 ½ per cent. per annum, and for money invested in short term credits, which can be called in or paid off from day to day (money on call) one can hardly get ¼ per cent. per annum. But by choosing to invest his money in this way rather than in new industrial undertakings the money capitalist is admitting how rotten the whole business looks to him. And this fear of new investments and old enterprises, which had already manifested itself in the crisis of 1867, is the main reason why things are not brought to an acute crisis.

But it will have to come in the end, all the same, and then it will make an end of the old trade unions here, let us hope. These unions have peacefully retained the craft character which clung to them from the first and which is becoming more unbearable every day. No doubt you suppose that the engineers, joiners, bricklayers, etc., will admit any worker in their branch of industry without more ado? Not at all. Whoever wants admission must be attached as an apprentice for a period of years (usually seven) to some worker belonging to the union. This was intended to keep the number of workers limited, but had otherwise no point at all except that it brought in money to the apprentice’s instructor, for which he did absolutely nothing in return. This was all right up to 1848. But since then the colossal growth of industry has produced a class of workers of whom there are as many or more as there are “skilled” workers in the trade unions and who can do all that the “skilled” workers can or more, but who can never become members. These people have been regularly penalised by the craft rules of the trade unions. But
do you suppose the unions ever dreamt of doing away with this silly bunk? Not in the least. I can never remember reading of a single proposal of the kind at a Trade Union Congress. The fools want to reform society to suit themselves and not to reform themselves to suit the development of society. They cling to their traditional superstition, which does them nothing but harm themselves, instead of getting quit of the rubbish and thus doubling their numbers and their power and really becoming again what at present they daily become less—associations of all the workers in a trade against the capitalists. This will I think explain many things in the behaviour of these privileged workers to you.

What is most necessary of all here is that masses of the official labour leaders should get into Parliament. Then things will soon go finely; they will expose themselves quickly enough.

The elections in November will help a lot towards this. Ten or twelve of them are certain to get in, if their Liberal friends do not play them a trick at the last moment. The first elections under a new system are always a sort of lottery and only reveal the smallest part of the revolution they have introduced. But universal suffrage—and with the absence of a peasant class and the start England had in industrialisation the new franchise here gives the workers as much power as universal suffrage would give them in Germany—universal suffrage is the best lever for a proletarian movement at the present time and will prove to be so here. That is why it is so important to break up the Social Democratic Federation as quickly as possible, its leaders being nothing but careerists, adventurers and literary people. Hyndman, their head, is doing his very best in this way; he cannot wait for the clock to strike twelve, as it says in the folk song, and in his chase after successes disgraces himself more every day.* He is a wretched caricature of Lassalle.

*The economic crisis—see Letters 189, 198, 199.

The economic crisis—see Letters 189, 198, 199.

Letter 197. 28 October, 1885

Letter 198. 7 January, 1886

newly extended franchise, resulted in the return of 331 Liberals, including 11 "labour" candidates, 247 Conservatives and 82 Irish Nationalists.

That . . . the official labour leaders should get into Parliament—compare Letter 195.

The craft unions—compare Letters 207, 208 on the rise of the "new unionism." [Ed. Eng. ed.]

198. ENGELS TO FLORENCE KELLEY WISCHNEWETSKY*

London, 7 January, 1886.

As to those wise Americans who think their country exempt from the consequences of fully expanded Capitalist production, they seem to live in blissful ignorance of the fact that sunry states, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, etc., have such an institution as a Labour Bureau from the reports of which they might learn something to the contrary.

*Engels, in dealing with this subject a month later in a letter to Florence Kelley Wischnewetsky (February 3, 1886) wrote: "America will smash up England's industrial monopoly—whatever there is left of it—but America cannot herself succeed to that monopoly. And unless one country has the monopoly of the markets of the world, at least in the decisive branches of trade, the conditions—relatively favourable—which existed here in England from 1848 to 1879 cannot anywhere be reproduced, and even in America the condition of the working class must gradually sink lower and lower. For if there are three countries (say England, America and Germany) competing on comparatively equal terms for the possession of the Weltmarkt [world market] there is no chance but chronic overproduction, one of the three being capable of supplying the whole quantity required. That is the reason why I am watching the development of the present crisis with greater interest than ever and why I believe it will mark an epoch in the mental and political history of the American and English working classes—

* Written in English.
the very two whose assistance is as absolutely necessary as it is desirable.** [Ed. Eng. ed.]


