

## **Labour and the Communist Manifesto**

**The Communist Manifesto was first published on this day in 1848. A century later, the Labour Party produced an appreciation of the Manifesto by Harold Laski – which Tribune will republish this weekend.**

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On this day in 1848, *The Communist Manifesto* was published by the Workers' Educational Association (*Kommunistischer Arbeiterbildungsverein*) in Bishopsgate in the City of London.

Its publication coincided with the continent-wide People's Spring, the revolutions of 1848 which stretched from France to Romania and paved the way for the fall of monarchs and the growth of mass democratic participation. As the Manifesto was translated into a vast array of languages in the decades which followed, it became a cornerstone of a working-class movement that would build on these revolutions to make the case for socialism.

A century later, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party sought to commemorate the Manifesto and its achievements – and enlisted political theorist, former Labour Party chair and one of the founders of *Tribune*, Harold Laski, to write an appreciation.

This weekend Tribune will republish this text in serial form, starting below.

### **Introduction by the Labour Party**

In presenting this centenary volume of the Communist Manifesto, with the valuable Historical Introduction by Professor Laski, the Labour Party acknowledges its indebtedness to Marx and Engels as two men who have been the inspiration of the whole working class movement.

The British Labour Party has its roots in the history of Britain. The Levellers, Chartists, Christian Socialists, the Fabians and many other bodies, all made it possible to carry theory into practice. John Ball, Robert Owen, William Morris, Keir Hardie, John Burns, Sydney Webb, and many more British men and women have played outstanding parts in the development of socialist thought and organisation. But British socialists have never isolated themselves from their fellows on the continent of Europe. Our own ideas have been different from those of continental socialism which stemmed more directly from Marx, but we, too, have been influenced in a hundred ways by European thinkers and

fighters, and, above all, by the authors of the Manifesto.

Britain played a large part in the lives and work of both Marx and Engels. Marx spent most of his adult life here and is buried in Highgate cemetery. Engels was a child of Manchester, the very symbol of capitalist industrialism. When they wrote of bourgeois exploitation they were drawing mainly on English experience.

The authors were the first to admit that principles must be applied in the light of existing conditions, but even the detailed programme they put forward is of great interest to us. Abolition of private property in land has long been a demand of the Labour movement. A heavy progressive income tax is being enforced by the present Labour government as a means of achieving social justice. We have gone far towards the abolition of the right of inheritance by our heavy death duties. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state is partially attained in the Bank of England and other measures. We have largely nationalised the means of communication while extending public ownership of the factories and instruments of production. We have declared the equal obligation of all to work. We are engaged in redressing the balance between town and country, between industry and agriculture. Finally, we have largely established free education for all children in publicly-owned schools. Who, remembering that these were the demands of the Manifesto, can doubt our common inspiration.

Finally, a word about the introduction. In his preface to the 1922 Russian edition of the Manifesto, Riazanov pointed out that a commentary would need to do three things:

- 1 To give the history of the social and revolutionary movement which called the Manifesto into life as the programme of the first international communist organisation.
- 2 To trace the genesis, the source, of the basic ideas contained in the Manifesto, to show their place in the history of thought, to bring out what was new in the philosophy of Marx and Engels, what differentiates them from earlier thinkers.
- 3 To indicate to what extent the Manifesto stands the test of historical criticism and how far it needs amplification and correction in certain points.

Riazanov did not produce such a massive work; Professor Laski has gone far towards it, and we look forward to the further material he promises. Since his publication of *Communism*, twenty years ago, he has been the foremost English authority on the subject. It is unnecessary to do more than commend to all the present scholarly Introduction which he has presented to the Labour Party for

this special centenary edition of the Manifesto.

*November 1947*

## **Preface**

In the spring of this year the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party decided to celebrate the centenary of the Communist Manifesto by the publication of a new edition with an historical introduction and illustrative material. At their request I undertook this task.

What is now published is only the Manifesto itself and the Historical Introduction. In the present circumstances it has seemed better to postpone the publication of the illustrative material, and a considerable body of notes, until the paper situation is less difficult; and I have also refrained from printing the very considerable annotated bibliography I have prepared. I hope these will appear in a separate pamphlet at a later date.

It is only necessary to add that, for English readers, by far the best lives of Marx and Engels are those by F. Mehring and Gustav Mayer respectively. They are of irreplaceable value in seeking to put the Manifesto in its full biographical perspective.

*H. J. Laski*

## **Marx and Engels**

The Communist Manifesto was published in February, 1848. Of its two authors, Karl Marx was then in his thirtieth, and Friedrich Engels in his twenty-eighth, year. Both had already not only a wide acquaintance with the literature of socialism, but intimate relations with most sections of the socialist agitation in Western Europe. They had been close friends for four years; each of them had published books and articles that are landmarks in the history of socialist doctrine. Marx had already had a stormy career as a journalist and social philosopher; he was already sufficiently a thorn in the side of reactionary governments to have been a refugee in both Paris and Brussels. Engels, his military service over, and his conversion to socialism completed after he had accepted the view of Moses Hess that the central problem of German philosophy was the social question, and that it could only be solved in socialist terms, had already passed nearly fifteen months of his commercial training in his father's firm in Manchester by the end of 1843. He had gained a deep insight into English conditions. He had come to understand the meaning of the conflict between the major political parties, the significance of Irish nationalism, then under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell, and all the stresses and strains within

the Chartist Movement; he appreciated the meaning of Chartism, and he had joined its ranks. He realised how great had been both the insight and the influence of Robert Owen. He had been an eager reader of the *Northern Star*, and had been on friendly terms, after the summer of 1843, George Julian Harney, then, under Feargus O'Connor, the main influence on the paper, and one of the few Chartists aware of conditions and movements on the European Continent. He had written a good deal in Owen's paper, *The New Moral World*, among his contributions being a very able essay on Carlyle's Chartism, and a really remarkable attack on the classical political economy. In the months of his return to Barmen, from the autumn to the end of the winter of 1844–45, he had published his classic *Condition of the Working Class in England*, influenced, no doubt, by the earlier and interesting work of Buret, but with a freshness and a power of philosophic generalisation far beyond Buret's grasp. He had already become certain that the antagonism between the middle classes and the proletariat was the essential clue to the history of the future.

