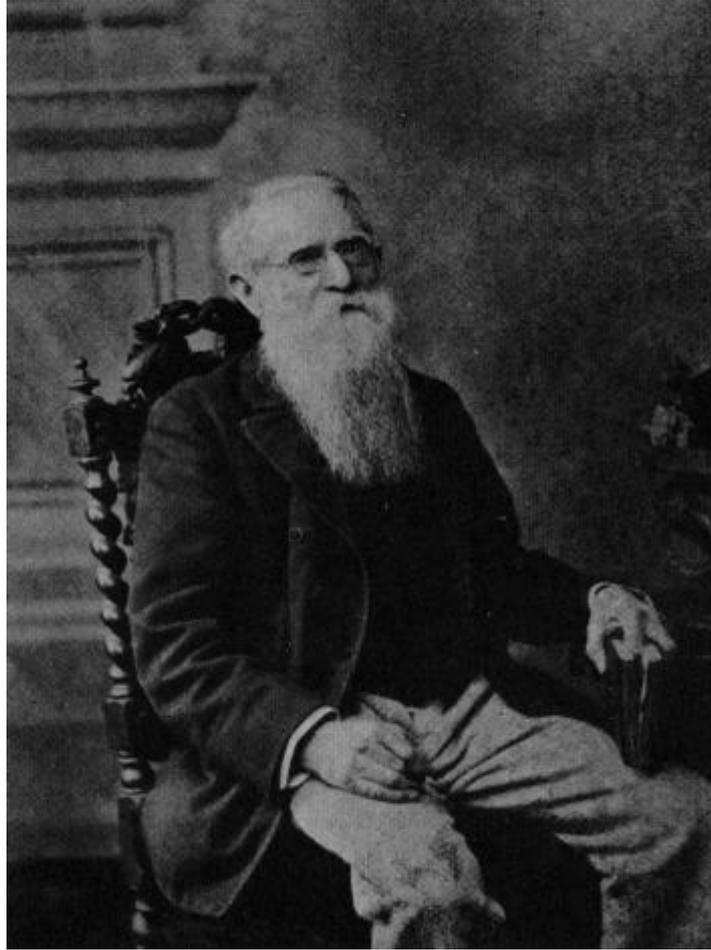


**SIXTY YEARS**  
**IN THE**  
**SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC**  
**MOVEMENT.**

**BEFORE 1848 AND AFTER.**  
**RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD**  
**COMMUNIST.**

**BY**  
**FREDERICK LESSNER.**



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**Sixty Years in the Social-Democratic  
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## **Contents**

[Foreword](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[Chapter IX](#)

[Chapter X](#)

[Chapter XI](#)

[Chapter XII](#)

[Chapter XIII](#)

[Chapter XIV](#)

[Chapter XV](#)

[In Remembrance of Karl Marx](#)

[In Remembrance of Frederick Engels](#)

## FOREWORD.

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Some years ago (in the "Social-Democrat") I expressed the hope that the autobiography of that old war-horse of the Socialist Party, Friedrich Lessner, probably the oldest living Social-Democrat, which had then just been published in German, in the "Deutsche Worte," of Vienna, should appear in an English form. This hope has now been realised in the following excellent translation. The present little book speaks for itself. It is for all Socialists of an absorbing interest, dealing, as it does, with the first beginnings of Modern Socialism, the period of the old International, and the early days of the present British movement, and written, as it is, by one who was himself throughout an actor in the events he describes.

Speaking from personal knowledge, as a frequent guest at the old house in Regent's Park Road, I can testify to the high opinion his old friend Friedrich Engels had of Lessner's services to the party.

To all but the youngest members of the Socialist movement in London, Friedrich Lessner will be a familiar figure, with his long white beard, which of late years has emphasised more than ever an already existing suggestion, in appearance, of the earth-spirit or gnome (Rübezahl) of old German folk-lore. To such of those who have known him, the personal element will, of course, give an added interest to these memoirs; but, as already indicated, their interest is far more than merely personal. They are bound to constitute in the future a valuable first-hand source to the historian of the Modern Socialist movement, when he shall arise. Meanwhile, I may venture to predict that they will be welcome to many readers for their own intrinsic merits.

E. BELFORT BAX.

DEDICATED TO MY WIFE.

# **Sixty Years in the Social-Democratic Movement.**

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## **CHAPTER I.**

I never had any intention of writing my recollections, but when I attended the Cologne Congress, in October, 1893, I was requested by so many comrades to publish my reminiscences of the many phases of the working-class movement in which I had taken part, that I at last consented to do so. The sorrow caused by the death of Frederick Engels (my friend for so many years) and continued ill-health have retarded me in my task.

Born on February 27th, 1825, in Saxe-Weimar, Germany, I was apprenticed to the tailoring trade, in which I have been employed for nearly seventy years. At the age of seventeen, having finished my apprenticeship, I went on my travels, according to German custom. During this period I passed all over the northern part of Germany, and finally settled down to work at Hamburg, where I became a member of the Working Men's Education Society. Here, at Hamburg, I became acquainted with Democrats and even Socialists. In March, 1847, in order to escape from compulsory military service, I came to London, where I at once joined the Arbeiter-Verein (Workmen's Educational Society), which is now the Communist Workmen's Club, 107, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, W.

It is not easy to describe one's own life; moreover, a life full of sorrow and distress, full of struggling and suffering, which unfortunately so often falls to revolutionary proletarians, is not always a pleasant one. Out of the eighty years of my life, sixty belong to the revolutionary Labour movement.

I witnessed the storms of the second half of the forties of the last century, being then a convinced Communist and a passionate champion of Socialism. Then came years of exile from Germany, followed by bitter persecutions, caused by the agitation of the "Association of the Communists." Later came the "International Workingmen's Association," the Paris Commune, the German Socialist Coercion Law, the inauguration of the international celebration of May-Day—all helping to form the history of Socialism, making the future more and more promising and hopeful.

One of the first works dealing with the social question which attracted my attention was the famous booklet of Weitling's, called "Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom." This excited my imagination, and when in 1846, as a young journeyman tailor, I heard a very pronounced Communistic speech in Hamburg, it caused me to imagine that Communism would be realised in a few years. If anybody then had told me that in the next century we should be under the

domination of capitalism I should have considered him stupid. The first flash of the idea of Communism dazzled me.

When, however, in 1847, I had the opportunity of hearing Karl Marx and had read and understood the "Manifesto of the Communist Party," it became clear to me that the enthusiasm and good intentions of individuals were not sufficient to effect a transformation of human society. I had to acknowledge economic development as the decisive factor in the history of human society.

What I lost in enthusiasm and sentiment, however, I gained in clear thinking; much to my joy, for, coming into contact with men of great understanding, my deficiencies soon became apparent to me. At this time I was only 22.

My father died early, and I only remember my stepfather, who treated me with such severity that I avoided him as much as possible. My mother was not allowed to keep me for long, she having to send me to distant relations in the country, where I grew up. In this new home I had to start work at an early age, and went to school very seldom. I still remember very vividly, though, a lesson in natural science, which was characteristic of the whole teaching at that time. "Why is it," asked the teacher, "that Almighty God lets day and night only come on slowly?" Answer: "In order that people shall not get blind." That was what we had to answer; and woe to the boy that could not answer quickly.

Religion governed the whole teaching in the schools. The explanation of natural phenomena was only a continuation of the catechism. My education at home and at school was throughout a uniformly religious one. My first experiences in the world soon led me to see that there was a conflict between religion and knowledge which was only removed when later on in life I became a Socialist and then a Materialist.

After having left school I was apprenticed to a master-tailor at Weimar, where I remained as apprentice for four years. It is not necessary to describe in detail the pleasures and sufferings of the life of an apprentice; most of my readers will know them from their own experience. I passed the examination then necessary to qualify as a journeyman and started tramping, as was then the custom with a German journeyman. My first stop was at Jena, the birth-place of my parents. Here I was offered work, which I did not accept, because my ardour for travelling was too strong. I stayed, however, at Jena for some months, and went tramping again in the summer. I rambled about Saxony, Silesia, and the Riesengebirge, the natural beauty of which often prompted me to utter cries of admiration, and arrived at Breslau, where I would have liked to have stayed, but I could not find work. Then I started for Berlin, where I was again unsuccessful in getting work. Only in Mecklenburg did I succeed, and when my job ended I went to Hamburg. This was in the autumn of 1843. Hamburg was still in ruins, caused by the great fire which had been raging there the year before. Here I

found good and profitable work, and remained for three years. In the autumn of 1846 I had to leave Hamburg to fulfil my compulsory military service in my own little "fatherland." At Weimar I presented myself to the military authorities, and was found fit for service; but as I had not presented myself the year before, according to law, double service was imposed upon me as punishment. However, they gave me leave till the spring of 1847, which induced me to go back to Hamburg for the time. It was here that a crisis in my life took place—instead of becoming a soldier of "Absolutism" I became a soldier of Freedom.

## CHAPTER II.

This happened soon after my return to Hamburg. In the workshop in which I was employed I made the acquaintance of some workmates who had been working in Switzerland, Paris, and London; there they had acquired Communistic ideas and had become intensely devoted to them. I soon became infected with their zeal.

There existed in Hamburg at that time a Workmen's Educational Club, which was the centre of the advanced workingmen's movement. Workmen used to meet there in the evening, to read newspapers, to debate, to practise singing, or to study foreign languages. The newspapers laid on the table were, of course, Radical ones, the discussions being chiefly about Communistic questions, and the songs were songs of freedom. The motto of the choral section was: "Not how I sing, but *what* I sing, makes me so proud, so free."

The Hamburg Workmen's Educational Club (Arbeiter Bildungsverein) was in the best sense of the word a home of the revolutionary ideas of the forties. It strove for German unity and freedom, for a republic, and the fraternisation of nations, for free thought, and Christian Communism—all these ideas were mixed together—which combination resulted in giving to their devotees dim and vague ideals. It was a time of fermentation understood only by few.

In the "Arbeiter Bildungsverein," Wilhelm Weitling was considered as the man of the future. The admiration he enjoyed in our circle was unlimited. He was the idol of his followers. I was introduced into the "Arbeiter Bildungsverein" by my shopmates in November, 1846, and was soon afterwards admitted a member. From this time I assiduously attended the debates of the club, which had a great attraction for me. In the discussions, one workman named Martens especially excelled. He had become a Communist while travelling abroad. He was also active in the labour movement of the sixties, and was sent in 1863 as a delegate of the Hamburg "Arbeiter Bildungsverein" to the first congress of the German "Arbeiter Bildungsvereine" at Frankfort-on-Main, but as an opponent of the Lassalle movement. Martens was a very able agitator; no one knew so well as he how to win his audience in favour of Communism. He spoke fluently and touched the hearts of us workmen as the suppressed and exploited. He animated and imbued us with new hopes and joys. One of my shopmates lent me Weitling's "Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom" to read. This book was at that time much read by working people. It passed from hand to hand, for only a few possessed a copy. I read this book through once, twice, and even thrice. For the first time it now dawned upon me that the condition of the worker could be made bright and happy. I was, indeed, already dissatisfied with my lot, which was not the case with the ordinary working man, but in the "Guarantees" my dissatisfaction was intelligently expressed. The author's keen criticism

revolutionised both feeling and thinking. The paltry and mean pleasures which had occupied my spare time, and which had prevented me from thinking over my social position, now became to me a quite subordinate consideration. The feeling that began to fill me was the desire to strive for a better organisation of society. I was extraordinarily impressed by the saying of Weitling: "The history of the world itself is nothing but a long story of robberies, in which honest people are always the duped." This seemed to me to be an irrefutable truth, the more so as the historical works contained at that time really nothing but stories of murders and wars. And how convincing, too, were to me Weitling's ideas on patriotism and country. "What love can a man possibly have for his fatherland," he wrote, "when he has nothing to lose in it but what he can find in any foreign country? The 'fatherland' should be nothing else than the land of the father, the inheritance that everybody needs for securing his livelihood and independence. But if a man has not got these benefits, or if in order to live he is compelled to work for the advantage of others, so that the others may be able to play the master the more comfortably, how can he love his country? A fatherland which nourishes all its members will secure their love; such a country is well worth fighting for; for it one may well risk life, blood, and liberty. . . . Unfortunately our masters have robbed us of everything except the name of the fatherland, but this name we will soon throw at the feet of our oppressors and take refuge under the standard of mankind, which will have among its champions neither high nor low, neither poor nor rich, neither masters nor slaves. To-day we are surrounded by enemies in our own country, who are as bad and tyrannical as the foreigners. . . . The death they make us die is the slow death of exhaustion and privation, and the misery we suffer is the misery of slavery. And shall these be our countrymen? They are vampires, foreigners, tyrants, that have stolen our country, whether by cunning or by force matters not. All the prejudices and passions of the people are stirred up to make them, in the name of patriotism, willing tools, whose vanity and ambition make them easy victims. Thus do the workers in hundreds of thousands declaim against the supposed foreign enemies, who in their turn are nothing else than living machines without a will of their own; workmen, like ourselves, dragged from their ploughs and workshops by trickery and force to play a bloody tragedy with themselves as victims. . . . As long as society is living in injustice, as long as a people consist of masters and slaves, so long will I remain the same. Whether Jack or John, whether Napoleon Frederick William, or Nicholas are the masters, workingmen will always be made fools of by one ruler or the other. It is upon us that all the classes of society, the native ruler as well as the foreign, throw our unbearable loads."

These stirring words greatly affected me. I was already supposed to be a soldier at that time, and had soon to don "the Duke's colours." For hours I would meditate on this passage, and in this way there ripened in me the resolution to "take refuge under the standard of revolution."

At that time, when the debates of the “Arbeiter Bildungsverein” and the “Guarantees” of Weitling revolutionised my ideas and considerably broadened my horizon, there was at Hamburg also going on a vigorous agitation in favour of Jewish emancipation. Many meetings took place for this purpose, and the question was well discussed. The speakers, almost all Jews, preached the principles of democracy; equality of political rights, freedom of religion and conscience were the subjects of the debates, which were animated by a warm heart for humanity, for social and political freedom. There were especially two speakers, Schusselka and Riesser, who excellently knew how to inspire and to carry away their audience; consequently these meetings were always well attended. I did not miss any of them, for they were for me a course of political education and a school of democracy.

I consider the winter from 1846-47 was the most important period of my life; and when, on April 1st, 1847, instead of going to the barracks at Weimar I got to the ship that was to take me to England, it seemed to me as if I left my whole past on the Continent in order to start a new life in England—a life that I decided to devote to the struggle for the emancipation of my class.