** 199.  ENGENS TO BEBEL


The disintegration of the German free thinkers in the economic sphere quite corresponds to what is going on among the English Radicals. The people of the old Manchester school *a la* John Bright are dying out and the younger generation, just like the Berliners, goes in for social patching-up reforms. Only that here the bourgeois does not want to help the industrial worker so much as the agricultural worker, who has just done his excellent service at the elections, and that in English fashion it is not so much the state as the municipality which is to intervene. For the agricultural workers, little gardens and potato plots, for the town workers sanitary improvements and the like —this is their programme. An excellent sign is that the bourgeoisie are already obliged to sacrifice their own classical economic theory, partly from political considerations but partly because they themselves, owing to the practical consequences of this theory, have begun to doubt it.

The same thing is proved by the growth of *Kathedersocialismus* [professorial socialism] which in one form or another is more and more supplanting classical economy in the professorial chairs both here and in France. The actual contradictions engendered by the method of production have become so crass that no theory can indeed conceal them any longer, unless it were this professorial socialist mish-mash, which however is no longer a theory but drivel.

Six weeks ago symptoms of an improvement in trade were said to be showing themselves. Now this has all faded away again, the distress is greater than ever and the lack of prospect too, added to an unusually severe winter. This is now already

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*  Written in English.

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**  200.  ENGENS TO BEBEL.

London, 15 February, 1886.

The Social Democratic Federation which, despite all self-advertising reports, is an extremely weak organisation—containing good elements but led by literary and political adventurers—was brought to the verge of dissolution at the November elections by a stroke of genius on the part of these same leaders. Hyndman (pronounced Heindman) the head of the society, had taken money from the Tories (Conservatives) at the time, and with it put up two Social-Democratic candidates in two districts of London. As they had not even got any members in these two constituencies the way they would discredit themselves was to be foreseen (one got 27, the other 32 votes out of 4000—5000 respectively!). Hyndman, however, had no sooner got the Tory money than his head began violently to swell and he immediately set off to Birmingham, to Chamberlain, the present Minister, and offered him
his "support" (which does not total 1000 votes in all England) if Chamberlain would guarantee him a seat in Birmingham by the help of the Liberals and would bring in an Eight Hour Bill. Chamberlain is no fool and showed him the door. Despite all attempts to hush it up, a great row about this in the Federation and threatened dissolution. So now something had to happen in order to get the thing going again.

In the meantime unemployment was increasing more and more. The collapse of England's monopoly on the world-market has caused the crisis to continue unbroken since 1878 and to get worse rather than better. The distress, especially in the East End of the city, is appalling. The exceptionally hard winter, since January, added to the boundless indifference of the possessing classes, produced a considerable movement among the unemployed masses. As usual, political wire-pullers tried to exploit this movement for their own ends. The Conservatives, who had just been superseded in the Government, put the responsibility for unemployment on to foreign competition (rightly) and foreign tariffs (for the most part wrongly) and preached "fair-trade," i.e., retaliatory tariffs. A workers' organisation also exists which believes mainly in retaliatory tariffs. This organisation summoned the meeting in Trafalgar Square on February 8. In the meantime the S.D.F. had not been idle either, had already held some small demonstrations and now wanted to utilise this meeting. Two meetings accordingly took place; the "fair traders" were round the Nelson Column while the S.D.F. people spoke at the north end of the Square, from the street opposite the National Gallery, which is about 25 feet above the square. Kautsky, who was there and went away before the row began, told me that the mass of the real workers had been around the "fair traders," whilst Hyndman and Co. had a mixed audience of people looking for a lark, some of them already merry. If Kautsky, who has hardly been here a year, noticed this, the gentlemen of the Federation must have seen it still more clearly. Nevertheless, when everybody already seemed to be scattering, they proceeded to carry out a favourite old idea of Hyndman's,