No partnership in history is more famous than that of Marx and Engels, and the qualities of each were complementary to those of the other. Marx was essentially the thinker, who slowly, even with anguish, wrestled his way to the heart of a problem. At times a writer of remarkable brilliance, he was not seldom difficult and obscure because his thought went too fast or too deep for words. Erudite in an exceptional degree—his pre-eminence in scholarship was recognised by all the young Hegelians of his German years—he had something of the German *gelehrte's* impractical nature, a passion for systematisation, not a little of that capacity for stormy ill-temper which often comes from the nervous exhaustion of a mind which cannot cease from reflection. He had fantastic tenacity of mind, a passion for leadership, a yearning, never really satisfied, for action; born of the difficulties he encountered from the outset of his career, he had too, a brooding melancholy, a thirst for recognition, which made him too often suspicious and proud, and, despite the noble self-sacrifice of his life, in a special way a self-centred personality who, outside his family, and a very small circle of friends of whom Engels was always the most intimate, found it, normally, much easier to give others his contempt or his hate than his respect and his affection. There were deeply lovable traits in Marx's character; but they emerge much more clearly in his private life than in his capacity either as agitator or as social philosopher. All his immense power, moreover, both of diagnosis and of strategy, rarely enabled him to conceal his inner conviction of intellectual superiority, so as to remain on easy terms with the rank and file in each phase of the movement he was eager—mostly selflessly eager—to dominate.

Engels had a quick and ready mind. He was always friendly, usually optimistic, with great gifts both for practical action and for getting on with others. He knew early where he wanted to go, but he had the self-knowledge to recognise that he could neither travel alone, nor be the leader of the expedition. Widely read, with a very real talent for moving rapidly through a great mass of material, he was facile rather than profound. He was utterly devoid of jealousy or vanity. He had a happy nature which never agonised over the difficulties of thought. After a brief moment of doubt at their first meeting, he accepted the position of fidus Achates to Marx, and it never occurred to him, during a friendship of forty years, marked only by one brief misunderstanding, to question his duty to serve Marx in every way he could. He was a better organiser than Marx; he had a far more immediate sense of the practical necessities of a situation. He was far quicker in seeing what to do than to recognise the deep-rooted historical relations out of which the necessity for action had developed. If Marx showed him vistas of philosophy he had never realised, he explained to Marx economic realities with a first-hand insight Marx could otherwise hardly have obtained. Not least, he made Marx see the significance of Great Britain in the historical evolution of the mid-nineteenth century at a time when Marx still thought of Germany as the central factor in its development. Without him Marx would have been in any case a great social philosopher of the Left; with him it became possible for Marx to combine superb intellectual achievement with immense practical influence. Their partnership was made when the practitioners of socialism were incoherent groups of doctrine and of agitation. When it ended they had laid the foundations of a world movement which had a well-integrated philosophy of history, and a clear method of action for the future directly born of that philosophy.

When Marx and Engels, then, came to write the Communist Manifesto they were not only close friends, but they combined an insight built on firm philosophic foundations with a breadth and depth of historical and contemporary knowledge unequalled in their day in its relevance to the problems of social development. They had both been enchanted by the Hegelian dialectic; they had both been driven, almost from the moment of their original acquaintance with it, first to the Hegelian Left, and then beyond it to the point where, as Marx said, it was necessary to stand Hegel on his head. They both knew from intimate personal acquaintance the deep tyranny of the German princes, always dull, always petty, and always bureaucratic. They both saw that the state-power was used to maintain a special system of legal relations which were set in a given historical mode of production; and they had both realised that nothing could be expected from the aristocracy, and little from the middle

classes, except what the proletariat became self-conscious enough to realise it must take. They both understood that, without this self-consciousness, nothing could prevent the exploitation of the wage-earners by their masters; and that every social agency, from the pietism of the Churches, through the pressure of the newspapers and the censorship exercised over them, to the brutal and deliberate use of the army and the police, would be employed to break any rebellion against this exploitation. They knew that every society was a class-society, that its education, its justice, its habits, were limited by their subordination to the demands of the class which owned the instruments of economic power. They had come to see, in the famous aphorism of Marx, that “the ruling ideas of an age were the ideas of its ruling class.” They had come to see also that freedom is never given from above, but must be taken from below; yet it can only be taken by men who have philosophy as well as habit. They had both seen through the hollowness of the official churches, and measured the gap between their actual and official practice. Not least, as Marx was later to add to his famous addition to the *Theses on Feuerbach*, they had both come to have an intensely practical view of the mission of philosophy. “Hitherto,” Marx was to write, “it was the mission of philosophers to interpret the world: now it is our business to change it.” It was to secure that change that their unique partnership had been formed.

Nor was the historical basis of their approach less ample in its survey when they came to write the *Communist Manifesto*. Marx was not merely a philosopher of competence and a jurist of considerable knowledge. He had read widely in German history. He had made a special and profound study of the eighteenth century in France, and, in quite special fullness, of 1789 and its consequences; and, with his usual omnivorous appetite, he had begun those remarkable studies of English economic history and theory which were to culminate, in 1867, the publication of the first volume of *Capital*. Engels knew the working-class movement in England from the end of the Napoleonic wars in massive detail. He knew the Chartist and trade union movements as one who had not only seen them from the inside, but with a perspective of historical knowledge and insight into contemporary European conditions that were hardly rivalled anywhere at the time. It is, in particular, important to emphasise that, apart from their specialised knowledge, both Marx and Engels, and especially Marx, had an extraordinarily wide general cultivation; each could say, with truth, that nihil a me alienum putat had been a choice of inner obligation. They were both polymaths; and one of the striking characteristics they shared, from an early age, was an appreciation of the significance of science in the context of each epoch in which its major developments influence human relations. Few eminent

thinkers in social philosophy had, at their age, so superbly prepared themselves for the task which lay to their hand.

## The Context

The composition of the Communist Manifesto is set in the background of the evolution into unity of a number of those groups of exiled revolutionaries which are the inevitable outcome of an age of repression and reaction. Though both the July Revolution of 1830 in France and the abortive Polish rebellion of 1831 had some influence in Germany, neither went deep enough to cause any serious concern. Yet a number of men remained not only profoundly dissatisfied, but eager to continue and further agitation. Among these was a young brushmaker, Johann Philip Becker (1809–84), who saw the need for something more than manifestos and meetings. With great courage, he organised groups of secret conspirators with a view to the preparation of an armed revolution; he himself, indeed, suffered imprisonment in 1833, for his activities. These groups were energetic and courageous. They attacked prisons, releasing their comrades. They distributed secretly-printed literature. They even attempted to seize the barracks at Frankfurt in order to secure arms. Some of the men who were thus aided to escape from prison, notably Karl Schapper and Theodore Schuster, fled to Paris. There, with other German exiles, they founded in 1833 a secret society to which they gave the name of the Society of the Exiles.