### CHAPTER III.

After having made up my mind to go to London, Martens recommended me to the London "Arbeiter Bildungsverein," where I was fraternally received.

The London "Arbeiter Bildungsverein" was founded on February 7th, 1840. Its founders were Karl Schapper, Heinrich Bauer, and Josef Moll. These men came to London at the end of 1839, after having been expelled from France because of the part they took in the Blanquist conspiracy.

Schapper, afterwards the reader of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," was born about the year 1812 at Weilburg (Nassau). When still a student of forestry he took part in the Hambach National Celebration which took place on May 27th, 1832, also in the attack on the constables at Frankfort in the spring of 1833. He was arrested, but succeeded in escaping and taking refuge in Italy, where he participated in the raid of Mazzini against Savoy in 1834. Abroad, probably in France, he got to know Communism, and joined the "Union of the Just," founded in 1836.

Schapper, with whom I had much intercourse during the end of the forties and the commencement of the fifties, was a regular giant in frame, yet throughout a person of deep feeling. He was a Communist rather by feeling than by reasoning. He would always have been ready to sacrifice all if Communism could have been realised at once. His impatience became more acute after the wreck of the Revolution, resulting in misunderstandings between him and Marx. Schapper afterwards retired from the movement, and lived as a teacher of languages in London, where he died in the beginning of 1870.

Heinrich Bauer came from Frankow, and was a shoemaker by trade. He was small, as far as stature was concerned, but great in sagacity, cleverness, and resolution.

Josef Moll was a native of Cologne and a watchmaker by trade. Of middle height, strongly built, he excelled in intellect, heroism and intrepidity. He did not know fear when he could serve the interests of the proletarians. At the outbreak of the revolution in Baden, in 1849, he hastened to the theatre of war, from which he unfortunately never returned. A fatal bullet put an end to his heroic life. In the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" (politico-economical review, edited by Karl Marx, 3rd part, 1850, London), Frederick Engels gave him honourable mention. Engels wrote: "To the more or less educated victims of the revolution in Baden memorials have been raised from all sides in the press, in the democratic societies, in verse and in prose. Of the hundreds and thousands of workmen that have fought the battles, that have been killed in the battlefields, that have rotted alive in the casemates of Rastatt—nobody speaks of these. The

exploitation of the workmen is too legalised an institution for our official 'Democrats' to consider workingmen any better than mere food for powder. That is why they hate those truly proletarian characters who, too proud to flatter them, too intelligent to be used by them, still take the sword when a ruling power is to be fought, and who represent the party of the proletarians in every revolutionary movement. But, if it is not in the interest of the would-be Democrats, it is the duty of the proletarian party to honour them. And to the better class of these workmen belonged Josef Moll, of Cologne. Moll had left Germany many years before, and had taken part in many revolutionary public and secret societies in France, Belgium and England. . . . After the February Revolution he went back to Germany, and took charge of the management of the Cologne Workmen's Society. A fugitive since the Cologne September disorders of 1848, he went back under a false name, agitated in different districts, and undertook missions, the risk of which frightened anybody else. At Kaiserslautern I met him again. Here, too, he undertook missions that would have made him immediately a victim of martial law if he had been discovered. Returning from his second mission, he luckily got through all the hostile armies to Rastatt, where he immediately entered the Bresançon workmen's company of our corps. Three days after he was killed. I lost in him an old friend, the party one of their most indefatigable, fearless, and reliable champions."

Besides these men, Karl Pfänder and George Eccarius took a lively part in the debates of the "Arbeiter Bildungsverein." Pfänder, a native of Swabia, and a painter by trade, belongs to those unknown heroes of our movement, who never push themselves to the front, but are always ready to give their lives and fortune for the sake of the proletariat. He was one of the noblest and most unselfish of men that ever lived. Sincere, true, faithful, and austere—such was his life. He died in London in 1876. Eccarius was a tailor and native of Thuringia. Richly gifted by nature, he was among the first who understood the trend of economic development, which he proved by his articles, while working as a tailor in London, in the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," and his polemics against John Stuart Mill. Eccarius spoke and wrote excellent English, and it would have been easy for him to have earned his livelihood by journalism. The English press readily accepted his contributions. Among English workmen, too, he was very popular. He devoted the last years of his life to trade unionism. Eccarius died in 1889.

I was recommended to these men by Martens in Hamburg. After some days I succeeded in getting work, and regularly frequented this club, of which I became a member. I was also admitted to the "Union of the Just," which about this time changed itself into the "Union of the Communists." The influence of Weitling, as time went on, decreased more and more in London, the influence of Marx and Engels overshadowing the sentimental teaching of this great agitator. Up to this time I did not know either Marx or Engels. I only knew that they had

been living at Brussels, where they had edited the "Deutsche Brusseler Zeitung." That the appearance of these men meant a new epoch in the history of Socialism I did not divine at that time.

The club had also evenings devoted to elocution. Everybody who was trained in reciting would recite poems of a serious or gay turn. My first recital consisted in the reading of a poem humorously describing an adventure that happened in Berlin in 1846.



## CHAPTER IV.

Some months after my arrival in London—in the summer of 1847—the first general meeting of the Council took place, for which purpose Engels and William Wolff had come over to London from Brussels. Marx was not present at that time. At this congress the re-organisation of the Association took place. All that had still been left of the old mysticism from the time of conspiracies was now abolished; the Association organised itself into districts, sections, leading sections, central office, and congress, and called itself from this time the “Association of the Communists.”

The second congress, leading up to the working-out of the “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” was to take place in November, 1847. But before I give a detailed account of this congress, I should like to mention an event that occupied in the meantime the London “Arbeiter Bildungsverein” for some weeks.

In the summer of 1847, Etienne Cabet, the famous author of the “Voyage to Icaria,” published a manifesto to the French Communists, in which he said: “As we are here [in France] persecuted, calumniated, and damned by the Government, the priests, the middle classes, and even by the revolutionary republicans (for they try to backbite us in order to ruin us physically and morally), let us leave France, let us go to Icaria, to found there a Communistic colony.” Cabet then uttered the hope that 20,000 to 30,000 Communists would be found to work out this plan.

This manifesto was also sent to the London “Arbeiter Bildungsverein.” About September, 1847, Cabet came to London to win us over to his idea. The discussion on his proposal lasted a whole week. At last the Association decided against any experimenting. The refusal was worded something like this:—

“Assuredly all Communists acknowledge with pleasure that Cabet has fought, and successfully fought, with admirable perseverance for the sake of suffering humanity, and that he has rendered immense services to the proletariat by his warnings against all conspiracies. But all this cannot induce us to follow Cabet when he, in our opinion, pursues a wrong path. Though we esteem citizen Cabet, we must fight his plan of emigration, being convinced that if the emigration proposed by him should take place the greatest damage would be done to the principles of Communism. The reasons for our opinion are as follow:

—

“(1) We think that when in a country the most scandalous briberies are going on, when people are suppressed and exploited in the most outrageous manner, when right and justice are no longer respected, when society begins to dissolve

itself into anarchy, as is now the case in France, every champion of justice and truth should make it his duty to remain at home to enlighten the people, to encourage the sinking, to boldly face the rogues, and lay the foundation of a new social organisation. If the honest men, if the champions of a better future mean to go away and leave the field to the religious obscurantists and exploiters, Europe will assuredly be lost to the people.

“(2) Because we are convinced that the establishment in America of a colony by Cabet, based on the principle of common property, cannot yet be carried out for the following reasons:—

“(a) Because although those comrades who intend to emigrate with Cabet may be eager Communists, yet they still possess too many of the faults and prejudices of present-day society by reason of their past education, to be able to get rid of them at once by joining Icaria.

“(b) Because the differences and frictions which would naturally arise in the colony from the very beginning would be still more excited and exacerbated by the agents and spies of the European Governments and the middle classes, until they lead to a complete break-up of the colony.

“(c) Because emigrants mostly belong to the artisan class, whilst robust labourers are wanted for the clearing and cultivation of the soil, and because an artisan cannot very easily be transformed into a farmer.

“(d) Because privations and diseases, produced by the change of climate, will discourage and induce many to leave.

“(e) Because a communism of property without a period of transition, in which personal property is transformed into collective property, is impossible for the Communists, who are determined to acknowledge the principle of individual freedom. Icarians, therefore, are like a farmer who wants to reap a harvest without first sowing.

“(3) Because no communism of property can be established and maintained at all by a few hundreds or thousands of persons without its acquiring a completely exclusive and sectarian character.

“These are the principal reasons why we consider as harmful the proposals of Cabet, and we say to the Communists of all countries: Brethren, let us stay here in old Europe, let us act and fight in the trenches at home, for it is here that the elements for the establishment of communism of property are at hand, and where it will first be established.”

The above statement formed our refusal to Cabet. I have written it out at some length because of its historic value. It shows that the thinking Communists had at that time already come under the influence of Marx and

Engels, and were prepared to condemn all utopian experiments. It proves, further, that we were right. Experience has only too completely justified our fears. But this declaration is also a strong answer to all anti-Socialists, who fancy they can kill Socialism by pointing to wrecked Communistic experiments.

Cabet left London. Soon after, at the end of November, 1847, there met the second congress of the Association, at which Karl Marx was present. He and Engels had come from Brussels to represent the principles of modern Socialism. The congress lasted ten days, only delegates taking part in the proceedings. Though not a delegate, I, in common with others, was keenly interested in the result of the debates. Our anxious inquiries soon brought us the knowledge that the congress had unanimously declared itself for the principles proposed by Marx and Engels, and had ordered these two to draw up a manifesto. At the beginning of February, 1848, the manuscript of the "Manifesto of the Communists" reached Brussels, and I had an opportunity of reading the manifesto, having been commissioned to carry the manuscript to the printer, from whom I brought the proof-sheets to Karl Schapper for revision.

It was about this time that I first saw Marx and Engels. The impression these men made on me I still remember. Marx was still a young man, being about 28 years old; nevertheless he strongly impressed all of us. Marx was of middle height, broad-shouldered, and of an energetic bearing. The forehead was high and beautifully moulded, the hair was thick and jet-black, his look penetrating, his mouth already showed that sarcastic trait so dreaded by his opponents. His words were short and concise; he did not utter superfluous words, each sentence was a thought, and each thought a necessary link in his argument. He spoke with a convincing logic; there was nothing dreamy about him. The more I learnt to understand the difference between the Communism of Weitling and that of the Manifesto of the Communists, the clearer it became to me that Marx represented the manhood of the Socialist idea.

Frederick Engels, the spiritual twin-brother of Marx, rather represented the Teutonic type. Tall, elastic, with fair hair and moustache, he more resembled a smart young lieutenant of the guards than a scholar. And yet Engels, who always laid stress on the great talent of his immortal friend, has undoubtedly done much for the establishment and propagation of modern Socialism. Engels belonged to those men whom one must know intimately to properly estimate and love them. These were the men who took into their hands the cause of the proletariat.

The members of the "Arbeiter Bildungsverein" were in a certain agitation at that time. They firmly believed that the revolution was soon to "come off." They had not yet the slightest idea of how much educating and organising work had to be done before the workers would shake the foundations of the bourgeois world.

The "Manifesto of the Communists" left the press in February, 1848, and we received it at the same time as the news of the outbreak of the February Revolution in Paris reached us.

I am not able to describe the deep impression which this news made upon us. An ecstasy of enthusiasm seized us. Only one feeling, only one thought filled us: To chance our lives and fortunes for the deliverance of mankind.

The London Central Council of the Association at once transferred its functions to the leading section at Brussels, which, in its turn, transferred them to Marx and Engels, and authorised them to constitute a new Central Council in Paris. Immediately after this decision Marx was arrested at Brussels and compelled to start for France.

## CHAPTER V.

The events in Paris had also exercised a deep influence upon the English workmen's movement. The Chartist movement had occupied the minds of the English workers since the middle of the Thirties, and now received a new impulse by the victorious progress of the February Revolution. The outbreak of this revolution was greeted by a great demonstration of the London workmen. The members of the "Arbeiter Bildungsverein" took part in it, for they supported the English Chartist movement in every way.

The most popular and most able leader of the Chartists, Ernest Jones, sometimes attended our club, where I found opportunity to make the acquaintance of this plucky and self-sacrificing agitator. Jones was of a small but robust figure. His fine-cut, earnest and energetic face at once revealed the resolute, fearless leader of men. He mastered German sufficiently to write and speak it, and was also one of the few Chartist leaders who at the same time understood and preached Socialism. On March 13th a meeting was called at Kennington Common, in London, at which Jones spoke. He exhorted the people not to fear the miserable puppets of the law, nor the police, nor the soldiers, nor the shopkeepers enlisted as special constables who ran away from the street-boys. "Down with the Ministry, demand the dissolution of Parliament, and the Charter—and no surrender," was the substance of his oration.

At the commencement of April a Chartist convention sat in London to make arrangements for presenting the petition for the political concessions demanded by the working-class. Such a petition was every year forwarded to Parliament, but on the 10th of April the petition was to be presented, not as was done before by a few delegates, but by the masses themselves. They intended to make Parliament understand that the working-class was determined to carry through its demands, if needs be, by force.

On the morning of the 10th of April London offered a remarkable aspect. All factories and shops were closed. The London middle classes were sworn in as special constables to maintain "order," among these bourgeois being Napoleon the Little, afterwards prisoner of Wilhelmshöhe. The members of the Communist League had decided to take part in the demonstration. We armed ourselves with all sorts of weapons. I vividly remember the comic impression George Eccarius made on me when he showed me a well-ground pair of enormous tailors' scissors, by which he meant to defend himself against the attacks of the constables.

The workmen met at Kennington Common, to start from there for the procession towards Parliament, but suddenly we heard that Feargus O'Connor, the leader of this demonstration, was against forming a procession en masse,

because the Government was ready to oppose us with an armed force. Many followed the counsels of O'Connor, others pushed forward, so that bloody conflicts between Chartists and police resulted. The unanimity among the demonstrators had disappeared in consequence of O'Connor's knuckling-down. In single combat the workmen could not win. That soon became clear to us. Bitterly disappointed, we left the place of demonstration where we had arrived full of hope an hour before.