* See page 442.

namely a procession of "unemployed" through Pall Mall, the street of the big political, aristocratic and high-capitalist clubs, the centres of English political intrigue. The unemployed who followed them in order to hold a fresh meeting in Hyde Park, were mostly the types who do not want work anyhow; hawkers, loafers, police spies, pickpockets. When the aristocrats at the club windows sneered at them they broke the said windows, dittos the shop windows; they looted the wine dealers' shops and immediately set up a consumers' association for the contents in the street, so that in Hyde Park Hyndman and Co. had hastily to pocket their blood-thirsty phrases and go in for pacification. But the thing had now got going. During the procession, during this second little meeting and afterwards, the masses of the Lumpenproletariat, whom Hyndman had taken for the unemployed, streamed through some fashionable streets near by, looted jewellers' and other shops, used the loaves and legs of mutton which they had looted solely to break windows with, and dispersed without meeting with any resistance. Only a remnant of them were broken up in Oxford Street by four, say four, policemen.

Otherwise the police were nowhere to be seen and their absence was so marked that we were not alone in being compelled to think it intentional. The chiefs of the police seem to be Conservatives who had no objection to seeing a bit of a row in this period of Liberal Government. However the Government at once set up a Commission of Inquiry and it may cost more than one of these gentlemen his job.

† "As to Hyndman," wrote Engels to Bebel a month later (18 March, 1886), "the way he came out in Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park on February 8 has done infinitely more harm than good. Shouting about revolution, which in France passes off harmlessly as stale stuff, is utter nonsense here among the totally unprepared masses and has the effect of scaring away the proletariat, only exciting the demoralized elements. It absolutely cannot be understood here as anything but a summons to looting, which accordingly followed and has
brought discredit which will last a long time here, among the workers too. As to the point that it has drawn public attention to Socialism, you people over in Germany do not know how utterly blunted the public are with regard to such methods after a hundred years of freedom of the press and of assembly and the advertising bound up with them. The first alarm of the bourgeois was certainly very funny and brought in about £40,000 in contributions for the unemployed—in all about £70,000—but that has already been disposed of and nobody will pay more and the distress remains the same. What has been achieved—among the bourgeois public—is the identification of socialism with looting, and even though that does not make the matter much worse still it is certainly no gain to us."

The four leaders of the demonstration to Hyde Park, Hyndman, Champion, Williams and John Burns, were afterwards arrested, released on bail and, in April, tried and acquitted. "A fine advertisement for Hyndman, but it comes too late; he has succeeded in ruining his organisation hopelessly..." wrote Engels to Bebel (12 April 1886); "at the very most, the two organisations—Federation and League—have not 2,000 paying members between them nor their papers 5,000 readers between them—and of these the majority are sympathetic bourgeois, parsons, literary men, etc. As things are here it is a real mercy that these immature elements do not succeed in penetrating the masses. They must first ferment themselves clear, then it may turn out all right." [Ed. Eng. ed.]

201. ENGELS TO FLORENCE KELLEY WIECHNOWETSKY*

London, June 3, 1886.

Whatever the mistakes and the Borniertheit [narrow-mindedness] of the leaders of the movement, and partly of the newly-awakening masses too, one thing is certain: the American working class is moving, and no mistake. And after a few false starts, they will get into the right track soon enough. This appearance of the Americans upon the scene I consider one of the greatest events of the year.

What the downbreak of Russian Czarism would be for the

* This letter was written in English.

202. ENGELS TO SORGE

London, 29 November, 1886.