It did not long remain unified. Schuster fell under the influence of Blanqui, then the leading socialist revolutionary in Paris, and his energetic propaganda for Blanquism led to a split in the Society. Schuster and others left it to form a new organisation of their own, which they called the “League of the Just,” and this body took part in Blanqui’s rising in Paris in 1839. Its members were sent to prison; some of them on their release decided, under the guidance of Schapper, to emigrate to London, where the police were less hostile to foreigners engaged in political agitation. There they formed a new organisation to which they gave the name—perhaps for purposes of concealment—of the “Workers’ Educational Society,” in February, 1840. The old “League of the Just” seems simply to have disappeared as a society, and to have survived only in small groups of workers in a number of towns like London, Paris, Brussels and Geneva. Though they became familiar with Left groups in the places to which they emigrated, for the most part they were essentially groups of German exiles, arguing, in the natural fashion of the *émigré*, with ardour and energy among themselves.

One of the best-known members of the “League of the Just” was the German tailor, Wilhelm Weitling, who settled down in Paris in 1837, and became an eager disciple of Blanqui. It was under his influence that Weitling, in 1838,

published a defence of revolutionary socialism in the form of a small pamphlet called “Mankind as it is and Ought to be.” Involved in Blanqui’s rising of 1839, he fled to Switzerland, where he settled down for some years, building up there groups of workers of his turn of mind. In 1842, Weitling published his *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom*—a book in which his debt to Blanqui is outstanding. He rejected the idea that socialism can be achieved peacefully. He urged the need to provoke revolution; and he argued that the most reliable element upon which the making of a revolution can be built is the *lumpenproletariat*, the casually employed, the homeless, even the criminal classes, who have nothing to lose by participating in the overthrow of the existing order. It is interesting to note that while he was in Switzerland Weitling met Bakunin and was undoubtedly able seriously to influence the ideas of that remarkable Russian personality.

The publication of Weitling’s book led to his arrest and imprisonment, together with a number of his comrades, by the Swiss authorities. On his release he was expelled from Switzerland to Germany. There the conspicuous attentions of the police kept him moving from place to place, with the result that he decided, in the early autumn of 1844, to go to London.

His reputation there, even beyond German circles, was already considerable, and a large international gathering was arranged in his honour. Not merely French and German exiles, but English Chartists and trade unionists as well, took part in the celebration. The interest created was sufficient to enable Schapper to found, in October, 1844, “The Society of the Democratic Friends of all Nations,” which, it was hoped, would prove a rallying centre for all members of the Left who recognised the need for the revolutionary conquest of political power. Weitling, of course, in the early months of his sojourn in London had great influence in the new organisation. But this did not last long. There were others in the Society, especially Schapper and his friends, who not only knew the English Labour Movement far more fully, and had personal acquaintance with Robert Owen and the trade union leaders, but were deeply hostile to many of Weitling’s most cherished ideas. He looked to the poor outcasts of society, and especially to its criminal classes, to be the main architects of the revolution. He saw no special historical significance in the working class as such. Like a good pupil of Blanqui, he thought long-term propaganda and preparation for action largely effort thrown away. He believed in the sudden overthrow of organised government by a surprise attack from a small, but daring, band of reckless revolutionaries. These were at once to inaugurate a Communist order to be governed by a small committee of wise men, somewhat like the Guardians of Plato’s *Republic*. To hold the allegiance of the masses, he believed it



indispensable for the new government to support religion. Christ was to be proclaimed as the founder of socialism, and the new church would preach a Christianity purified from all dogmas incompatible with its service to the poor and the suffering.

There is no sort of doubt either in Weitling's ability or of his devotion; Heine's testimony, after meeting him, is sufficient evidence of both. But there is also no doubt that, able though he was, Weitling had little sense of proportion, and that he looked upon criticism as a declaration of enmity. That is shown by his inability to decide whether Communism was more important than the creation of a universal language. Yet, with all his faults and eccentricities, he had made a great impression upon the European socialists. Even before he met Weitling, Marx wrote of his "fiery and brilliant debut"; and he and Engels saw a great deal of him in 1846 when Marx had taken refuge in Brussels after his exile from France. It is also clear that they considered the groups of which Weitling was the intellectual centre as of far more importance than any other, and that they had in mind building a kind of Socialist International around them; Engels tells us that Marx had begun to work out a scheme for a congress of the kind in 1845–46, to be held at Verviers.

But their good relations with, and interest in, Weitling were of brief duration. They were deeply divided, as Weitling himself tells us, on questions of method. Weitling still insisted that a revolution could be made at any moment, granted resolute leaders, and the skilful use of the *lumpenproletariat*. Marx wished for careful propaganda. He wanted socialists whose character was beyond reproach, and whose theoretical analysis was combined with a real power of agitation and organisation. He was anxious to insist on the folly of any socialist doctrine which evoked the goodwill of the bourgeoisie as a source of change. Since all this was anathema to Weitling, and since, also, he probably resented Marx's challenge to his own leadership, they could not work together; in the spring of 1846 Weitling left Brussels for America. Marx and Engels then devoted themselves to strengthening the Workers' Educational Society. They organised lectures for its members. They formed and kept in close touch with similar groups in London and Paris, as well as in Germany and Switzerland. Even from the incomplete documentation we have, it looks as though Brussels, under Marx, was a kind of central clearing house whence plans for instruction and agitation were initiated. And it looks as though the energy displayed by Marx in this work was the reason why Moll came to him from London, early in 1847, to discuss what was being done by the London committee. It seems, also, that at this meeting it was agreed to call a conference of delegates from the various international committees. This congress met in London in the summer of 1847.

Engels represented the Paris Committee, and Wilhelm Wolff, to whom Marx was later to dedicate the first volume of his *Capital*, represented the Brussels committee. Marx himself was not present. The handful of delegates founded the “Communist League” with a provisional constitution which was to be ratified by each of the corresponding committees. It was agreed to issue a general statement of principles and to publish a popular journal; the London committee even went so far as to print a trial copy. This is interesting for the attack on the “Utopianism” of Cabet, who was actively organising his scheme for the foundation of the socialist colony in America, to be called *Icaria* after his well-known book. No other issue of this journal appears to be known.