Simultaneously with these stormy events in Western Europe the revolution in Central Europe broke out, which created great excitement among us. The evening debates at the "Arbeiter Bildungsverein" became more and more lively and enthusiastic—we were all ready to hurry to the field of battle in Germany. Most of us, however, did not possess the means to execute at once this intention; only in July, 1848, had I saved enough to enable me to start on the journey to Germany. Unexpectedly the bad news of the crushing of the Revolution of June in Paris reached us. How this news impressed us all I cannot describe by words. I still vividly remember reading the article written by Marx on this event in the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" (29th of June, 1848), which so well expressed our feelings. His words were:

"The last official remains of the February Revolution, the Executive Commission, has disappeared like a hazy phantom before the seriousness of events. Lamartine's Roman candles have transformed themselves into Cavaignac's war-rockets. The 'fraternité,' which the exploiting class proclaimed in February on the forehead of Paris, with gigantic letters, on every prison, on every barracks, its true, unsophisticated, prosaic expression is the civil war, civil war in its most frightful shape, the war between Labour and Capital. This 'fraternity' flashed before all eyes on the evening of June 25th, when the Paris of the middle classes illuminated whilst the Paris of the proletariat was bled to death. The 'fraternity' lasted just as long as the interests of the middle class fraternised with those of the proletariat.

"Pedants of the old revolutionary tradition of 1793, Socialistic systematians who were allowed to preach long sermons and to expose themselves as long as the proletarian lion had to be lulled to sleep, republicans that demanded the whole of the old bourgeois constitution minus the crowned head, dynastic opponents to whom chance gave the downfall of a dynasty instead of a change of ministry, legitimists that would not throw off, but only change the shape of their livery—these were the allies with whom the people made its February.

"The February Revolution was the revolution of moderation, the revolution of a general sympathy, because the contrasts which coalesced in it against the royal power, lay undeveloped, peacefully side-by-side, because the social contrast that formed its background had only an aerial existence, the existence in phrase, in word only. The June Revolution is the rotten revolution, the

nauseous revolution; because fact has taken the place of phrase, because the republic revealed the head of the monster itself by knocking off its protecting, concealing crown. *'Order!'* was the war-cry of Guizot. *'Order!'* shouted Sebastian, the Guizotist, when Warsaw became Russian. *'Order!'* shouts Cavaignac, the brutal echo of the French National Assembly and of the republican bourgeoisie. *'Order!'* thundered its cannons, tearing the body of the proletariat. None of the numerous revolutions of the French bourgeoisie was a plot against order, for it left the dominion of the class, it left the slavery of the workmen, it left untouched the bourgeois order, however often the political form of this misrule and this slavery changed. June has touched this order. Woe to this June Revolution!"

Nevertheless we did not lose courage. Early in July I left London and went back to Germany.

## CHAPTER VI.

In Midsummer of 1848 I arrived at Cologne. This town had a particular attraction for me, because of the men who were working there in the interest of the revolution. Marx, Engels, Wilhelm Wolff, Freiligrath, Schapper, and Moll were there, and it was the place of publication of the "Rheinische Zeitung."

First of all, I tried to find work, in order to be able to stay. Of course, I could not do it under my real name, as I was then considered a deserter from my military duty. One of my Hamburg friends, however, provided me with a passport in the name of Carstens, under which name I was then known. As the description in this passport nearly corresponded to my personal appearance, I had no trouble with the police. My real passport I left as a memento with the Hamburg police.

After having obtained work, I joined the Workingmen's Union, managed by Dr. Gottschalk, Lieutenant Anneke, Schapper, Moll, Nothjung, and Elster. There existed, besides, a democratic league, to which Freiligrath, Wolf, Marx, and others belonged. Here I made the acquaintance of Wolff, who frequently lectured on current political events. Freiligrath also attended, with whom I soon became on friendly terms.

I frequented all the important public meetings held at that time, of which I will only mention two:

In September, 1848, an open-air meeting was held to protest against the disarmament of the civic guard, the declaration of a state of siege, and against the suspension of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." After the meeting was over, people began to build barricades. No fight, however took place.

On November 9th, a meeting of the "Democratic League" was held, when Marx brought the news that Robert Blum had been shot in Vienna, in accordance with martial law. The meeting was in full swing when Marx appeared. At once, all became deadly quiet in the hall, as if in expectation of evil news. Marx at once ascended the platform and read aloud the telegram from Vienna about Blum's death. We were struck dumb with amazement. Then there broke out something like a storm in the hall. I thought that now the German nation would rise in a body, finally to fight through the revolution. I and all others, however, were mistaken. Things went a different way. The mayors did homage to the tyrants who murdered the noblest democrats.

That the reaction was gathering strength became clear at once by the persecution of the opposition press, especially of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." On February 7th, 1849, the first action against the editors of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" was taken. The following day there came the second

action, and at last, on May 19th, 1849, the paper was entirely suppressed. The last number was printed in red ink. The proceedings in the second trial have been published as the second part of the "Social-Democratic Library." But the first trial, in which Engels took part, is nearly forgotten in Germany. And yet the defence that Marx made at this occasion is worth mentioning. The expression "defence" is hardly the right word to use, for Marx did not defend himself, but accused the Ministers. As far as I remember, there stood before the jury—H. Korff (manager of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung"), Karl Marx (principal editor), and Frederick Engels (sub-editor), who were charged with having "libelled" the public prosecutor Zweifel, concerning his official actions, also the constables ordered to arrest Gottschalk and Anneke concerning their official functions, by an article printed in No. 35 of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," concerning the arrest of Dr. Gottschalk and the dismissed Lieutenant Anneke. The galleries were crowded. After the public prosecutor and the solicitors had spoken, Marx spoke for something like an hour, in a quiet, composed and energetic tone. He dwelt first upon the legal aspects of the case, and at the end said:—

"Not only does the general situation in Germany, but also the state of affairs in Prussia, impose upon us the duty to watch with the utmost distrust every movement of the Government, and publicly to denounce to the people the slightest misdeeds of the system. The present, the Cologne Court, afforded us quite a special inducement to expose it before public opinion as a tool of the counter-revolution. In the month of July alone, we had to denounce three illegal arrests. On the first two occasions, the public prosecutor kept quiet, the third time he tried to exculpate himself, but kept silent when we replied, for the simple reason that nothing could be said. And under these circumstances the Ministers dared to affirm that the case was not one of denunciation, but of paltry malicious 'libel'! This view is derived from a misinterpretation of their own. I, for my part, assure you, gentlemen, that I prefer following the great historical events; I prefer analysing the march of history to fighting with local idols, with constables and public prosecutors. However great these gentlemen may be in their own imagination, they are as nothing in the gigantic struggles of the present. I consider it a real loss when we have to break a lance with such opponents. But, on the other hand, it is the duty of the press to step forward on behalf of the oppressed and their struggles. And, then, gentlemen, the edifice of slavery has its most proper supports in the subordinate political and social functionaries that immediately deal with private life—the person, the living individual. It is not sufficient to fight the general conditions and the superior powers. The press must make up its mind to oppose *this* constable, *this* attorney, *this* councillor. What has wrecked the March revolution? It reformed only the highest political class, but it left untouched all the supports of this class—the old bureaucracy, the old army, the old courts, the old judges, born, educated, and worn out in the service of absolutism. *The first duty of the press is now to undermine all the supports of the present political state.*"

Marx was expelled from Prussia some months later; Engels went to Baden, where the revolution had broken out. Some of my acquaintances followed Engels. Schapper went to Nassau, there to organise the peasants, whilst those who had remained in Cologne extended their agitation to the open country, as we had already understood the importance of the rural agitation.

(When I attended the Cologne Congress in 1893, I was invited by some peasants to Worringen, near Cologne. They still remembered me from the years 1848 and 1849.)

Our leisure time was filled up by manufacturing cartridges. The cartridges were then sent to Baden. The manufacture was, of course, done in secret. The "red Becker" (afterwards Chief Mayor of Cologne, and a member of the Prussian house of peers) provided balls and powder, and each contributed his share in promoting the revolution.

About this time Dr. Gottschalk died. At Cologne, the cholera was raging in the town, but it was mostly poor working men that were killed by it. Gottschalk, who had in a most unselfish manner devoted his medical aid to the working men, was everywhere where counsel and help was needed, till he himself, fatigued and exhausted, succumbed to the disease. The death of this sincere democrat was a hard blow for the Cologne workmen. The grief was general. No wonder that the funeral transformed itself into a great demonstration. On behalf of the Cologne "Arbeiter-Bildungsverein," I was delegated to deliver the funeral speech, which was afterwards printed.

Karl Schapper, who had gone to Nassau in order to agitate there, was arrested at Wiesbaden soon after. During his imprisonment his wife died at Cologne. The better off comrades took care of the four children left; Freiligrath also adopted a child, a girl of eight years, who knew only English, as Mrs. Schapper was an English lady. Every day I would go and see the children, and by this I got on intimate terms with Freiligrath.

In February, 1850, Schapper was tried before the jury. The workmen of Cologne sent me to Wiesbaden, to be present at the trial, and to bring Schapper with me in case of an acquittal. Originally Freiligrath had been charged with this mission, but as he had to stay at Cologne at this time, I took charge of the business. In the meantime, the news had spread at Wiesbaden that Freiligrath would arrive, and they made preparations to give the poet a great reception.

I had, of course, not the least idea of what was planned at Wiesbaden; so I was not a little astonished at the grand reception I got on my arrival. Everybody wanted to see Freiligrath, and to shake hands with him. Of course, I at once explained to the people that I was not Freiligrath. But, notwithstanding their disappointment, they retained their high spirits. Schapper and the rest of the accused were found "Not guilty," and this verdict was celebrated by banquets

and meetings by the Wiesbaden democrats. Schapper and I then started for Cologne. As soon as he arrived at Cologne, Schapper was expelled by the police though a Prussian, and had to leave Prussian territory within three days. Schapper and I then went back to Wiesbaden, from where I was expelled on June 18th, 1850. I went to Mainz, Schapper to London.

In the meantime, the revolution in Baden had broken down. On the whole line the counter-revolution had won, and reaction had now begun its reign of terror.



## CHAPTER VII.

“After the defeat of the revolution in 1848 to 1849, the working-class party on the Continent lost what they gained during its short epoch—a free press, liberty of speech, and the right of association. The Liberal bourgeois party, as well as the democratic party, found in the social conditions of the classes they represented the opportunities to keep together under one form or another, and to assert more or less their common interests. To the working-class party, after 1849, as before 1848, only one way was left open—the way of a secret society. So, since 1849, there developed a whole series of proletarian societies on the Continent, discovered by the police, condemned by the courts, broken up by imprisonment, but always reorganised under pressure of the existing conditions. Part of these secret societies had for their object the immediate revolution of the state. This was right in France, where the working class was conquered by the bourgeoisie, and the attack on the actual Government immediately coincided with the attack on the governing class. Another part of the secret societies sought the formation of a party of the working class without caring for the actual governments. This was necessary in countries like Germany, where the bourgeoisie and the working class together succumbed to the half-feudal governments, and, where, therefore, a victorious attack on the actual Government would have brought about a victory for the middle class.”

Thus did Marx describe the situation after the breakdown of the 1848 movement. The League of the Communists was revived with the aim of organising the working-class party in secret. As dubious elements of all sorts intruded themselves into the League in London, the central office was, at the suggestion of Marx, transferred to Cologne. My task at Mainz was to revive and reanimate the local organisation of the League, and to win over the workmen to our aims. In public our propaganda appeared only in the circulation of leaflets. We were so well organised, that we could inundate the whole of Mainz with a flood of leaflets within an hour. The police did not even once succeed in catching the distributors.

In October, 1850, I was ordered by the Frankfort comrades to reorganise the League at Nürnberg, which had succumbed. Unfortunately, our agitation did not last long. In the German fatherland one only heard of arrests. The police-constable was the hero of the day. The reaction shrank from no means, which it deemed opportune, to suppress the revolutionary movement.

In June, 1851, I also was arrested at Mainz.

When I first entered the prison cell, I did not expect that my imprisonment would last for years. Young and lively as I was in the consciousness of having done what I had to do as a workman, I did not expect to encounter a hard time

of afflictions. But there came years of suffering and of agony that will never fade from my memory. Mainz and Cologne, Graudenz and Silberburg were to be the stations of the cross in my life.

There were pending three charges against me—firstly, that of procuring, publishing, and circulating treasonable writings; secondly, of assuming a false name (the police had found out that I was a deserter, and that I was not bearing my right name); the third charge, and most serious, was that of participating in the “League of the Communists.” The last charge was formulated as follows: An Act of indictment against Frederick Lessner, 27 years old, journeyman tailor, born at Blankenheim, in the Grand Duchy of Sachsen-Weimar, and lately residing at Mainz. Of the personal circumstances of the accused Frederick Lessner, the connections he formed in London from the summer of 1847 to the spring of 1848, his stay at Cologne during the years 1848, 1849, and 1850, the relations in which he stood during this whole time with the heads of the League of the Communists, and the activities he displayed as chairman of the Socialist Workingmen’s Club at Mainz, the details are contained in the Act of indictment already made against Röser and associates (the Cologne Communist trial of 1852 is meant), to which reference is here made. At his arrest, effected the previous year (June 18th, 1851), a regular communistic library was found in his possession, that contained, among other things, the rules of the London “Arbeiter-Bildungsverein,” the manifesto of the Communists of the year 1848, the rules of the “Arbeiter-Bildungsverein” at Cologne, Wiesbaden, and Mainz, the “Aims of the Communist Party,” the “Red Catechism,” the “Appel aux Democratres de toutes les Nations,” the toast of Blanqui, and the leaflet “German Men and Prussian Subjects.” . . . According to this Frederick Lessner is charged with having formed a plot in the course of the years 1848 and 1851, at Cologne, in combination with several persons, the object of which was to overthrow the Constitution, and to arm the citizens and inhabitants against the Government of the King, and against each other, to excite to civil war. Offences against Sec. 84, 89, and 91 of the Rhenish Penal Code, and against Sec. 61, No. 2, and Sec. 63 of the Penal Code for the Prussian State.—Cologne, September 28th, 1852. The Attorney-General, NICOLOVIUS.

This act of indictment was only handed over to me after a detention on remand of 15 months.

The greatest part of this anxious time I spent in solitary confinement. If I had not made the acquaintance of an educated and high-minded girl some months before my arrest, who took care of me, in her full devotion and love, I would have fared badly. This high-minded girl procured breakfast, lunch, and supper for me, and even succeeded by her persistent endeavours in being allowed to see me once a week, so that I was not entirely cut off from the outside world. The magistrates allowed this because they very probably supposed they would by these means get acquainted with the secret societies. Every step of this girl

was watched by the police, and they even tried to induce her by threats to bear witness against me. The endeavours were not successful, but my faithful friend succeeded in interesting a Hessian Member of Parliament in my case, and induced him to bring before the public the mean treatment of myself, and that of other prisoners on remand.