The Henry George boom has of course brought to light a colossal mass of fraud and I am glad I was not there. But despite it all it has been an epoch-making day. The Germans have not understood how to use their theory as a lever which could set the American masses in motion; they do not under-
stand the theory themselves for the most part and treat it in a doctrinaire and dogmatic way, as something which has got to be learnt off by heart but which will then supply all needs without more ado. To them it is a credo [creed] and not a guide to action. Added to which they learn no English on principle. Hence the American masses had to seek out their own way and seem to have found it for the time being in the K(nights) of L(abour), whose confused principles and ludicrous organisation appear to correspond to their own confusion. But according to all I hear the K. of L. are a real power, especially in New England and the West, and are becoming more so every day owing to the brutal opposition of the capitalists. I think it is necessary to work inside them, to form within this still quite plastic mass a core of people who understand the movement and its aims and will therefore themselves take over the leadership, at least of a section, when the inevitably impending break-up of the present “order” takes place. The rottenest side of the K. of L. was their political neutrality, which resulted in sheer trickery on the part of the Powderlys, etc.; but this has had its edge taken off by the behaviour of the masses at the November elections, especially in New York. The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the organisation of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers’ party. And this step has been taken, far more rapidly than we had a right to hope, and that is the main thing. That the first programme of this party is still confused and highly deficient, that it has set up the banner of Henry George, these are inevitable evils but also only transitory ones. The masses must have time and opportunity to develop and they can only have the opportunity when they have their own movement—no matter in what form so long as it is only their own movement—in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn wisdom by hurting themselves. The movement in America is in the same position as it was with us before 1848; the really intelligent people there will first of all have the same part to play as that played by the Communist League among the workers’ associations before 1848. Except that in America now things will go infinitely more quickly; for the movement to have attained such election successes after scarcely eight months of existence is absolutely unheard of. And what is still lacking will be set going by the bourgeoisie; nowhere in the whole world do they come out so shamelessly and tyrannically as here, and your judges have got Bismarck’s smart practitioners in the German Reich brilliantly driven off the field. Where the bourgeoisie conducts the struggle by methods of this kind, things come rapidly to a decision, and if we in Europe do not hurry up the Americans will soon be ahead of us. But it is just now that it is doubly necessary to have a few people there from our side with a firm seat in their saddles where theory and long-proved tactics are concerned, and who can also write and speak English; for, from good historical reasons, the Americans are worlds behind in all theoretical things, and while they did not bring over any medieval institutions from Europe they did bring over masses of medieval traditions, religion, English common (feudal) law, superstition, spiritualism, in short every kind of imbecility which was not directly harmful to business and which is now very serviceable for making the masses stupid. And if there are people at hand there whose minds are theoretically clear, who can tell them the consequences of their own mistakes beforehand and make it clear to them that every movement which does not keep the destruction of the wage system in view the whole time as its final aim is bound to go astray and fail—then many a piece of nonsense may be avoided and the process considerably shortened. But it must take place in the English way, the specific German character must be cut out and for that the gentlemen of the Socialist have hardly the qualifications, while those of the Volkszeitung are only more intelligent where business is concerned.*

*In the November 1886 municipal elections in the U.S.A., many of the newly-formed Labour Parties polled big votes and

* The Socialist, a German-American weekly (edited by Dietgen), was the official organ of the Socialist Labour Party; the New Yorker Volkszeitung, a German daily paper, had been founded in 1876 by members of the S.L.P. (See Note, page 460). [Ed. Eng. ed.]
in some places even got their candidates elected. The most spectacular success was that in New York City where the United Labour Party, which had only been formed in July, put forward Henry George (Letter 175) as candidate for mayor. George took second place with over 68,000 votes to about 90,000 cast for the Democrat, Hewitt; Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate, polled 60,000. Engels, in his Preface to the American edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844, written two months later (January 26, 1887), discussed the rise of the American Labour movement and gave a criticism of Henry George. See also Letter 201. [Ed. Eng. ed.]

The Knights of Labour. This organisation arose in 1869; in the first ten years of its existence it only continued with great difficulty and the number of its members was very insignificant. With the rising industrial development and the spread among the American working class of the eight-hour day movement, the Knights of Labour began to develop with unexpected rapidity. In 1886 the American working class was in the grip of a strong strike movement. The American bourgeoisie resorted to its usual methods: terrorist and provocative acts (the bomb attempt organised by the police in Chicago), a wild campaign of slander against the working-class movement in the corrupt press and the no less corrupt courts; gaols and prison for the most active and advanced leaders of the movement. Later the Knights of Labour became the prey of its own bureaucracy.