It is worth while emphasising that, on this view the Communist League formed in the summer of 1847, was a new central organisation and not, as Engels has said, merely a continuation of the League of the Just under another name. This latter had been, in fact, dissolved by internal schisms; it had given place to the correspondence committees mainly organised by Marx, and in a large degree, directed by him from Brussels. The first conference of the new League was successful enough to be followed, some months later, by a second conference which Marx himself attended. He went there with the knowledge that Engels, the motive force of the Paris committee, had drawn up the heads of a “Communist Catechism,” though he preferred the idea of what he called a “Communist Manifesto.” At the second Conference, it seems obvious that Marx took the lead into his hands and, after stiff and prolonged opposition, secured a majority for his proposals, being charged with the task of drawing up a Manifesto for the League. It also seems clear that, in some fashion, the London committee became the central organ of the League. This alone explains why, on 26 January, 1848, the London committee could write to the committee in Brussels, enclosing a letter for Marx with a resolution which is nothing less than a command. This resolution must be quoted in full.

“The Central Committee,” it runs, “hereby directs the District Committee of Brussels to inform Citizen Marx that if the Manifesto of the Communist Party, which he agreed, at the last congress, to draw up, does not reach London before Tuesday, February 1st, further measures will be taken against him. In the event of Citizen Marx not writing the Manifesto, the Central Committee requests that the documents handed over to him by the Congress shall be returned forthwith. On behalf, and at the instructions of, the Central Committee, Schapper, Bauer, Moll.”

From this resolution, certain unmistakable conclusions emerge. It is clear that the Central Committee assumed that Marx was the draftsman of a Manifesto, the lines of which had been agreed upon by the Conference in London in

December, 1847. It is clear, further, that documents were entrusted to Marx intended to define the character of the Manifesto. It is clear, moreover, that, so far as the Committee is concerned, the responsibility for drafting the Manifesto was Marx's alone, and it did not regard Engels as either his collaborator or assistant in its composition. This explains the character of the personal letters upon the Manifesto between the two men. Whatever the wishes of the League, they had agreed upon the kind of document they thought necessary; and they decided not to be bound by the instructions Marx had been given by the London Conference. It explains, further, why Engels always insisted that Marx was the major author of the Manifesto, and he himself a minor collaborator in its formulation. It suggests, also, that the London Committee regarded Marx as simply their agent for this purpose, and had the intention, if he did not observe their time-table, of entrusting its composition to someone else; the request for the return of the papers, suggests that, if Marx had not complied with the resolution of 24 January 1848, someone else, probably a member of the League in London, would have been given the task of drafting the Manifesto.

Marx was able to complete his task in time. He must have sent his manuscript to London by 1 February, or shortly thereafter; for it was published in the last days of February. Two things here are of importance. First, the very date of its publication must have meant that it did nothing to precipitate, and had no influence upon, the February Revolution in Paris, which broke out within a few days of the Manifesto's publication in London. Second, it cannot have had any effect on the German risings of that year, since it does not appear to have been known in Germany until at least May, and perhaps June, of 1848. Its main circulation, in the first few months of its existence, was among the members of the Communist League in London and in Brussels. It came to them as a definitive statement of their aims. It was sponsored mainly by Germans, with a sprinkling of Frenchmen, Belgians, and a few members of the Chartist Movement in London. Though its whole tone and outlook was deliberately set in international terms, to most of its readers it must have appeared as essentially related to the conflicts between the socialism of which Marx himself was the chief exponent, with, of course, the indefatigable support of Engels, and that of other groups.

All this is reasonably evident if Engels' own *History of the Communist League* is amended in conjunction with other documents of the time. We know that, on behalf of the London Committee, Schapper and Moll had drawn up an outline of a "Creed" which had been circulated to a few branches and discussed by them. We know, further, that the Paris branch had discussed a draft submitted by the German socialist, Moses Hess; and that Hess's draft was so severely criticised

by Engels that the Paris branch asked him to write a new one himself. Engels was elected the Paris delegate to the London Conference of December, 1847, and he made a new draft of his own. In doing so he rejected the term “Creed” and the League’s desire for a Catechism by question and answer on the ground that “the statement must contain some history.” We have his letter to Marx of 24 November 1847, which he proposed that “the thing” should be called the “Communist Manifesto.” He told Marx that his own sketch was “nothing but narrative, and badly flung together, in a frightful hurry.” He also urged Marx to “think over the creed a bit.” It seems probable that the draft sent by Engels to Marx was largely concerned with the contemporary problems of the international proletariat, and written with a view to being read by working-class readers. If this be correct, Marx must have had before him, in the six or seven weeks during which the Manifesto was written, (a) a draft from Schapper and Moll; (b) the solitary issue of the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift* of September, 1847 where, no doubt at the instance of Engels, the motto of the old League of the Just—“All men are brothers”—had been changed into the historic challenge of “Workers of the World Unite”; (c) perhaps, also, the rejected draft of Hess; (d) the notes that Engels had made on his way to London. These must have been the papers for the return of which the London Central Committee asked, if Marx did not write the Manifesto by 1 February 1848.

In all that he wrote, especially after Marx’s death, Engels always insisted that the main ideas of the Manifesto came from Marx, and that, both in substance and in composition, it is to Marx that the main credit for it belongs. This is, no doubt, largely true; but we must not make the mistake of underestimating the rôle which, through his natural modesty and generosity, Engels assigned to himself. For, first of all, though the form and style of the Manifesto are those of Marx at his most brilliant level, there is a close resemblance between its substance and that of the sketch Engels had made at the desire of the Paris branch of the League. If, moreover, the Manifesto is compared with the joint work of the two men, the *German Ideology* (which they wrote between August 1845 and September 1846, and for which they were unable to find a publisher, or with Marx’s famous polemic against Proudhon, the *Poverty of Philosophy*, which, though written by Marx alone, drew, with the eager consent of Engels, upon the *German Ideology*) it becomes clear that the two men had, as it were, evolved in common a joint stock of ideas which they regarded as a kind of intellectual bank account upon which either could draw freely. And even if, on the basis of Engels’ preface to the German edition of 1883, which is obviously written under the stress of deep emotion, we grant to Marx all with which Engels so generously credited him, we must not underestimate what Marx owed

to Engels. It was from Engels that he learned at first hand how the capitalist system really works and the significance of Chartism. It was from Engels that he learned both of the classic English political economy, and of the English socialist economies developed by men like Hodgskin, Thompson, and Bray, in reply to it. Nor is it unfair to suggest that the inspiration to blend English socialist economics with the materialist philosophy which the Left Hegelians had evolved by “standing Hegel on his head” was the outcome of Engels’ inspiration. And, granted the part that Engels played, both in the Paris branch of the Communist League, and in its two London conventions, it is no exaggeration to say that his skill as a committeeman was largely responsible for getting the first decision of the League to assign the task of actually drafting the Manifesto to Marx. No one realised more clearly than Engels that once in Marx’s hands it would become a good deal more than an appeal from a small organisation with less than a thousand members; it would be a call to action from the vanguard of a working class which, over large areas of Europe, was just about to embark upon an attempt at large-scale revolution.