After this had been spoken of in the Diet, a change took place in the brutal treatment meted out to me. My benefactress was soon afterwards expelled from Mainz, in revenge for her noble behaviour. If she had not taken care of me, I could not have undergone all this without harm.

The worst treatment I experienced was the transport from the prison at Mainz to that of Cologne. The journey, which I had to do on foot, lasted from June 26th to July 6th—eleven days. I was transported mostly in company with 20 to 30 criminals from town to town. At each of these stations I had to undergo solitary confinement as a particularly dangerous man, and thus I had occasion to find out the whole brutality and villainy of the different burgomasters and policemen. During the whole journey I was handcuffed. Obsequious policemen put the handcuffs on so tight that the blood spurted from my hands. When I protested against this inhuman treatment, I was maltreated. The burgomasters and police meant to prove their loyalty towards King and Government by their brutality. Only with a shudder do I remember the days from June 26th to July 6th, 1852.

On October 4th, 1852, I was tried before the jury at Cologne. Besides me, the accused were Nothjung, Bürgers, Röser, Dr. Daniels, Dr. Becker, Dr. Abraham Jacobi, Dr. Klein, Otto, Reiff, and Ehrhardt. The proceedings lasted over five weeks. I will not give details of the course of the proceedings; they are minutely treated by Karl Marx in the "Revelations on the Communist Trial at Cologne." The verdict was given on November 12th, 1852. The sentences on Nothjung, Bürgers, and Röser were six years; on Dr. Becker, Reiff, and Otto, five years; on myself, three years confinement in a fortress; as to the remaining four accused, a verdict of "Not Guilty" was returned. Except myself, none of those then sentenced are still alive.

With the Communist trial at Cologne, the first part of the campaign of the German Communists came to an end.



## CHAPTER VIII.

The sentence hit me severely. Three years' confinement in a fortress I had to do. Yet I soon grew calm. I was glad that the imprisonment on remand was over—this fretting and sorrowing in anguish and grief. At least I knew now how long I had still to suffer. The days would pass, however slowly, and with them the time of imprisonment decreased also; one could see an end of the thing. It is quite different with imprisonment on remand. One lives in a distressing uncertainty, and every day means a prolongation of suffering.

On December 14th, 1852, my companions in misfortune were taken to the different fortresses where they had to serve their sentences. On March 30th, 1853, it was my turn at last. Police-Lieutenant Rockenstein, and another policeman from Berlin, fetched me. I stayed at Berlin over night, where I chanced to see the famous police director, Stieber, the witness for the Crown in the Cologne trial. From Berlin we went to the fortress of Graudenz. I recollect the treatment I received from Lieutenant Rockenstein during the whole journey as a contrast to my earlier experiences with satisfaction. He was a thoroughly honest man.

On April 2nd, we arrived at Graudenz. I was surrendered to the town commandant, who allotted a room to me. It was very lonely at Graudenz, yet I felt far more comfortable than in the prisons of Mainz and Cologne. I was at least allowed to move more freely. I was also permitted to occupy myself with writing and reading, and to take an hour's walk in the open air daily.

Above my room a Pole named Sulkowsky was confined, who had been transported to Graudenz for six years, on account of his political opinions. He told me that Röser, my co-defendant in the Cologne trial, was also at Graudenz, which cheered me. Unfortunately, I could never meet him. Besides Sulkowsky, Röser, and myself, there was another political, an old Pole called Bonski, in the fortress, who had been there as a prisoner since 1831. He had taken part in the Polish Revolution of 1831; then, after the defeat at Warsaw, crossed the Prussian frontier, and was sent to the fortress by the Prussian magistrates. There he advanced to the post of an attendant, in which function he acquired the love of all. I soon made his acquaintance, and learned to love this good old man like a brother. On September 11th, he was given his liberty. We all wept when the old man shook our hands for the last time.

My stay at Graudenz lasted till January 12th, 1854. On this day I was transported to the fortress of Silberburg.

On January 11th I was unexpectedly informed that I had to get ready for being transported to another fortress. I was not told where. I asked them to tell me

the name of my future residence, but this was strictly refused. The great precautions taken for this transport, and the silence with which all was done were distressing to me and disquieted me. The soldiers who had to bring me to my destination were ordered to keep a strict watch upon me, and the town-commandant told me, on leaving, the soldiers were ordered to shoot me without ado if I should attempt flight. These preparations were ridiculous indeed, but they made a certain impression on me. Was I then such a very dangerous person?

On January 12th I left Graudenz, and on January 15th I arrived at Silberburg, where I remained to the day of my deliverance, January 27th, 1856.

At the fortress of Silberburg the treatment was better, inasmuch as the prisoners were allowed to speak to each other, and to take daily some hours' walk together. This did us a lot of good. Besides myself, there were then in the fortress an officer, Schlehahn by name, whose crime consisted in having sympathised with the 1848 movement; there was also a student called Kaufhold, from Erfurt; the third was a compositor, Dönnig; and besides these there were some other political "criminals." Tragical was the fate of Dönnig. His father had been a Prussian patriot, who did all in his power, after the battle of Jena, to deliver Germany from the foreign rule. Napoleon I. put him in prison for that, where he had to stay for years. These democratic, patriotic traditions were taken up by his son, who had been sent to the fortress of Silberburg for acting upon them. If his father had to go to prison because he was dissatisfied with the Napoleonic rule, his son had to do so for being in strong opposition to the Government of the country. Would old Dönnig have sacrificed himself if he could have divined the Carlsbad resolutions? Would he have fought against the foreign rule if he could have known what shackles the German princes would put on the German people? In the fate of the Dönnig family a piece of history of the German people in the first half of the last century is revealed.

The two years in the fortress of Silberburg passed in the hope of liberty and activity. The longing for liberty increased more and more; the nearer the day of release the more impatient I became.

During my stay in the fortress of Silberburg, a change of rulers took place in Saxe-Weimar, where the usual amnesty was not missing. All deserters were also amnestied. This was fortunate for me, else I should have been handed over to the military authorities in Weimar. This idea had disturbed me already in the prisons at Mainz, Cologne, and Graudenz, and had contributed towards depressing my spirits. After the amnesty I became brighter and more hopeful, for I had the certainty that I had to fear nothing more after the end of my term.

The hour of my release struck at last. To describe all the feelings that passed through my mind at this memorable moment is impossible. The four and a-half

years of imprisonment seemed to me only a bad and confused dream. It was on the whole a dull time, during which the sympathy shown to me by my comrades were the only bright moments. The days when I received letters or financial help from my Cologne fellow-combatants are numbered among the happiest of my life.

The things found upon me at my arrest at Mainz had been confiscated by the Treasury. I regretted most the loss of my collections of books, among which were pamphlets and journals of the thirties and forties. I claimed them several times from the Cologne magistrates, but without success.

## CHAPTER IX.

On January 27th, 1856, I was released. "Released," for Germany was nothing but a vast prison at that time. This was my impression as soon as I came to Weimar after a visit to the relations of my fellow-prisoners at Breslau, Erfurt, and Freiburg. At Weimar I tried to agitate, but the people were so frightened by the repressive measures of the Government, that they shrunk from the mere word "Communism." They all seemed to me as thrashed children that feel themselves threatened by the schoolmaster at every step.

I myself was homeless. The magistrates I applied to for a passport were not willing to acknowledge me any longer—a notorious Communist—as a subject of the country. It was only after much running about and pushing that I got some certificates. I then went viâ Hamburg to London. The only people that treated me with kindness during my short stay in Germany after my release were the mother-in-law of Freiligrath at Weimar, and the Martens at Hamburg.

In May, 1856, I arrived in London. Soon after I called on Freiligrath, who welcomed me most heartily; then I went to Karl Marx, who presented me with his books published up to that time as a compensation for my confiscated library. I went to see my old friends of '48, such as Charles Pfänder, George Eccarius, and others, and also made the acquaintance of the German exiles, who were then very numerous in London, among them being William Liebknecht. After I had found employment, I again resumed my attendance at the "Communistische Arbeiterbildungsverein," which was then in a very straitened condition. The reason was that after the breakdown of the revolutionary movement of the year 1848, the society divided itself into two factions, one being led by Marx and Engels, which aimed at a systematic education and organisation of the working class, whilst the other faction, led by Willich and Schapper, sought the salvation of the German people in plots and revolts. This internal quarrel had weakened the society greatly. Many members had left the club, and the rest were so unsettled in their minds that they would calmly listen to lectures of the bourgeois representative, Professor Kinkel, who was willing to give lectures as long as he was paid from 10s. to 12s. per lecture. Without payment, however, that professor was not willing.

I was sorely grieved to see this state of affairs in the club, and endeavoured to bring about a change, I made friends with members of my way of thinking, and by combined action we undermined the influence of the bourgeois element in the club, till at last we felt strong enough to get rid of Professor Kinkel. A new era began for the club. Liebknecht became a regular attendant, and Marx gave a series of lectures on political economy without any payment, as Marx has never accepted a farthing payment from workmen for whatever he did in their interest. A new life was soon infused into the club; the membership increased,

and improved in character so much that it rendered the greatest help when the "International Workingmen's Organisation" was founded in 1864. In a financial way, also, the club did much for the International.

Simultaneously with the events described here, the Freethought movement made itself conspicuous in London. At the head of it was Charles Bradlaugh, a man of the people, a very able speaker and agitator. He held public lectures, which, at the beginning, were directed not only against religion and church, but also against oppression and corruption. I and my first wife (I married in 1858) at once joined the movement, and assisted it to the best of our abilities. Mrs. Marx and her children also attended the Sunday afternoon lectures of Bradlaugh, and Marx himself went several times. When I paid a visit to the Marx family about that time, I heard Mrs. Marx praising Bradlaugh, and expecting great things from him for the proletarian movement. Marx smiled, and gave his opinion that Bradlaugh would go over to the bourgeois party sooner or later. After his return to Parliament, he only spoke in favour of the middle class, and decried Socialism. The bishop of atheism behaved towards the working class as badly as the bishops of the church. He also tried to intrude himself into the International Workingmen's Association, but here he met Marx's opposition, who knew how to keep undesirables off. Bradlaugh avenged himself on Marx by spreading the rumour that Marx had sold himself to Bismarck, and was acting in his interests. Men like Bradlaugh are not rare in England. They use the shoulders of working men only as steps to rise higher, and then turn against the working class.

In 1859, a weekly German paper was started in London, edited by Professor Kinkel. Its tendency was middle-class "Liberal." We determined to start an opposition paper on Communistic lines, and requested Marx's and Engel's co-operation. The first number of our paper, "Das Volk" (The People), appeared on May 7th, 1859. I was charged with the sale of the paper. Two months later Professor Kinkel severed his connection with the "Hermann." Of "Das Volk," only 16 numbers appeared, in which Engels published a series of articles on the Austro-Italian war, and Marx discussed the policy of Prussia during this war. In Nos. 15 and 16 appeared a review of "Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie," published by Marx at that time.

From 1860 to 1864, little happened in political affairs worth mentioning. I devoted these years to my family, and to my personal education. I regularly attended the lectures held at the London University by Professors Huxley, Tyndall, and Hoffmann, on Physiology, Geology, and Chemistry. The lectures of these eminent scientists were then much frequented by working men. It was Marx who encouraged us in doing so, and he himself would often go with us.



## CHAPTER X.

In 1864, the old "League of Communists" revived in a different shape, and under the name of the "International Workingmen's Association." The idea of an international association of workmen originated at the second London Universal Exhibition, in 1862. At that time working men from all civilised countries met in London to take into consideration the measures to be adopted to bring about an improvement in the condition of the working classes. Two years passed, however, before this idea took a practical shape. The immediate inducement for founding the International was given by the Polish Revolution of 1863. At that time Poles were far more liked by people of Western Europe than they are today. In every Pole people saw a champion of liberty. The suppression of the Polish Revolution was universally regretted. In April, 1864, a meeting of English workmen took place at St. James's Hall, London, in order to influence public opinion in favour of the Poles, and to exercise pressure in their favour upon Lord Palmerston, then head of the English Government. To this meeting the French workmen also sent a deputation. After the meeting a committee of English workmen was formed, which sent an address of fraternity to their French comrades. The reply to this address was to be delivered by a French deputation, which was to be welcomed at a public meeting in London. The English committee invited also the "Communistische Arbeiterbildungsverein" to this meeting, and at the same time expressed a wish that Marx should attend this international fraternisation of the working men. The "Communistische Arbeiterbildungsverein" sent me to Marx. I informed him of the wish of the English workmen, and after some inquiries as to the conveners and the object of the meeting, Marx consented to come.

As arranged, the meeting took place on September 28th. Mr. Beesly, professor at the London University, and a follower of Comte, took the chair. There were present Englishmen, Germans, French, Poles, and Italians. The report of this memorable meeting was as follows:—

Professor Beesly opened the meeting with an address, received with enthusiasm. He said: "We are present to receive a deputation of French workmen. I hope this meeting will contribute towards strengthening the feeling of fraternity among the working men of the world. A fraternal association between England and France would protect and maintain the liberties of the people. The English Government is as bad as the Continental Powers. England has committed wrongs against Spain, China, Japan, and India. Everywhere the English Government has behaved cowardly and unjustly. Lay aside, my friends, those egotistical feelings, marked by the expression of patriotism, and act always according to your feelings of right and justice."

After that the Germans sang some songs, which were received with great applause. Then the addresses of the English and French working men were read. In both declarations, the social revolutionary idea found strong expression. At last a provisional Central Council (later on called the General Council) was elected, to which Marx belonged from the first. At the second meeting of the Central Council I was proposed and elected a member. In the third session the Italians submitted the first draft of an inauguration address, composed by Mazzini. Marx also submitted a draft, which was unanimously accepted, whilst that of Mazzini was rejected.

At the meetings of the Central Council of the year 1865, besides the question of organisation and the Labour question, the situation of the Poles was also discussed. Marx was a great friend of the Poles. He never tired of telling us of the importance of a free and independent Poland. Not less intense were his sympathies for the Irish. The International had especially aroused public opinion in England against the vile treatment the Irish prisoners had to undergo in English prisons. The English Government was forced to alleviate the fate of these political "criminals." Generally Marx endeavoured to draw into our discussions all the greater political questions, and to enable the working men to "penetrate into the mysteries of international politics and to watch the diplomatic coups of the Governments."