203. Engels to Florence Kelley Wischnewetsky*

London, December 28, 1886.

My Preface† will of course turn entirely on the immense stride made by the American working man in the last ten months, and naturally also touch H.G. and his land scheme. But it cannot pretend to deal exhaustively with it. Nor do I think the time has come for that. It is far more important that the movement should spread, proceed harmoniously, take root and embrace as much as possible the whole American proletariat, than that it should start and proceed from the beginning on theoretically perfectly correct lines. There is no better road to theoretical clearness of comprehension than "durch Schaden klug werden" [to learn by one's own mistakes]. And for a whole large class, there is no other road, especially for a nation so eminently practical as the Americans. The great thing is to get the working class to move as a class; that once obtained, they will soon find the right direction, and all who resist, H.G. or Powderly, will be left out in the cold with small sects of their own. Therefore I think also the K[nights] of L[about] a most important factor in the movement which ought not to be pooh-poohed from without but to be revolutionised from within, and I consider that many of the Germans there have made a grievous mistake when they tried, in face of a mighty and glorious movement not of their creation, to make of their imported and not always understood theory a kind of alleinseligmachenden* dogma and to keep aloof from any movement which did not accept that dogma. Our theory is not a dogma but the exposition of a process of evolution, and that process involves successive phases. To expect that the Americans will start with the full consciousness of the theory worked out in older industrial countries is to expect the impossible. What the Germans ought to do is to act up to their own theory—if they understand it, as we did in 1845 and 1848—to go in for any real general working-class movement, accept its faktische† starting points as such and work it gradually up to the theoretical level by pointing out how every mistake made, every reverse suffered, was a necessary consequence of mistaken theoretical views in the original programme; they ought, in the words of *The Communist Manifesto*, to represent the movement of the future in the movement of the present. But above all give the movement time to consolidate, do not make the inevitable confusion of the first start worse

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* This letter was written in English.

* Necessary to salvation.
† Actual.
confounded by forcing down people's throats things which at present they cannot properly understand, but which they soon will learn. A million or two of workingmen's votes next November for a bona fide workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform. The very first attempt—soon to be made if the movement progresses—to consolidate the moving masses on a national basis will bring them all face to face, Georgites, K. of L., Trade Unionists, and all; and if our German friends by that time have learnt enough of the language of the country to go in for a discussion, then will be the time for them to criticise the views of the others and thus, by showing up the inconsistencies of the various standpoints, to bring them gradually to understand their own actual position, the position made for them by the correlation of capital and wage labour. But anything that might delay or prevent that national consolidation of the workingmen's party—no matter what platform—I should consider a great mistake, and therefore I do not think the time has arrived to speak out fully and exhaustively either with regard to H.G. or the K. of L.

204. **Engels to Florence Kelley Wischinewetsky**

January 27, 1887.

The movement in America, just at this moment, is I believe best seen from across the ocean. On the spot personal bickerings and local disputes must obscure most of the grandeur of it. And the only thing that could really delay its march would be a consolidation of these differences into established acts. To some extent that will be unavoidable, but the less of it the better. And the Germans have most to guard against this. Our theory is a theory of evolution, not a dogma to be learned by heart and to be repeated mechanically. The less it is drilled into the Americans from outside and the more they test it with their own experience—with the help of the Germans—the deeper will it pass into their flesh and blood.† When we

* Written in English.
† This sentence was written in German.

205. **Engels to Sorge**

London, 7 January, 1888.

A war, on the other hand, would throw us back for years. Chauvinism would swamp everything, for it would be a fight for existence. Germany would put about five million armed men into the field, or ten per cent. of the population, the others about four to five per cent., Russia relatively less. But there would be from ten to fifteen million combatants. I should like to see how they are to be fed; it would be a devastation like the Thirty Years' War. And no quick decision could be arrived at, despite the colossal fighting forces. For France is protected on the north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers by very extensive fortifications and the new constructions in Paris are a model. So it will last a long time, and Russia cannot be