One or two other minor points may be made. The Manifesto was published in London at the end of February, 1848. It began serial publication in the *Deutsche Londoner Zeitung*, the little journal of the German *émigrés* in England, on 3 March. On 4 March, the Belgian police expelled Marx. Returning to Paris within the next week he met Schapper, Bauer and Moll from the London Germans, and George Julian Harney and Ernest Jones from the English Chartists, to concert joint plans; it was agreed, as Marx wrote to Engels, that the Central Committee of the League should be moved to Paris, with Marx as its President. A large number of copies of the Manifesto, perhaps one thousand, reached Paris about 20 March; and it was beginning to arrive in Germany early in April. In the Preface to the German edition of 1872, Marx and Engels tell us that the French translation first appeared in Paris before the June days of 1848, and that the first English translation, made by Helen Mac-Farlane, appeared in Harney’s *Red Republican* in 1850; it ran through four numbers of November in that year. In the edition of 1872 Marx and Engels tell us that a Polish version appeared in London shortly after the original edition, as did also a Danish translation. A Russian edition, translated by Bakunin, was published in the earlier ‘sixties; a revised version, translated by Plekhanov, though in his special preface to the German edition of 1890, Engels attributes it to Vera Zasulich, was published in 1882. In 1888, a revised English translation was made by Engels’ friend, Samuel Moore, and edited with notes of his own by Engels himself; it was published by the well-known Socialist, William Reeves. The first American translation appears to have been published in 1872 in *Woodhull*

*and Chaplin's Weekly*; it may well be that these two well-known radical feminists published it on account of the removal of the headquarters of the International to New York in that year, as a result of the internal struggles between Marxists and the followers both of Proudhon and Bakunin. At the present time it exists in practically every written language of importance all over the world.

It is worth noting the character of the relations between Marx and Engels and the English working-class movement before the publication of the Manifesto. The contact was first made personally by Engels when the latter was writing his *Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1843. Through Mary Burns, with whom he began to live soon after his first arrival in Manchester, he met John Watson, a socialist tailor, who was a leading figure there among the Owenites, and James Leach, a man of ability and character who was among the outstanding Chartists in Manchester. In the summer of 1843 Engels went to Leeds, primarily to meet George Julian Harney, then virtually the editor of the *Northern Star*. Engels made a vivid impression on Harney and they remained friends until the former's death; it is not unlikely that it was through this friendship that Harney became, with the exception of Bronterre O'Brien, one of the few English socialists before the foundation of the *International* who had knowledge of, and interest in, the socialist movements in Europe. It was perhaps through these connections that Engels began to write, in the Labour press, articles intended to explain, and arouse interest in, the revolutionary movements abroad. In November 1843, in the Owenite *New Moral World* he published an admirable article on the *Advance of Social Reform on the Continent*. There he sought to show that, even if there were differences of approach, there was bound to be the overthrow of capitalism in England, France and Germany. There might be divergent opinions from time to time; but it was urgent for the different movements to be in touch with each other. After his return to Germany, he wrote in December, 1844, a second article in the same journal called *The Swift Progress of Communism* in Germany. At this stage, he was still arguing, influenced perhaps by his then close relations with Moses Hess, that the intelligentsia would be the makers of the German revolution. Certainly, he had found it difficult, in the police-state that Germany was then, to find ways and means of exercising any influence on the workers.

Engels returned to England in the summer of 1845, with Marx as his companion. They stayed for several weeks, visiting Manchester as well as London, and it was then that Engels became a fairly regular contributor to the *Northern Star* and began to insist that the working class alone could achieve its own salvation by breaking the power of the bourgeoisie. During this visit, also,

William Lovett, at the instance of Karl Schapper, appealed to Chartists to join the London branch of the Workers' Educational Society. There was a fair response to his appeal; among those who joined were Harney, Ernest Jones and Thomas Cooper. Thenceforward the Northern Star began to publish reports of the meetings and lectures of the German socialists, and to pay a good deal more attention to the European movement. In the Northern Star of 25 July 1846, there is a letter in its pages, signed by Marx, Engels and Gisot, on behalf of the German branch in Brussels, which congratulates Feargus O'Connor for standing as a Chartist candidate for Nottingham. The letter praises the paper for its insight into English politics; it points out that, as O'Connor and the Northern Star have clearly seen, the real struggle in England is between the middle class and the workers, between capital and labour.

There was now a constant, if fragile, relation between Chartism and continental socialism through the medium of the Communist League. At the November Congress of the League, in 1847, an international meeting was held, at which both Marx and Engels were present, to celebrate the anniversary of the Polish rebellion of 1830. Harney, Ernest Jones and Kydd, the author of the *History of the Factory Laws*, were the English speakers; Marx and Engels were among the foreign guests who spoke. We have a report of Marx's speech in the Northern Star of 4 December 1847. "I have been sent by the Brussels Democrats," he said, "to speak with the Democrats of London to call on them to cause to be holden a Congress of Nations — a Congress of Working Men, to establish liberty all over the world. The middle classes, the free traders, held a congress in Brussels, but their fraternity is one-sided, and the moment that such congresses are likely to benefit the working man, that moment their fraternity will cease and their congresses dissolve. The Democrats of Belgium and the Chartists of England are the real democrats, and the moment they carry the six points of their Charter, the road to liberty will be opened to the world. Effect this grand object, you workmen of England, and you will be hailed as the saviours of the whole human race." The speech is, no doubt, one of Marx's polite expressions of international working-class fraternity to which delegates give expression at meetings of this kind; but it has a special interest from the fact that the Marx who spoke it was returning directly to Brussels, charged by the Communist League with the task of drawing up that Manifesto which was to be a challenge to more than a century of subsequent history.