At one of the meetings of the Central Council it was agreed to hold the first Congress of the International Workingmen's Association at Brussels in September, 1865. As the Belgian Government threatened expulsion and punishment, the Central Council called a conference in London. This conference was attended, among others, by J. Ph. Becker, from Geneva, and Cæsar de Paepe, from Brussels. I had not made the acquaintance of either before then. Becker was of striking, manly appearance; De Paepe was insignificant looking, scarcely of middle height, and slender, but of an active mind, and of great intellect. When I made the acquaintance of Paepe he was still a Proudhonist. At the London Conference the chief business was to decide what questions were to be discussed at the General Congress, which was to take place at Geneva. Among these questions, the position of the International Workingmen's Association regarding religion especially called forth a lively debate. Marx proposed to discuss the religious question at the next Congress, its relation to the social, political, and intellectual development of the people. This proposal, strongly opposed by two English delegates, was finally accepted against the protest of a strong minority.

In the beginning of 1866 the movement for English franchise reform started. The International assisted this movement by all available means. Towards the end of February a conference for Franchise Reform took place in London, attended by 200 English and Irish delegates. At this conference the General Council was represented by some Englishmen, also Eccarius and myself. The

agitation lasted for two years, until the English Government was compelled to extend the franchise to the town workers.

In the spring, 1866, a great tailors' strike broke out, in which I took part as a workman and leader.

At the outbreak of the war between the Prussian and Austrian dynasties, in which the German people had to pay the costs, this question often occupied us in public meetings. The debates held on this occasion can be condensed into the sentence—we want neither Prussia nor Austria, but a free Germany.

At the same time we received an appeal of the Paris students to their colleagues in Germany and in Italy. This appeal was worded thus:—

#### APPEAL OF THE PARIS STUDENTS TO THE STUDENTS OF GERMANY AND ITALY.

Brothers! In both countries you have the expectation of war. Young Italy and Young Germany are making preparations against each other. It is with deep regret that we as young Frenchmen notice this movement. Our generation is destined to fulfil a task, which is the hope of mankind, and requires the consolidation of all our forces. This task you seem not to fully understand.

German and Italian brothers, who draw swords against each other with threatening looks, tell us what are the feelings and opinions that separate you. Only one hatred glows in our hearts. What hatred? Is it not the hatred against oppression? What do we love best in the world? What do we want to realise in society? Liberty and Justice! Do not ask further; surely we all agree. It is madness to attack each other. Brothers, you are the victims of an old-fashioned, despicable policy which has instigated nations to mutual slaughter for thousands of years under the silly pretext of national interest and differences of race.

Nationalities, countries, differences of races, balance of powers—all big words that have always served as a mask for the ambition and pride of some oppressors. Wars of this kind have been waged since civilisation began. What have they effected? Torrents of blood have been shed. And what have the people won?

Brothers, the time has come to shake off all these murderous prejudices. Let us separate ourselves from this old world that is doomed to ruin.

Italians, Germans, Frenchmen! Long enough have we fought for the glory of these empty titles. Away with them! Let us recognise that we are simply men. If we accept only one guide—reason, we acknowledge only one country—mankind. Whosoever means to be free, whosoever is willing to go with us on the way to

revolution, he is our countryman; and the violators of liberty, they who for ever mean to doom people to slavery, to ignorance, and to misery, are our only foes.

Brethren of Germany and Italy! Against these foes it is that we have to wage war, merciless war, without mercy or cessation. We urge you to take your share in *this* war. This is our sacred task, the task of the nineteenth century.

Onward, united! For this war will be the first from the beginning of human society that deserves well of mankind; and it will be the last of all wars. For if oppression is destroyed, social justice realised, who, then, would think of fighting against each other? Their plain interest is not in these hideous fights, but in peace, in harmony, and fraternity.

(Here follow the names).

To this appeal the working men on the General Council answered as follows:—

THE WORKMEN OF ALL COUNTRIES TO THE STUDENTS OF PARIS AND  
THE STUDENTS AND YOUNG MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES.

Students of Paris! We have heard your earnest appeal, which you have addressed to your brothers in Germany and Italy. Our hearts have been filled with joy. They had told us the magnificent youth of learning was dead, which before had always been ready to fight for right and justice. No, it is not dead; it moves as steadily as ever in the path of the revolution.

To you, who in the midst of frenzy that carries away the Governments to set nation against nation for mutual slaughter; to you, who have had the courage to proclaim words of peace and concord, we say:—

We, in common with you, curse the war, for we have to bear the burden; we have to pay for it; and men of our class are butchered by the thousands on the battlefields.

We, the disinherited of to-day, that bear the burdens; we, who produce the riches, and enjoy nothing of them, appeal to your hearts.

Students of medicine! You know better than others our sufferings, for you see us in the hospitals—our whole reward for a life of privations and loathsome work.

Students of law! You know how they stop our endeavours by laws, and hinder our organisation.

Students of philosophy, who have freed yourselves from all superstitions by science, remember the exertions it has cost you to reach this result. Can we workmen, who have to work without cessation, make more efforts to raise ourselves to this intellectual height?

Young men, who are obliged to earn your livelihood like ourselves, best know what miserable work our daily bread costs us.

We also have, like you, our Congress. It will be held on September 3rd, at Geneva.

We shall examine together the horrible wound that rots our flesh; we will look for a cure and remedy at all costs.

You are still young; old age has not yet chilled your noble feelings. You are the hope of the future. Therefore, we ask you: come into our midst, join hands with us. You shall light us with the candle of science, and we will show you the secrets of work. Thus we shall learn to know and to love each other.

The poor have no country. In all countries the same ills oppress them; therefore they understand that the partition walls the rulers have raised between the nations in order to better enslave them must fall for ever. *It is this class*, young men, the working class, that shall realise the dream of Anacharsis Cloots, the speaker of mankind; it is the working class that shall found the great confederation of nations. Come, then, and help us to fulfil the great work of our century.

It is the Social Revolution, which we expect and desire with all our might, that must be accomplished. Then man will not only be master of his person, but also of his work, for the privileged will then have sunk to insignificance, and the parasites of labour will have disappeared from the world. Then workers only shall be honoured, peace will reign on earth, and the union of mankind shall be established.

(Signed)—DUPONT (Toolmaker), DUTTON (Saddler), ECCARIUS (Tailor), JUNG (Watchmaker), LESSNER (Tailor), MARCO (Umbrella Maker), etc.

London, 1866.

At the first Congress of the International, which took place at Geneva, in September, 1866, I was not present. All the other Congresses I attended as delegate.

## CHAPTER XI.

In February, 1867, the club celebrated the 27th anniversary of its foundation, at which Marx and myself were the official speakers.

I leave out my speech as not being above the level of an ordinary opening speech.

Marx spoke on "Labour and Capital." He explained how workmen produced capital, how they were kept in slavery by the produce of their own work, and how capital is continually employed to fasten the chains of the workers. That the so-called free workman lives under the belief that he is a free agent, but that he is really in the power of the capitalist, and has to sell his labour power to him for a miserable wage, in order to obtain the necessaries of life. That the free workman is placed materially on a lower level than the slave and serf. That the working class was really not obliged to abolish private property, as this was more and more abolished every day under the capitalistic régime. What was to be abolished at the end was only middle-class property, founded only on deceit.

Concerning the situation in Germany, Marx remarked that the German proletariat was as yet the first to victoriously carry out the social fundamental cure. Firstly, the Germans had mostly freed themselves from all religious nonsense; secondly, they had not to undergo the different lengthy periods of social development, from the first to the last, as the workmen of other countries, especially those of England.

Marx had always a high opinion of the German proletariat, the development of which he closely observed.

Early in September, 1867, the second Congress of the International took place at Lausanne, which I attended as a delegate. There were present 64 delegates, among them Dr. Büchner (Darmstadt), the author of "Force and Matter." Eugène Dupont, a French member of the General Council, was elected chairman; Eccarius and J. Ph. Becker vice-presidents; and Guillaume, Dr. Büchner, and Karl Bürkli secretaries.

The Congress then received the reports of the General Council, and those of the different Continental committees.

Of the full agenda three questions especially occupied the Congress:

(1) Shall the working classes confine themselves only to the economical struggle, or shall they also agitate for political reforms?

(2) In what way can the workmen use their own savings, which now they have to leave at the disposal of the capitalists, for their own emancipation?

(3) What is the attitude of the International Congress towards the Peace Congress meeting at Geneva?

On question (1) it was unanimously declared: (a) That the social emancipation of the working classes is not to be separated from their political deliverance; (b) That political freedom is absolutely indispensable.

In reply to question (2), I was called upon to speak. I recommended to the workmen to found co-operative societies out of their savings. The outlines of my speech I summed up in two resolutions, which were accepted by the Congress.

On question (3) the following resolution was received with applause:—

“Whereas the pressure of war weighs on no class of society more heavily than on the working class, which is not only deprived of its livelihood, but also has to shed its blood;

“Whereas nearly as heavily as war itself the pressure of so-called armed peace weighs down the workman by consuming the best force of the people in unproductive and destructive work;

“Finally, in consideration that as a radical cure of this disease a reform of the present social conditions, based on the exploitation of one part of society by the other, is an indispensable condition:

“The Congress of the International Workingmen’s Association declares its entire and determined agreement with the League of Peace, constituted on September 7th, at Geneva, and to its endeavours in the interest of the preservation of peace, and demands not only the cessation of war, but also the abolition of standing armies, and a general and free confederation of nations, being based on the principles of reciprocity and justice, provided, however, that the emancipation of the working classes from their oppressed position, and from their social neglect is attained, and the struggle of classes is put an end to by the abolition of the present class contrasts.”

At the finish the land question was to be discussed. The French delegates, all Proudhonists, were against collectivism of landed property, whereas the German, English and Belgian delegates were in favour of it.

About this time the movement of the Irish people had become a threatening one. The men of action, the Fenians, frightened the ruling classes in England by their plots, and everywhere the hatred against the unfortunate Irish was stirred up. The International at once took the side of the oppressed and hated. Towards the end of October, 1867, we arranged a large meeting to express our sympathy for Ireland.

On the part of the German working men, H. Jung and I spoke. Also on other occasions we have assisted the demands of the Irish for their liberty with all our power. But we could not prevent, in 1867, the execution of the three Fenians who were condemned to death and executed at Manchester.

Soon after the foundation of the International, Marx drew our attention to the English Trade Unions. In order to win these for our aims, the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association delegated some members, who were to form a connection with the different trade unions. Very often this task fell to me, and I devoted most of my time to it. This wearisome task unfortunately taught me very soon that the leaders of the trade unions worked against our aims. The masses sympathised with the International, but the secretaries of the trade unions, with few exceptions, refused to act according to their desires. The trade union leaders did not mind the formal resolutions in favour of the International, but when they were asked to act, they withdrew. However, the exertions of the International Workingmen's Association were not quite without success, for it is chiefly due to them that the trade unions entered the struggle for electoral reform, and began to take part in politics.

In February, 1868, the "Communistische Arbeiterbildungsverein" in London, celebrated its 28th anniversary. To me fell again the task of delivering the opening speech. After me, George Eccarius spoke.

He said: "Twenty years have passed since a special committee, sitting with closed doors, was occupied with laying down our 'Manifesto of Communists.' This committee had private connections in all parts of Europe. The most important documents were often transmitted by people without their guessing what these documents contained. To-day all this has disappeared; we here discuss our interests openly and freely and undisturbed. The last event that attracted my attention was the circular which the Austrian Minister issued to the officials of Austria, in which he admonishes the latter no longer to consider themselves as the masters, but as the servants of the people. This is a great progress. In 1829 or 1830, seven workmen were severely punished because they discussed their social interests, and to-day they are going to establish a democratic-communistic labour union at Vienna. We learn from that that we have not worked in vain. By-and-bye Governments will be obliged to listen to our demands. If all that we agitated for had been given to us, I am convinced that many things we might otherwise have secured would not have been attained. The obstinacy of our opponents makes us attain our aims the more surely and the more thoroughly."

In September, 1868, the International held its third Congress at Brussels. I represented there the German workmen of London. There were present 73 delegates from all the civilised states of Europe. The Congress this time attracted the attention of the leading papers of England and of the Continent.

The London "Times" devoted special leaders to its transactions, and occupied itself in a very serious way with the activity and the aims of the International.

On September 6th, the Congress was opened. After the committee of management had constituted itself, one of the London delegates read the annual report. This was written by Marx, as were all the publications of the International, and was as follows:—

"The year 1867-68 marks an epoch in the International Workingmen's Association. After a period of quiet progress, its influence increased to such an extent that it provoked the bitter denunciations of the governing classes and of the governments. It entered the phase of struggle.

"The French Government, of course, took the lead in the reaction against the working classes. Already in the previous year we had to denounce some of its hostile manœuvres—suppression of letters, confiscation of our rules, interception of the documents of the Geneva Congress at the French border. The surrender of the latter was long demanded in Paris and they were at last only restored to us by the official pressure of Lord Stanley, the English Foreign Minister.

"In this year, however, the old Empire completely threw off the mask. It openly tried to destroy the International Workingmen's Association by the aid of its police and courts of justice. The December dynasty owes its existence to the class struggle, the grandest manifestation of which was the June insurrection of 1848. It played in turn the rôle of the saviour of the middle-classes and of the proletariat.

"As soon as the increasing power of the International clearly showed itself at the strikes of Amiens, Roubaix, Paris, Geneva, etc., the self-appointed patron of Labour was restricted to the alternative—to control our society or to suppress it. In the beginning he did not do much. A manifesto that the French delegates had read at the Geneva Congress (1866), and published the following year at Brussels, had been confiscated at the French frontier. Upon an inquiry by our Paris committee for the reasons of this violent proceeding, the Minister, Rouher, invited a member of the Committee to a personal interview.

"When interviewed, he first demanded the modification and alteration of some passages of the manifesto. When answered in the negative, he said: 'We could yet come to an understanding if you would only insert some words of thanks to the Emperor, who has done so much for the working classes.' But this gentle hint of Rouher's did not meet with the expected compliance. From this moment the December régime watched for any pretext in order to destroy the association by force. Its anger increased in consequence of the anti-Chauvinist agitation of our French members after the Austro-Prussian War. Soon after, when the Fenian panic had reached its height in England, the General Council

addressed a petition to the British Government, in which the impending execution of the three Manchester martyrs was called a judicial murder. At the same time we held meetings in London for defending the rights of Ireland. Always anxiously striving for England's favour, the French Government now considered the circumstances ripe for a stroke against the International Workingmen's Association on both sides of the Channel. During the night its police entered the houses of our committee-members, ransacked their private letters, and with much ado announced in the English press that the centre of the Fenian conspiracy had at last been discovered. One of its principal organs was the International Workingmen's Association. The judicial inquiry, however, did not find the shadow of a proof, notwithstanding their best endeavours.

"In Belgium our society boasted of great progress. The mine-owners in the district of Charleroi drove their miners to revolt by continued vexations, and they sent armed forces against the unarmed miners. In the midst of the panic caused by this dastardly act, the Belgian branch of the International took the cause of the colliers in hand. It revealed, through the press, and in public meetings, the miserable economic position of the workmen; it helped the families of the killed and wounded men, and procured legal assistance for the prisoners. . . . After the events at Charleroi our success in Belgium was assured.

"In Italy the Association was weakened by the reaction following the slaughter of Mentana. Some of the consequences were restrictions of the right of forming associations and holding meetings.

"In Prussia the International could not legally exist, because the law prevented any connection of Prussian labour associations with foreign societies. Moreover, the Prussian Government repeated the Napoleonic policy on a petty scale. But notwithstanding all these obstacles, small branches spread about the whole of Germany, grouped themselves round our committee at Geneva.

"In Austria the Labour movement assumed a more and more marked character.

"In England the decomposition of the old political parties and the preparation for the next electioneering fight occupied our best forces, and retarded our propaganda. Nevertheless, we opened an active correspondence with the provincial trade unions. Some of them declared their adhesion. The General Council maintained a continuous connection with the National Labour Union of the United States. The latent power of the North American working class manifested itself in the form of the legal introduction of a normal working day, and in the passing of a general eight hours law in eight or nine States of the Union. Nevertheless, the American working class succumbed, especially in New York, after a desperate struggle against capital, which tried to prevent the

execution of the eight hours law with all the means in its power. This fact proves that even under the most favourable political circumstances each success of the working class depends on the strength of their organisation, which trains and concentrates their forces.

“It was necessity which created the International. It was not the hot-house plant of a sect, or the outcome of a theory; it was a natural growth of the proletarian movement, which in its turn originated in the normal and irresistible tendencies of modern society.

“Deeply impressed by the greatness of its task, the International did not allow itself to be frightened or misled. Its fate was henceforth inseparably linked with the historical progress of that class which bears in its womb the new birth of mankind.”

Then there was to be discussed the question, “How should the working class behave in case of a war breaking out between two or more great Powers.”

This question was answered by the following unanimously accepted resolution:—

“Justice must regulate all relations between states and nations, as well as between citizens; that war always establishes the power of the stronger; that war is only a means to bring the people under the yoke of the privileged class, or of the governments representing them; that it strengthens despotism and strangles liberty; that it perpetuates ignorance and want by bringing misery and perdition over families, and spreads demoralisation wherever the armies concentrate themselves; that the blood and fortunes of the people were only used to conserve the cruel instincts of the primitive state of man; that in a community based on work and production, power should enter the service of liberty and of equal right for everybody; that it must be only a guarantee of freedom and right, but not an instrument of suppression; that in the present condition of Europe the governments do not represent the just rights of Labour; that war has for its chief cause the want of an economical balance, and, therefore, can be removed only by social reform; that there is also another cause in the arbitrary power arising from centralisation and despotism; that the people can diminish the number of wars by opposing those who declare and wage war; that this right particularly belongs to the working classes, exclusively subject to military service, and that they only can establish it; that there exists, for this purpose, a legal, effective, and at once practicable means, as society could not exist if production stops for a time; that it is, therefore, sufficient, in order to render impossible the enterprises of a personal and despotic régime, that the working classes should strike: the Congress raises, therefore, with all its energy, a protest against war, it requests all the sections of the association, as well as all labour societies and associations, of whatever kind they may be, to

work in their respective countries, with all their energy, to prevent war between peoples, which really is only a civil war, a fight between brothers and comrades. The Congress particularly recommends to workmen to cease all work in the event of a war breaking out in their countries. Reckoning on the spirit of solidarity among the workmen of all countries, the Congress hopes that their help will not be wanting in this strike of the people.”

The Congress further discussed strikes as a social weapon. The resolution on this question ran:—

“The Congress declares that a strike is not the means of completely emancipating the workmen, but that it is necessary under the present economic conditions; that it is necessary to submit the strike to certain rules, to be laid down according to the conditions of the organisation, opportunity, and legislation; that it is necessary before all, to establish trade unions where none exist, to provide them with powers of resistance, and funds, and to federate the local trade unions, enabling them to assist each other in the case of strikes; that in such places committees are to be appointed, formed of delegates of the different trade unions, who will have to decide on the opportuneness of impending strikes; it is, however, necessary that sufficient liberty of action should be allowed to the different sections for the working of such committees according to the particular customs, usages, and prevailing laws.”

A lively discussion was called forth by the question, “What influence does machinery exercise on the economic position of the workman.”

Tolain (Paris); Pollart, De Paepe (Brussels); Eccarius, and myself joined in this discussion. The “Times,” “Daily News,” “Manchester Examiner,” and other papers almost literally reproduced these speeches. The discussions were summarised in the following resolution:—

“That machines have proved to be one of the most powerful means of oppression and exploitation in the hands of the capitalists; that the development of machinery will create the necessary means for replacing the wage-system by a truly social system of production; this Congress, therefore, declares: (1) That only by co-operative associations and organisation of the mutual credit system\* can workmen succeed in getting hold of the machines; (2) That under present conditions working men, strengthened by organisations, should have a voice in the introduction of new machines, in order that this introduction should take place only under certain guarantees or compensations for the workmen.”

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\* Proudhonistic influence —F. L.

For the completion of propaganda among working men, the Congress recommended all sections to organise public lectures on scientific and technical

subjects, to remove, as much as possible, the deficiency of education from which working men are suffering.

An excited debate arose on the Labour Credit institutions. The Proudhonists always spoke of exchange-banks, etc., and at last proposed the following resolution:—

“That interest-taking is a permanent source of injustice and inequality, and as co-operative societies retaining it transfer thereby the principle of egotism, which is the chief disease of present society, from individuality to collectivity, the Congress, therefore, expresses itself in favour of founding exchange-banks, which, issuing capital at cost price, have for their object the democratisation and equalisation of credit to simplify the intercourse between producers and consumers.”

The German and English delegates were against this resolution.

Moses Hess, who was present at the Congress as a delegate, said, among other things, that Proudhonism had already expired before 1848. Marx had proved this doctrine to be wrong in his book, “*Misère de la Philosophie*” (The Poverty of Philosophy).

At last the question of landed property was to be discussed. In this debate it again appeared that the Frenchmen did not take a proper social position, whereas the Germans, the English and the Belgians advocated the collectivism of landed property. Tolain and Laquet (from Paris) spoke against it, and De Paepe, Eccarius and myself spoke for it. On this question the following resolution was carried:—

“1 (Concerning mines).—That as the great means of Labour are connected with the soil, they require the land to a considerable extent; that they become a dangerous monopoly in the hands of the capitalists; that these means necessarily need machines and collective work; that machines and the collective power of individuals are to-day solely and exclusively in the service of the capitalists; that, therefore, every industry where these two economical forces are indispensable should be used by groups of working men, working for their own account, the Congress declares: (a) That quarries, coal and mineral mines, as well as railways, are not to be handed over to capitalists, but to workmen’s societies, by means of a double treaty, so that the State demands, firstly, a rational exploitation of the concession, services of the members of these societies, if possible at cost price, and inspection into the management whereby these companies shall be prevented from degenerating into monopolies; secondly, the mutual rights of the members of the society shall be settled.

“2 (Concerning agricultural land).—That the economical development tends to large farming; that the needs of agricultural produce, the employment of

agricultural knowledge, the introduction of machines, require a cultivation on a great scale and the co-operation of labour; that landed property and agriculture are to be treated after the same principle as mines; that the soil is the primitive source of all riches, and is not the production of any man: the Congress is of opinion that landed property is to be conceded to labour associations for collective cultivation, and with the same guarantees as pointed out with regard to the mines.

“3 (Concerning canals, highways, railways and telegraphs).—That these means of traffic require a uniform management and control; that the means of communication must remain the property of the community.

“4 (Concerning forests).—That the leasing of forests to private individuals leads to their destruction; that this destruction endangers the regulation and conservatism of the sources of water, diminishes the productiveness of the soil, and is a danger to the general health of the community; that forests are to be the common property of society.”

This resolution was accepted with 30 votes against 4; 15 delegates abstained.

At this time a great misfortune befell me. On Christmas day, 1868, my wife died, with whom I had lived ten years in the happiest union. The “National Reformer,” of January 3rd, 1869, devoted to her the following obituary:—

“We regret the death of Mrs. Lessner, wife of Mr. Lessner, a member of the International Workingmen’s Association. The deceased lady was brought up in the faith of the Church of England, but arriving at the age of womanhood, was induced to investigate the basis of her creed, with the usual result: she gradually relinquished all ideas of supernaturalism, and looked upon human duty as consisting in improving *this* life, instead of preparing for a doubtful hereafter. She took the greatest interest in all freethought matters, subscribing to the “National Reformer” from its commencement, and attending regularly at Cleveland Hall (which was at that time the headquarters of the Freethought movement in London).

“For some years her health had been precarious; symptoms of consumption developed, which increased in intensity. Feeling her end approaching, she faced the rider of the pale horse with a calm eye, and mind at ease, and refusing the offer of priestly consolation, sank into her last dreamless slumber on Christmas morning, at the early age of 29, to the intense grief of her husband. While sorrowing for our departed sister in the cause, let us remember the uncertainty of life, and work for good, ere that time arrives when the hand drops nerveless, and the busy brain is at rest for ever, since to our lost sister we may say, in the words of the old Romans, ‘Nos te ordine, quo natura permiserat, cuncti sequemur.’ (We shall all follow thee, in whatever order nature may permit.)—  
FREE LANCE.”

## CHAPTER XII.

The most important event in 1869 for me was attendance at the Congress of the "International," which took place early in September at Basel. There were present 77 delegates, among them being Michael Bakunin, Professor Tanusch (Magdeburg), Liebknecht (Leipzig), Cameron (Philadelphia). Bakunin was a giant. His head was similar to that of Marx, only Bakunin's features were not so expressive as those of Marx. I had no idea at that time what mischief Bakunin would accomplish for the "International."

The first meeting of the Congress was occupied with reading the annual report of the General Council. After that the discussion on landed property was entered upon. A committee was appointed which should propose a resolution to the Congress. To this committee belonged J. Ph. Becker, Collin, Tanusch, Lucraft, Langlois, De Paepe, Picton, Rittinghausen, Murat, Creusot, Sentinon, and myself.

The committee put the following motion before the Congress:—

"This Congress declares that society has the right of abolishing private property in the soil, and of transforming it into collective property. It declares, further, that this transformation is a necessity."

Concerning the way in which the soil was to be cultivated and used, two views were brought forward and advocated.

The majority were of opinion that the soil was to be cultivated and exploited by communities. The minority demanded that society should concede the soil to single farmers, or, on which was laid a special stress, to agricultural societies for exploitation on the payment of rent.

The motion of the majority was signed by J. Ph. Becker, Collin, Rittinghausen, Varlin, Tanusch, Lucraft, Sentinon, and myself.

The motion of the minority was signed by De Paepe, Picton, Langlois, Murat, and Creusot.

Moses Hess and George Eccarius demanded a simple affirmation of the Brussels resolution on the question of landed property.

By the motion of Caporusso, the delegate of Naples, this point of discussion was postponed to the next Congress, and the meeting proceeded to vote on the chief point.

For abolition of private property in land there voted 54; against, 4; 13 abstained from voting; 4 were absent.

The proposal of a resolution of the committee on the inheritance question ran as follows:—

“That the law of inheritance promotes the development of individual property and favours the distribution of the soil, and of all materials in the hands of individuals, and prevents the transition of the soil into collective property; that the law of inheritance, small as the property inherited may be, always constitutes a privilege, which is an injustice under any circumstances, and that this right is a permanent danger to social order; that the law of inheritance in all its phases makes political as well as social justice impossible, and prevents social equality; that this Congress declares itself for collective property in land, and that the right of inheritance ought to be abolished.”

For this motion there voted 32; against, 23; 13 abstained from voting; 13 were absent.

After that the question of trade unions was discussed. William Liebknecht and the English delegates especially advocated the starting of trade unions. The result of the debate was the following unanimously accepted resolution:—

“The Congress declares that all workmen should energetically work for the establishment of trade unions in their different crafts. As soon as such trade unions shall have formed themselves, they shall connect themselves with other unions of the same craft formed at other places, to form a national union. These unions are to be expected to collect all information concerning their industrial branch, and generally to discuss the measures to be taken in the interest of the working men. They have to work with all their might for these ideals being carried out, until the present system, based on wages, shall be abolished by the co-operation of working men. That as modern economical life requires an international organisation, the Congress charges the General Council to bring about an international union of trade unions.”

The next Congress—the fifth—of the International was to take place on September 1st, 1870, in Paris, but great events prevented it. The war between France and Germany had broken out; and nearly at the same hour when the Congress was to take place, Napoleon was a prisoner of the Germans, and in France the Republic was proclaimed. After that came the Commune with its horribly tragical end, and thus it was only possible 19 years after to hold an International Socialist Congress in Paris.

In consequence of these events, no Congress took place till 1871, which I attended as a delegate. At this conference of delegates, which took place in the middle of September, in London, the following resolutions were accepted, among others:—

*“Constitution of the General Council.—*The Conference requests the General Council to restrict the numbers of its members, and to provide that these do not exclusively belong to one nationality.”

*“Delegates of the General Council.—*All delegates appointed by the General Council for distinct missions have the right to attend the meetings of the federal councils of committees, etc., and to be heard there, but without having a vote.”

*“Formation of Female Sections.—*This Conference recommends the formation of female branch societies. This resolution is not, of course, directed against branch societies being composed of working men and working women.”

*“General Statistics of the Working Classes.—*(1) The Conference charges the General Council to enforce Article V. of the original rules, as far as relating to general statistics of the working classes, as well as the resolutions of the Geneva Congress (1866) on the same subject. (2) Each local group is bound to appoint a special statistical committee, in order that it may be always ready, as far as its means allow it, to answer questions put by the Federal Council of their respective country, or of the General Council. The Conference recommends to all the groups to grant some payment to the secretaries of the statistical committees. (3) On August 1st in every year, the Federal Council or committees shall send to the General Council the materials collected in their relative countries. The latter, on its part, shall work out a general report to be put before the Congresses or Conferences taking place in September of every year. (4) Trade unions and branches of the International which refuse the required information are to be indicated to the General Council for consideration.”