## **Intellectual Influences**

*The Communist Manifesto* has passed beyond the stage where it requires any eulogy. It is admitted by every serious student of society to be one of the

outstanding political documents of all time; in the influence it has exerted it compares with the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, and the French Declaration of Rights of 1789. Its character is unique, not only because of the power with which it is written, but also because of the immense scope it covers in its intense brevity. It is a philosophy of history, a critical analysis of socialist doctrines and a passionate call to revolutionary action. In each of these phases, it is written as a deliberate and provocative challenge. Its aim is to make the working class conscious of a great historical mission, and to communicate to it the deep sense of urgency about that mission which Marx and Engels themselves possessed. Its savage invective is intended to strip the veil from those bourgeois foundations of the existing order the concealment of which is one of the ways in which capitalist civilisation hides its real purposes from the workers whom it makes its slaves. But its invective is intended also to safeguard the workers from being deceived by other doctrines, claiming to be socialist, which, in the judgment of Marx and Engels, are intended to turn the workers from their vital task of abolishing a society built on the exploitation of one class by another and so building the classless society. The Manifesto, it must be added, is a remarkable feat of compression; and though its ringing sentences make it, on a first reading, seem simple and straightforward, there are, in fact, behind almost every phrase of it the marks of profound intellectual conflict, without the grasp of which the reader is only too likely to miss both the decisiveness of the document and its great complexity. For one of the purposes of the Manifesto is the definition of a doctrine which, though rooted in the massive discussions which had taken place ever since the conspiracy of Babeuf and, in particular, since the French Revolution of 1830, was intended to supersede all competing theories, and thus to unify a chaos of ideas into a philosophy which bound the workers together and prepared the basis of action. The originality of the Manifesto does not lie in any single doctrine that it enunciates. It draws upon an immense body of literature, not all of it socialist, in which a number of the doctrines which lie at the heart of classical Marxism had already been set out with clarity and with vigour. Its originality lies in the skill, first of all, with which these doctrines are woven together so as to form a logical whole; and, second, in putting in the perspective of ultimate revolutionary prophecy the outlines of an immediate programme so conceived as to be directly related to the demands of the workers in the major European countries, as these had been born out of their practical experience of capitalist domination. Two other things, moreover, must be said. It is evident from the whole content of the Manifesto that when it was written both Marx and Engels were convinced that the day of reckoning was close at hand, and this was why there was a



certain apocalyptic note of urgency about their discussions. It is not less evident that they believed—of course quite mistakenly—that the birthplace of the social revolution they anticipated was certain to be Germany. No one can seriously doubt that they had immensely overestimated the degree to which revolutionary socialist ideas had penetrated the German working class; and brave as was the fight they put up in particular places, remarkable as was the literature they published in their cause, their enthusiasm allotted to the German movement a priority it was far from ready to assume. On any detached analysis the France of 1848 was, alike in ideas and in action, far more mature than the Germany of the same years; it is impossible not to feel that this emerges in Marx's own two classic pamphlets, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852) and the *Class-Struggles in France* (1850). Anyone who compares these with his account of the German struggles of the same years, cannot but fail to note what it is difficult not to call an almost Utopian element in his description of German events and their implications. They pitched their expectations of the outcome of the German Revolt unjustifiably high; they tended to exaggerate both the influence and the significance of their own supporters. It may even be doubted whether they fully realised how deep were the internal divisions in the movement they sought to lead; or how difficult was the achievement of that democratic centralism which the Manifesto put forward as the basis of organised proletarian action.

It is, moreover, obvious, both from their references to the Owenite movement and to Chartism, that, though Marx and Engels were aware of important trends in English thought, they tended to underestimate their significance both for doctrine and for action. Even though Engels' studies had since 1842 brought him into close contact with the English workers' movement, it is doubtful if at this stage he fully understood its possibilities; Marx who, apart from two brief visits to England in 1845 and 1847, knew only of the British movement at second hand from Engels, had hardly begun those massive studies of English political activity and theory which, in the *Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and the first volume of *Capital* (1867), were to bear such remarkable fruit. It was not until they had both settled down in England, after the failure of revolution in France and Germany, that they really began to grasp the full importance of an English tradition which not only bourgeois economists like Sir William Petty, Adam Smith, Malthus and Ricardo had their share in making, but in which that classical tradition had been challenged by Owen and his followers, by Hodgskin and Bray; only then did they understand how much more was to be gained from a full study of the English scene than from that of France or of Germany. Here, they began to see, was already the most mature

expression of capitalism's habits; and they could only prophesy its outcome by the careful and detailed study of its operation. But, by that time, the Communist Manifesto had already taken a dogmatic position in their thinking; and their tendency, henceforward, was to judge the English movement less by the scene which unfolded itself before their eyes, than by the degree to which they could fit its postulates of action into those they had so stoutly defended in the Manifesto. In the early years of their exile, they assumed that the habits of the English trade union movement were due to their theoretical backwardness; they awoke with relative slowness to its significance alongside the magnificent slogans with which the French and German workers were accustomed to decorate their doctrines. It was not until both men had realised that the English movement was to be the context in which the major part of their lives was likely to be passed that they gave it the full consideration it deserved. Even then, when they could desert its analysis for the large-scale *Weltanschauung* of some German or French doctrinaire, they continued to feel far more at home in socialist exegesis. However much Engels made himself at home with English habits it is important to remember that Marx was always a German who lived, very consciously, *in partibus infidelium*, and was never able to alter the categories of his thinking from those of his native land. Engels, for him, was always a remarkable source of fertile English illustration; the core of Marx's approach was Franco-German experience. Late in life, he realised the significance of Russia; but England was an illustration of a thesis in the main largely formed when he first entered the library of the British Museum.

## **The Manifesto and Revolution**

The actual construction of the Communist Manifesto is brilliantly simple. Affirming, with justice, the dread of communism felt by the governments of Europe, it goes on to insist that the struggle between classes is the central clue to historical change. But whereas in previous periods the structure of society is a "complicated arrangement," in the new "epoch of the bourgeoisie" society is being ever more "simplified" by being forced towards the dual division between bourgeoisie and proletariat. The Manifesto emphasises the revolutionary part the bourgeoisie has played in history, its relentless drive to make the "cash nexus" the only bond between men. It has dissolved innumerable other freedoms for the one freedom which gives it command of the world market—freedom of trade. It lives by exploitation, and its unrelenting search for markets means an unending and profound change in every aspect of life. It gives a "cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country." It compels the breakdown of national isolation; as it builds an inter-dependent

material universe, so it draws, as a common fund, upon science and learning from every nation. It means the centralisation of government, the supremacy of town over country, the dependence of backward peoples upon those with more advanced methods of production in their hands.

The Manifesto describes with savage eloquence how the development of bourgeois society makes the workman a wage-slave exploited by the capitalist. The latter spares neither age nor sex. He makes it increasingly impossible for the small producer to compete with him; on every side economic power is increasingly concentrated and the little man, in every category of industry and agriculture, is driven into the dependent condition of the working class. So ruthless is this exploitation that in sheer self-defence the workers are compelled to combine to fight their masters. They form unions, ever more wide, which come at last to fight together as a class and as a political party representative of that class. If the battle sways backwards and forwards, with gains here and losses there, the consolidation of the workers as a class hostile to their exploiters has one special feature which distinguishes it from all previous struggles between rulers and ruled; the working class becomes increasingly the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. If at first it struggles within the framework of the national state, it soon becomes evident that this struggle is but one act in a vast international drama. A time comes in the history of capitalism when "its existence is no longer compatible with society." It cannot feed its slaves. It drives them to revolution in which a proletarian victory is inevitable.