*“International Relations of Trade Unions.—*The General Council shall, as hitherto, do all in its power to further the increasing tendency of the trade unions of every country of entering into communication with other countries. Its efficiency as international mediator between the national trade unions essentially depends on the assistance these societies themselves grant to the work of general labour statistics, undertaken by the International.”

*“Agricultural Labourers.—*(1) The Conference requests the General Council and the Federal Councils or committees, to prepare for the next Congress a report on the proper means for safeguarding the adhesion of agricultural labourers to the movement of the industrial proletariat. (2) In the meantime the Federal Councils or committees are requested to send delegates into the agricultural districts, in order to hold there public meetings, to propagate the principles of the International, and to form rural branch societies.”

*“Political Activity of the Working Classes.—*In consideration of the preamble of the rules, which says, ‘the economical emancipation of the working classes is the great object to which every political movement must be subordinated as a means towards this object’; that the inaugural address of the International

Workingmen's Association (1864) says: 'The masters of the soil will always exploit their political privileges in order to defend and perpetuate their economical monopolies. Far from promoting the political emancipation of the working classes, they will continue to put in its way every possible obstacle. . . . The conquest of political power, therefore, becomes the first duty of the working classes'; that the Congress of Lausanne (1867) has declared: 'The social emancipation of the working classes is inseparable from their political emancipation'; that the declaration of the General Council on the pretended plot of the French 'International' on the eve of the Plebiscite (1870), contained the following passage: 'According to the wording of our rules all our branches in England, on the Continent, and in America, have undoubtedly the special task, not only of forming centres for the fighting organisation of the working classes, but also to assist in their respective countries every political movement, which serves the attaining of the object of our movement—the economical emancipation of the working classes.' Considering further that the International has to face an unrestricted reaction, which suppresses shamelessly every tendency in favour of the emancipation of the working classes, and tries to perpetuate by brute force the class distinction and the political power of the possessing class upon which it is based; that the working class can only act against the collective force of the possessing classes, as a class, by constituting itself as a political party in opposition to all the old party formations in the past; that this constitution of the working class as a political party is necessary for the triumph of the social revolution and of its object—the abolition of all classes; that the unification of the individual forces which the working men have established up to a certain point by their economic struggles, has also to serve as a means in their political struggle; for these reasons the Conference reminds all members of the International that in the struggle of the working class, the economical movement and political action are inseparably connected."

*"Special Resolutions of the Conference.—*(1) The Conference approves the reception of the exiles of the Commune in the General Council. (2) The Conference declares that the German working men have done their duty during the Franco-German war."

These are the most important resolutions of the London Conference in 1871.

In the same year I made the acquaintance of a great number of French, Polish, and Russian revolutionaries, mostly exiles of the Commune. Among them were Edouard Vaillant, Leo Frankel, Lavroff, Wroblewski, Outine, Lopatin, Lafargue, etc. Lopatin was treated by Marx with the greatest respect, as also was Outine, who later on was waylaid and badly treated by eight Bakunists.

## CHAPTER XIII.

After the Commune, grave times arose for the International. The English press, which governed public opinion, calumniated and abused us. Things went so far that we could no more get a room for our meetings in London. When we were going to celebrate the first anniversary of the Commune, on March 18th, 1872, we found the engaged room closed. This induced me to rent a house, where the General Council held its meetings. The English press is, at the root, neither better nor worse than the German press. In later years especially this has shown itself. Thus the English journals either left out the favourable news of the progress of the German Social-Democracy, or misrepresented them. They glorified the Czar, Bismarck, and Crispi instead. Neither are the English middle classes any better than the German. They are more cunning and more crafty. Thus they do not oppose the Labour movement, but they try to corrupt it with all the means at their disposal.

The International was fought more and more fiercely from the outside. Most of the Governments took proceedings against its followers. In France even a special law was passed against it. In the English trade unions, too, they worked against it, and the intrigues of Michael Bakunin began within the organisation. The situation of Marx was not an enviable one about this time. He was overworked with addresses and other documents for the International. The manifestoes, addresses, and other documents, which have been published by the International, all originate from Marx. Added to this were the heavy claims laid upon him by the Communards that fled to London, and an extremely large correspondence. Marx satisfied all these claims without any material recompense, and besides he had to fight the fiercest struggle for existence. The costs of the household became more and more considerable, especially after the Commune. One could always find a number of French refugees at Marx's house, who were received and entertained. Mrs. Marx had to pass through some difficult times just then. Very often she came to my wife and to me to ask our advice, and to discuss with us this or that household care. But all this could not prevent her from taking a lively and sincere interest in the proletarian movement.

The difference with Bakunin was to be gone into at the Hague Congress. Bakunin promised to appear there. This induced Marx to go also to the Hague, in order to settle the fight with him. The Congress at the Hague was the only one that Marx attended personally. He stayed in London, leaving to others to shine at the Congresses. When he at last resolved to go to this Congress, it was only to put an end to Bakunin's intrigues, once for all. Frederick Engels, Mrs. Marx, and her children seized this opportunity of going to the Hague as well.

The Congress took place early in September, 1872. There were present 72 delegates, among them, from Germany: Bernhard Becker, Karl and Hugo Freidländer, Dr. Kugelmann, Ad. Heppner, Rittinghausen, Schumacher (Solingen), Heinrich Scheu, and Josef Dietzgen.

Michael Bakunin did not keep his promise; he kept aloof from the Congress. Instead, two of his creatures were present, who played a dull part. The Congress had to settle, chiefly, two questions—firstly, the transfer of the seat of the General Council, and, secondly, the exclusion of Bakunin from the International. To the first question Frederick Engels spoke, who wanted the seat of the General Council to be at New York. This proposal was accepted. The exclusion of Bakunin was arrived at in a secret session. Even the opponents of Marx condemned the intrigues of Bakunin, and voted for his exclusion. Whoever wants to learn more of this affair may read “The Plot Against the International,” translated from the French by Kokosky (Braunschweig, 1874). New edition, “Vorwaerts” Library, Berlin. During his stay at Brussels, Marx was regularly besieged by journalists from all civilised countries. Everyone wanted to see him and to hear his opinion on the aims and objects of the International.

In the same year the “British Federation of the International Workingmen’s Association” held its Congress at Nottingham, and in 1873 at Manchester. I attended both of these Congresses as the delegate of the Communist Labour Club, London. The Hague Congress of the year 1872 was the last event of the old International. The individual federations dissolved themselves in order to make room for larger national organisations.

The International had fulfilled a considerable part of its task. Socialism had been established, economically and philosophically, by the head of the International, Karl Marx, and it was the first organisation that had carried these doctrines to all quarters of the civilised world, where they came to be acknowledged, more or less quickly, according to the temporary economic and intellectual conditions.



## CHAPTER XIV.

The ten years from 1873 to 1883 passed rather quietly for me. I felt that I was growing old. Besides, the condition of my numerous family obliged me to do what I could in order that no member of it might be a burden to anybody. These endeavours were not quite in vain. We had, indeed, to work very hard, all of us, in order to supply our modest wants, but, on the whole, I was not dissatisfied with my situation.

During this time I much frequented the Marx family. Marx's house stood open to every reliable comrade. The agreeable hours I have spent in his family circle, as many others, are unforgettable to me. There shone before all the excellent Mrs. Marx, a tall, very beautiful woman, and of noble bearing, but for all that so extremely good-natured, amiable, spiritual, and so free from any pride and stiffness, that she seemed like one's own mother or sister. Her whole nature reminded me of the words of the Scotch popular poet, Robert Burns, "Woman, lovely woman, heaven destined you to temper man." She was, as above mentioned, full of enthusiasm for the cause of the Labour movement, and every one, even the smallest, success in the fight against the middle classes, gave her the greatest satisfaction and joy. Marx always attached an extreme importance to meeting and talking with working men. He sought the society of those who openly uttered their opinion to him, and spared him flattery. He was always anxious to hear the opinion of working men on the movement, and was at any time ready to discuss with them the most important political and economical questions of the hour. He quickly found out whether they really understood these questions, and the more they appreciated these questions, the greater was his delight. At the time of the International he would miss no meeting of the General Council, and after the meeting Marx and most of the members of the Council regularly used to go to a decent public-house to talk freely over a glass of beer. On the way home Marx would often speak of the normal working day in general, and the eight hours working day in particular. He often said: "We aim at the eight hours working day, but we often work more than double the time within 24 hours ourselves." Indeed, Marx, I am afraid, worked far too much. How much energy and time the International alone cost him, no outsider has an idea. Besides that, Marx had to drudge for his livelihood, and to collect materials for his historical and economical studies in the British Museum for hours daily. When going home from the British Museum to his house, situated in the North of London (Maitland Park Road, Haverstock Hill), he would often come to me, as I was living not very far from the Museum, to have a talk with me about some point concerning the International. Arrived at home, he took his dinner, after which he would rest for a short time, to start work that, only too often, extended till late in the night, as the short time of his evening rest was more often broken into by calls of comrades.

Marx was, as are all truly great men, free from conceit, and appreciated every genuine striving, every opinion based on independent thinking. As already mentioned, he was always eager to hear the opinion of the simplest working man on the Labour movement. Thus he would often come to me in the afternoon, fetch me for a walk, and talk about all sorts of matters. I let him speak, of course, as much as possible, as it was a real pleasure to listen to the development of his ideas and to his chat. I felt always much attracted by such a talk, and always unwillingly left him. Generally he was an excellent companion, who extremely attracted, one might say charmed, everybody that came in touch with him. His humour was irrepressible, his laugh a very hearty one. When our comrades succeeded in winning a victory in any country, he gave full expression to his joy in the most unrestrained manner, and in loud merriment, when he would carry away with him all near him.

The three daughters of Marx, too, from a very early age, took the deepest interest in the modern Labour movement, which was always the chief theme in Marx's family. The intercourse between Marx and his daughters was the most intimate and freest that can be imagined. The girls treated their father more like a brother or friend, as Marx rejected the external attributes of paternal authority. In serious matters he was the adviser of his children, and at other times, whenever his time permitted it, their playmate. Marx had, on the whole, an extraordinary predilection for children. He often remarked that in the Christ of the Bible he liked best his great love of children. When Marx had nothing to do in the city, and took his walk to Hampstead Heath, one might often have seen the author of the "Capital" bustling about with a crowd of street children.

The death of his eldest daughter in 1883, who possessed all the qualities of her mother—and these were only good ones—was an extremely grave and disastrous blow for Marx. Scarcely twelve months before, on December 2nd, 1881, he had lost his brave partner for life. These were blows from which Marx never recovered. Marx already at that time suffered from a bad cough. When one heard him coughing one thought that his broad, powerful frame would burst to pieces. This cough exhausted him the more, as his constitution had been undermined years ago in consequence of permanent overwork. Already, about the middle of the seventies, the doctor had prohibited him to smoke. Marx had been a passionate smoker, and he thought it a great sacrifice to give up smoking. When I first called on him after this prohibition, he was not a little proud and pleased to be able to tell me that he had not smoked since so-and-so, and that he would not do it until the doctor gave him permission again. And every time when I came to him, after his prohibition, he always would repeat to me for how many days and weeks he had given up smoking, and that he had not smoked, even once, during this whole period. It seemed to appear to him quite incredible that he should have achieved this. The greater was his joy when, after some days, the doctor permitted him again a cigar a day.

On March 15th, 1883, I received the following letter:—

London, March 15th, 1883.

DEAR LESSNER,

Our old friend Marx has quietly and peacefully fallen asleep for ever at three o'clock yesterday. Immediate cause of death was probably interior bleeding.

The funeral will take place on Saturday, at twelve o'clock, and Tussy\* requests you not to miss it.

In great haste, Yours,

F. ENGELS.

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\* Eleanor Marx Aveling.

The bad news struck me most deeply. Those who had been in more intimate intercourse with Marx knew what the Labour movement had lost by his departure. Not only was he a man of embracing knowledge and of a great intellect, but of a consistent, iron character. What riches of knowledge have gone to the grave with him the writings he left are the best testimony of, though they may contain only the tenth part of what he meant to write. He was a heroic character, and his whole life was one series of struggles and sacrifice.

I give now a letter that Marx wrote to Eccarius and myself at Brussels. We were then at the third Congress of the International Workingmen's Association. It read as follows:—

London, August 10th, 1868.

DEAR ECCARIUS AND LESSNER,

First, my thanks to Lessner for his long and interesting letter.

You are not to allow this Congress to last longer than this week. As yet—as far as England is concerned—no report has taken place.\*

If the Belgians and French again bring forward masses of new rubbish, make them understand that that will not do, as

(1) The Germans are represented in small number, as their Congress takes place simultaneously in Germany.

(2) That England is scarcely represented because of the General Election.

(3) That the German-Swiss are not at all represented, as they have only just joined, and the branches existing before have exhausted their means in the

Geneva strike.

(4) That the discussion is now one-sidedly carried on in French.

(5) That it is, therefore, necessary to avoid taking resolutions on general theoretical questions, as this will only provoke protests from the Belgian and French sides.

The war matter interests the public most, of course. Big declarations and inflated phrases do not do any harm here. The resolution to be taken about it seems to be simply that the working classes are not sufficiently organised to throw any decisive weight into the scale; but that the Congress protests in the name of the working class, and denounces the authors of the war; that a war between France and Germany is a civil war and ruinous for Europe. The remark that this war can profit only the Russian Government will scarcely prevail with the French and Belgian gentlemen.

Greetings to friend Becker.

K. MARX.

P.S.—If the *crédit mutuel* is mentioned, Eccarius has simply to declare that the working men in England, Germany, and the United States have nothing to do with the Proudhonistic dogmas, and treat the question of credit as a secondary one.

The resolutions of the Congress are to be forwarded to the English press by telegraph. Therefore, nothing foolish!

K. MARX.

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\* In English.

I possess, besides, a number of letters that Marx addressed to me, but they are mostly about private matters, and are, therefore, without interest to the public at large.

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It was the greatest satisfaction to us that the oldest and best friend of Marx was still staying with us, bodily strong and mentally fresh. Through him alone the party obtained acquaintance with the third volume of the "Capital."

Whilst Marx was still furnishing new knowledge and new views after his death, his doctrines more and more spread among the fighting proletarians. Everywhere the Labour movement is under the influence of his doctrines. Marx has not only thrown among the masses the powerful message, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" he has also, by his doctrines, created the basis on which

the union of the proletariat can be, and is being, carried out. The International, of which Marx was the soul, has risen again, mightier and more powerful than the old one, and the standard round which the Labour battalions of the International Labour movement crowd is the standard that Marx raised in 1848, and carried for a generation in front of the fighting proletariat. Under this standard it is that the Labour army of all countries is now marching on from victory to victory.