The Manifesto then turns to the special functions of Communists in the working-class movement. It insists that the Communists do not form "a separate party opposed to other working-class parties." They have no interest apart from the workers. More than this: "They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own," says the Manifesto, "by which to mould and shape the proletarian movement." Their task is to insist on the international solidarity of the working class, to stand in its vanguard in each country, to aid, by their deeper theoretical grasp of the movement of history, in the workers' drive to the conquest of power. They do not aim at the abolition of individual private property, but of that bourgeois form of the ownership of the instruments of production which deprives nine-tenths of society of the capacity to acquire individual property. Communists admit freely that they desire to abolish the bourgeois corruption of the family and to replace home education by social education. They do so because the bourgeois family is a means of exploiting the labour of women and children, and because bourgeois education means its subordination to the ends of the ruling class. If Communists are charged with seeking to abolish love of

country, the Manifesto answers that the workers can have no country until they are emancipated from bourgeois domination; with their acquisition of political power, the hostility between nations will disappear. So, also, it will change traditional ideas in religion and philosophy. Since it puts experience on a new basis, it will change the ideas which are their expression.

The Manifesto recognises that the emancipation of the workers will never come in exactly the same way in every country; differences in development make that inevitable. Yet it suggests a programme of measures, “generally applicable” in advanced countries, which will enable the workers to win the battle of democracy. When this victory has been won, under these conditions class distinctions will disappear and the state-power will wither away, since it is necessary only to preserve class-distinctions. In its place there will be a free association of citizens “in which the free development of each will be the condition of the free development of all.”

Such a summary as this, of course, is bound to do injustice to the superb sweep of the Manifesto itself. But it is important to dwell upon it for the implications upon which it insists. First, perhaps, a word is useful on the title of the document itself. It was to have been the “Catechism” by way of question and answer, from the Communist League; it became the Communist Manifesto. What is the reason for the change? Partly, no doubt, the decision of Marx and Engels to alter what would have been an essentially temporary domestic piece of propaganda into one that would have permanent historical value. It is hard not to believe that they called it a Manifesto in tribute to the memory of the Babouviste *Manifesto of the Equals*. They always recognised Babeuf as a real precursor, and do honour to him in their own work. The word Communist, it may fairly be suggested, has a double implication. On the one hand, it emphasises the relation of their work to the Communist League, by which they were authorised to undertake it; on the other, it serves to mark their own sense of profound separation from the “true” socialists of Germany, and especially of Karl Grün, against whom their criticism was so evident in the Manifesto itself. They reproached “true” socialism with sentimentality, with pretentiousness, and with an abstract approach to concrete problems which deprived them of any sense of reality. One can already see the depth of their hostility to Grün in articles they had written against him in August and September, 1847. It would not be surprising that they should choose a title for their pronouncements which at once looked back to a great revolutionary predecessor, and avoided the danger of any confusion with a group whose “socialism” seemed to them no more than a vapid humanitarianism.

What lends support to this view is the emphatic declaration of Marx and Engels

that the Communists do not form a separate party. On the contrary, they are ready to work with all working-class organisations genuinely dedicated to the socialist task; more, they repudiate any claim to “sectarian” doctrines of their own which might result in their separation from the rest of the working-class movement. It is vital to insist upon this emphasis. However critical Marx and Engels may be of other socialist principles than their own, their regard for unity among the working-class forces is paramount. That is shown by their careers from the very outset. Engels lent his support to Chartism even before the appearance of the Manifesto; yet there must have been few among its leaders who had any real insight into the doctrines of which he was the exponent. He and Marx were often bitterly hostile to the German Social Democratic Movement; they attacked Lassalle, Liebknecht, Bebel, Kautsky. But they never sought to found a separate German Communist Party. The hostility of Marx to the dominant elements in French socialism is obvious from his attack on Proudhon as early as 1847; but though he and Engels always encouraged the “Marxist” elements in the French party, the *Civil War in France* (1871) of Marx himself shows their anxiety to assist it, even when they thought its policy mistaken. Indeed, Section IV of the Manifesto itself insists upon this view. The Communists support the Chartists in England and the Agrarian Reformers in America; they “ally themselves” with the Social Democratic Party in France; they support the radicals in Switzerland, “without forgetting that the party consists of contradictory elements”; in Poland they support “the party that has seen in an agrarian revolution the means to national freedom, that party which caused the insurrection of Cracow in 1846”; in Germany they fight with any bourgeois elements which see the need to “act in a revolutionary manner against the absolute monarchy, the feudal landlords, and the little middle class.” The Manifesto, without question, insists that the Communists enter into relations with other groups to give them direction, to spread their own revolutionary creed, to make the workers aware of the “hostile antagonism” between bourgeoisie and proletariat. They “openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.” But this declaration follows upon the announcement of three purposes which must be kept closely in mind if it is to be fully understood. They support “every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.” In every movement, moreover, whatever its stage of development, they put the question of property in the first place. “Equally,” says the Manifesto, “they labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.”

If all this is read in the context of Engel’s famous introduction to Marx’s *Class*

*Struggles in France*, which he wrote in 1895, and of the joint *Address Of The Central Council Of The Communist League*, it is clear that the Manifesto is presenting a doctrine of permanent revolution. By that famous phrase they do not mean a continuous series of attempts to seize the state-power by the workers in the manner advocated by Blanqui. They had learned that revolution was an art, and that it needs certain special historical conditions if it is to be successful. They meant that when an alliance of the progressive forces in society overthrows the reactionary forces, the workers must not allow bourgeois democrats or social reformers to stop at the point where private ownership of the means of production remains unchallenged. They must always drive them on from this reformist outlook to the revolutionary stage where direct attack is made on private property. Even if the conditions do not permit of success, at least they will have done much to educate those workers who are not yet class-conscious into a realisation of their position. And, with the coming of universal suffrage, the revolutionary idea will, by force of historical circumstances, enable the Communists to “conquer the greater part of the middle section of society, petty bourgeois and small peasants, and grow into the decisive power in the land, before which all other powers will have to bow, whether they like it or not. To keep this growth going without interruption, until of itself it gets beyond the control of the ruling governmental system, not to fritter away this daily increasing shock force in advance guard fighting, but to keep it intact until the day of the decision—that is our main task.”

The continuation is not less significant. “The irony of world history,” wrote Engels, “turns everything upside down. We, ‘the revolutionaries,’ the ‘rebels,’ we are thriving far better on legal methods than on illegal methods and revolt ... The parties of order, as they call themselves, are perishing under the legal conditions created by themselves ... and if we are not so crazy as to let ourselves be driven into street fighting in order to please them, then nothing else is finally left for them but to break through this legality so fatal to them.”

Nothing here written by Engels means that he assumed the likelihood that the final transition from capitalism to socialism would be peaceful. On the contrary, it is quite evident that he expected the peaceful forces of socialism so to develop that their strength became a threat to the interests of property. That threat, he prophesied, would lead the interests of property themselves to break the Constitution. Where that occurred Social Democracy would then be free to act in its own defence. That, for him, is the moment when a revolutionary struggle would begin. He did not neglect the danger that progress towards socialism might be halted by war on a global scale. “No war is any longer possible for Prussia-Germany,” he wrote, “except a world war, and a world war indeed of an

extension and violence hitherto undreamed of. Eight to ten millions of soldiers will mutually massacre one another and, in doing so, devour the whole of Europe until they have stripped it barer than any swarm of locusts has ever done. The devastations of the Thirty Years' War compressed into three or four years; and spread over the whole Continent; famine, pestilence, general demoralisation both of the armies and of the mass of the people produced by acute distress; hopeless confusion of our artificial machinery in trade, industry and credit, ending in general bankruptcy; collapse of the old states and their traditional state-wisdom to such an extent that crowns will roll by dozens on the pavement, and there will be no one to pick them up; absolute impossibility of foreseeing how it will end, and who will come out of the struggle as victor; only one result is absolutely certain: general exhaustion, and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class. This is the prospect when the system of mutual outbidding in armaments, driven to extremities, at last bears its inevitable fruits. This, my lords and gentlemen, is where, in your wisdom, you have brought old Europe. And when nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right. The war may perhaps push us temporarily into the background, may wrench from us many a position already conquered. But when you have unfettered forces which you will then no longer be able again to control, things may go as they will; at the end of the tragedy you will be ruined, and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved, or, at any rate, inevitable.” Nor does he fail to note, in a letter to Sorge, of 7 January 1888, that “American industry would conquer all along the line, and push us up against the alternatives: either retrogression to production for home consumption ... or—social transformation ... but once the first shot is fired, control ceases, the horse can take the bit between his teeth.” To this should be added what Marx and Engels had to say in the edition, prepared by the latter, of Marx's famous address to the General Council of the First International on the Civil War in France which arose out of the defeat of Louis Napoleon in the Franco-Prussian War. “In reality,” wrote Engels, in his preface of 18 March 1871, “the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and, indeed, in the democratic republic, no less than in the monarchy; and, at best, an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides, the proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid leaving to lop off until such time, at the earliest possible moment, as a new generation, reared in new and free social conditions, will be able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap-heap. Of late, the Social Democratic philistine has once more been filled with terror at the words: dictatorship of the proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to

know what this Dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat!”

No one can examine this section of the Manifesto honestly without coming to two conclusions, especially when it is set in the light of the subsequent comments upon its meaning by its own authors. They did not expect that capitalist society would be transformed into socialist society without violent revolution. They were insistent that the people who shared their views must never divide the organised working-class forces, that it was their duty to avoid sectarianism, and that they must not form a separate party. Their task was to be the vanguard of their party, to proclaim, indeed, their views, to do all in their power to get them accepted as the basis of action, but still to remain within the political ranks of the organised working class. More than this: in the last edition of the Manifesto edited by Engels, though he remained emphatic in his belief that violence would accompany the final disappearance of capitalism, was also emphatic that the workers would be foolish to rely upon the old methods of street-fighting at the barricades, because new methods and new weapons had altered the situation in favour of the armed forces and the police. Fighting might still be necessary, but it would be folly for the workers to abandon legal methods until a stage had been reached when the position they confronted compensated for the new strength a capitalist society possessed in the power at the disposal of the state authority.

Under what circumstances did the workers reach that position? The answer, surely, is given by the fact that Marx saw the dictatorship of the proletariat as the outcome of the Paris Commune when France was defeated by Prussia in the war of 1870. Engels saw it, as is evident from the preface of 1895 to the Manifesto, and from his introduction to Borkheim's book, as the outcome of the catastrophic conditions produced by global war. It is of decisive importance to consider these views in the light of the interpretation that Lenin himself put upon them. He pointed out, with perfect fairness, the immense step taken by Marx between the publication of the Manifesto and the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, and between these pamphlets and both the *Letters to Kugelmann* and the *Civil War in France*, he draws attention, too, again quite fairly, to a similar change in the outlook of Engels between the production of the Manifesto and the careful analysis of the *Anti-Dühring*; but the vital outlook of Lenin is set out in his classic *State and Revolution* and the documents therewith connected. It is sufficient here to say that Lenin was here concerned to establish to the comrades in Leningrad the necessary conditions of successful revolution; for he, like Marx and Engels, was careful to distinguish his outlook from that of Blanqui. He thought it necessary, first, that the armed forces of the state-power should be



disloyal. He thought that the machinery of the state must be in ruins; there must be widespread revolutionary disturbance among the working class, as evidenced by strikes and demonstrations and there must be a solid and coherent working-class power able to lead the working class to the conquest of power. On these conditions, working-class victory was a possibility with a real prospect of success. Here, it will be noted that Lenin is considering a condition in which the overwhelming breakdown of the machinery of government opened the prospect of new orientations. The breakdown of ancient state-powers as the outcome of the war of 1939 had resulted in something akin to that which Lenin had foreseen. That was the result of defeat in war. The form of state has remained unaltered in the states which remained victorious in that struggle. Lenin was pretty clearly right in insisting that the “democratic republic,” based on universal suffrage, was the last rampart of bourgeois socialism rather than the first of democratic socialism in the Marxian sense of that term; that can be seen from utterances like those of Macaulay and of Daniel Webster. But nothing in his discussion deals with the fundamental point of whether and why that extreme Left he represented was justified in dissenting from the continuous insistence of Marx and Engels that the working class opposed to the imposition of bourgeois capitalism should form a separate party from the old social democrats. In this regard, the famous split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, at the Congress in London in 1903, was an innovation unconsidered by his predecessors. Whether it was wise or unwise, together with all the immense consequences to which, since the foundation of the Third International in 1919, it has led, lies outside the scope of this introduction.