## CHAPTER XV.

My participation in the International Socialist movement naturally brought me in contact with many prominent comrades. With many of them I entered into a correspondence, among whom were Engels, Freiligrath, J. Ph. Becker, Leo Frankel, Cowell, Stepney, Professor Labriola, Karl Kautsky, etc. I also corresponded for the Budapest "Arbeiter-Wochenschronik" and the Zurich and London "Social-Democrat" in the seventies and eighties. It was, and it is still, my highest pleasure to serve my party by propagating Socialism as far as my abilities allow. I honour everyone who is working in the service of Socialism, but that does not prevent me from criticising where it seems necessary to me to do so. According to my experience gathered during these many years as a common soldier of the proletarian army, it is mostly the fault of the masses if their leaders are treasonable. Working men must always control the actions of their representatives, but they must also learn to be *able* to control them. The more the proletariat enlightens and educates itself, the less danger there will be that its leaders will act against its interests. The working class wants knowledge, not only to enable it to beat its enemies, but also to be able to understand and judge its friends. The English Labour leaders often neglect their duties because of the lack of interest in their work among the masses they represent. This is likewise one of the causes why Socialism has been so long getting representatives in the House of Commons.

In the beginning of the eighties, the Social-Democratic movement began to revive in England. In 1881 originated the "Social-Democratic Federation"; in 1885, the "Socialist League"; in 1888 the "Bloomsbury Socialist Society," which latter took the initiative for the celebration of the May Day in London.

In 1886 and 1887 I took part in the Trafalgar Square demonstrations, and up to now am working to awaken the class consciousness of the English working class.

In 1891 I attended the International Socialist Congress at Brussels as a delegate. It was, as I have already mentioned, not the first time that I saw the Belgian capital. But how mighty was the difference between 1868 and 1891. A comparison between the two Congresses showed me, in the most striking manner, the gigantic progress the proletarian movement had made within the last 25 years. I felt myself highly compensated for all that we had done and sacrificed for years in the interests of the party. I shall never forget the reception the Ghent population gave to the delegates of the International Congress. The short stay at Ghent belongs to the most pleasing recollections of my life.

I was also well satisfied by the Zurich International Congress in 1893, and the Congresses of the German Social-Democracy, in 1893 at Cologne, and in 1894 at Frankfort, which I also attended.

During my visit at Cologne and Frankfort, I seized every opportunity to make the acquaintance of the young men attending the Congresses and the meetings, and I was most agreeably surprised to find how well they understood our cause. Spontaneously the times came back to my memory when I myself, as a young fellow, spread the doctrines of Socialism in secret. How difficult and dangerous was the task at that time. How difficult it was to make the young working men understand the principles of modern Socialism, as represented in the Communist Manifesto! How different it is to-day! The youths learn easily and eagerly, and willingly suffer for their convictions; they educate their intellect and their characters, and harden themselves for the fights to come. This experience has done me good. If only Marx and his wife could have seen and experienced all this! Both of them had struggled and suffered so much, and sacrificed all; but it was unluckily not given to them to see the splendid harvest of their painfully-spread seed!

And yet Marx was firmly convinced that the working class would understand him sooner or later, and draw from his doctrines the power to effect the revolution of the bourgeois society, and with clear conscience to work towards the construction of a new society.

*Marx has not been mistaken!*

This is the conviction I have brought home from the last Congresses, and this certainly brightens the rest of my life.

## **CONCLUSION.**

I may be allowed at the conclusion of these reminiscences to mention that my second wife (who is still living) has done her share in the movement, although she did not speak in public or contribute by writing.

When I made her acquaintance, in 1869, she already possessed some knowledge of what life was. Grown up in a little town in Germany, she was already, as a school-girl, obliged to earn something towards the support of the family. She could not attend school regularly, but as at that time schools in small towns were not up to much, she did not, perhaps, lose a great deal. It was the struggle for life that sharpened her reason.

It is scarcely possible to believe how little the poor were paid at that time for long and hard work that kept them so intensely engaged that they hardly had time to think over their unfortunate lot.

When I joined the Labour movement in early life, it soon became clear to me that women must be drawn into the movement, that without their participation a movement like the proletarian one could never be perfect and victorious. It is to women and their influence upon the education and bringing up of children that we must look for a better state of social conditions in the next generation.

With my help my wife soon learned to understand my ideas on economical and political questions. From the beginning of our married life I took her to German and English meetings for her to understand the working-class movement. But as years went by, we had to work harder for our living; the family grew, and there was little spare time left for my wife to accompany me to meetings, but, unselfishly, she insisted that I should go. Without her help and goodwill, it would have been impossible for me to do for the cause what little I have done. It is due to my wife's untiring industry, economy, and her abandonment of all amusement that we have been able to steer clear of all the sorrows, and afflictions, and hard times that beset a working man's life.

That all these worries, which she withheld from me should have made her older than she is, and a sufferer, is not surprising, and it grieves me now that I cannot alter these circumstances.

When I here openly declare that I owe it only to the goodwill of my wife what I have been able to do for the Labour movement for so many years, I set it forth, also, as an example to other working men's wives to do their share in our movement, in order to make it more successful.

There are so many time-servers and place-hunters in this world who consider their interest alone, to the exclusion of all fellow-feeling, that it is imperative for those endowed with intelligence to take their stand in the interest of our common cause. There are thousands of nameless men and women who silently have done their duty. Where would the working class be now without their silent sacrifices? May this fact appeal to everyone to do his duty.

My wife, at least, will never forget or forgive the indignities and harm which the capitalist class has heaped upon the working class, the remembrance of which has made her such a self-sacrificing adherent to our cause.

FREDERIC LESSNER.

In the preparation of this English edition, I have thankfully to acknowledge the services of our comrade Thalmeyer, who translated it from the German revue "Neue Worte."

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## **In Remembrance of Karl Marx.**

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For the benefit of English comrades, I beg to reprint a translation of an article I wrote at the request of our Viennese comrades, giving my recollections of Karl Marx, which I published in the beginning of February, 1903.

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On the 20th anniversary of Karl Marx's death, in compliance with the express wish of our Vienna comrades, I give again my reminiscences of what I know of our teacher and instructor.

Of course, it will be understood that I cannot give a complete insight to Marx's life and labour in the Socialist movement in the short space left to me. To anyone understanding German, I would recommend to read Mehring's writings on the literary legacy of Marx, in which he states to the fullest extent the strong character, the indomitable will which Marx possessed from his youth in the furtherance of his ideals. My recollections here shall only record personal experiences.

I made the acquaintance of Marx, as also of Engels, on the occasion of their coming to London, in the winter of 1847, to attend the Congress of the "Bund der Gerechten" (League of the Just), which Congress proved epoch-making, as it originated the "Communist Manifesto."

After the revolution of 1848 had broken out, and Marx had gone to Cologne to start that remarkable paper, the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," my intercourse with Marx became more regular. I also became acquainted there with the other editors of this paper, Engels, Wilhelm Wolff (the red Wolff), the poet Freiligrath, G. Wirth, E. Droncke, and Karl Schapper, all of them conspicuous figures of that revolutionary time.

Then followed the suppression of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." Marx was expelled, and went to London. But the defenders of "Absolutism" were not satisfied with this. Then came the famous "Trial of the Communists," during which Marx did everything to be of service to the accused. His efforts, however, were in vain; they were condemned.

When, in the spring of 1856, I had at last done my term of incarceration in the fortress of Silberberg, I came for the second time to London. Marx had taken, about this time, a large house outside London, but this great distance did not prevent me from accepting his frequent kind invitations to visit him. Soon after he had moved to this locality, Marx became, for the first time, seriously ill. However, under careful medical advice, he recovered. As soon as Marx

recovered, his wife fell seriously ill, it being considered necessary to remove his three daughters to the house of Liebknecht, who lived not far away.

Hardly were these domestic troubles over, when, in about 1859, Professor Karl Vogt published his infamous and calumnious aspersions against Marx, which took the latter quite a twelvemonth of valuable time to dispel. During the Commune documents were found that Professor Karl Vogt had in this affair only acted as a paid police-agent to Napoleon.

Then followed later—in September, 1864—the foundation of the International Workingmen’s Association, which soon made its influence felt, and became a terror to all reactionaries. It was quite appropriate at the time to say that the International was a small “body” but a “great soul.” Of course, Karl Marx was its soul, for nearly all the documents and publications published emanated from him.

Difficulties never diminished. Fate seemed to overtake him more heavily and oftener. During the fifties, he had the misfortune to lose three children in succession—a girl of eleven years, a boy of two years, and one of nine years—who had given promise of excellent development. These losses our great friend could never forget.

Then followed, in the seventies, the losses of his grand-children, the children of his two elder daughters, Jenny Longuet and Laura Lafargue. Soon after followed the long and painful illness of his wife, who died on December 2nd, 1881, to be followed by the death of his eldest daughter, Mrs. Longuet, at Paris.

It was clear to all of Marx’s friends that this succession of bereavements would only hasten his own death, and that our party would soon lose him.

It was well known to us that many circumstances had contributed to undermine the constitution of Marx, robust though it had been in the past. He had to fight against many enemies. He was often without any income, and the struggle for existence was keenly felt, for it was only at the time of the Crimean War that Marx had a regular income by his correspondence for the “New York Tribune.” But his greatest fault was working too hard. When once he began a task, he stuck to it through day and night till it was done. About popularity Marx never troubled; on the contrary, he hated the so-called “popular” phrases then in vogue. On the other hand, no power in existence would have been able to turn him from his path. And when, at the conclusion of his preface to the first volume of the “Capital” he quotes Dante’s lines, “Segui il tuo corso, e lascia dir le gente,” it was not intended simply as a quotation, but in the spirit of its full meaning—“Pursue your course, let other people talk!”

The higher standard by which I estimate Marx as a friend of the Labour movement was his energetic action and deep interest in all Labour struggles.

When the working class anywhere suffered a defeat, it was Marx who stepped forward to defend them against their adversaries. This can be seen in the publications of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," of 1848, after the suppression of the Paris proletariat, and better still after the fall of the Commune of Paris, in 1871, when all reactionary elements, and even a large part of the working class, turned against the fallen. Marx was the first to take the side of the defeated. The famous address of the General Council of the International, "The Civil War in France," shows with what energy and sympathy he stood up for the working class.

His friendship for the working classes of all countries is further shown by his extensive correspondence with them and their leaders. His sympathy for the Russian Socialist movement, as well as for the Poles, is well known. He had great expectations of the Austrian movement, as he considered the Austrian workmen able and determined. If he could only see now what strides the Austrian workers have made, I feel sure he would be gratified.

This rare man, with his original ideals, seemed to be destined, with his friend Frederick Engels, to reconstitute the modern Labour movement on an international basis. Karl Marx's teachings have permeated the movement.

Some comrades proposed to erect a monument to him. But no monument could be of firmer foundation than his teachings, his actions, and his struggles, which are engraved now into the hearts and heads of millions of workers for ever.



## **In Remembrance of Frederick Engels.**

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I now wish to give a few reminiscences of Engels. As mentioned before, my first acquaintance with Engels and Marx took place in London, in 1847, and it was in the Communist Club—the only club that has stuck true to its principles and is still alive. It was on that memorable occasion when Marx, Engels, W. Wolff, and the Belgian comrade Tetesko came from Brussels to come to an understanding about the principles and tactics of the new movement. It is now well known that Marx and Engels at this Congress were chosen to elaborate the Manifesto of the Communist Party.

In the Communist Club it was that I bought Engels's book on "The Condition of the Working Class in England," first published in 1845, which was there for sale.

Engels's personal appearance was quite different from that of Marx. Engels was tall and slender, his movements quick and impulsive, his language short and to the point, his bearing erect, with a soldierly effect. He was of a lively nature, with an effective wit, and everyone who came into contact with him could feel at once that he had to deal with an unusually intellectual man. When occasionally persons came to me to complain that Engels did not treat them as he ought, they did not know and realise that Engels was very reticent with strangers, and very friendly with those whom he had once acknowledged as friends. He was a good judge of human nature, which, however, did not prevent him from being taken in sometimes.

He was very liberal in granting relief to persons who came to him in need, but as he found out that he was victimised by the systematic "beggar-league," he later on consulted me, and largely left it to me to expend his bounty.

Engels's portrait would not be complete if I were not to mention the estimate of his old friend George Julian Harney, the editor of the Chartist organ, "Northern Star," who knew him since 1843:—"I have known him, he was my friend and occasional contributor, for many years. It was in 1843 when he came from Bradford to Leeds and inquired after me at the office of the 'Northern Star.' . . . I found a tall, stately young man, with an almost boyish face; his English was already at that time—in spite of his German birth and education—without fault. He told me that he was a constant reader of the 'Northern Star,' and with the greatest interest had followed the Chartist movement. And so commenced our acquaintance, 32 years ago. Engels, with all his work and troubles found always time to remember his friends, to give advice, to help where required. His vast knowledge and influence never made him proud; on the contrary, with 75 years he was just as modest and ready to acknowledge the

work of others as when he was 22. He was extremely hospitable, full of fun, and his fun was contagious. He was the soul of the entertainment, and managed admirably to make his guests comfortable, who, at that time, were mostly Owenites, Chartists, Trade Unionists, and Socialists."

My own more intimate knowledge with Engels commenced in 1848, at Cologne, where he was one of the editors of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung." I went then under the assumed name of "Friedrich Carstens," and Engels had found out that I was a tailor by trade, and henceforth appointed me "master of his wardrobe." I am sorry, however, to state that at that time my functions consisted mainly in repairing his garments. Neither he nor Marx ever took much notice of dress, and, besides, pecuniary conditions just then were not very flourishing.

I was only a young man at that time, and it never was my habit to push myself into the front, and I only met Engels at meetings.

However, the Prussian reaction was at work to destroy the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," and when this did not succeed at the first onset, they tried more drastic measures. Two prosecutions were instigated, the first on February 7th, the second on February 9th, against the Executive of the Rhenisch Democrats.

Both these proceedings I attended, and it was a pleasure to me to see with what ingenuity and perseverance the reactionary methods of that time were combated. Even opponents could not help expressing their admiration.

After the suppression of the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," and the illegal expulsion of Marx, the editors dispersed in all directions. Marx went to Paris, Engels to the Palatinate, where the movement for a constitution for the whole German Empire had just commenced. Engels's activity in the Palatinate may be judged by his contribution on that subject in the "Politische Oekonomische Revue" (London Hamburg, and New York, 1850), of which Marx was editor.

After the suppression of the revolution in Baden, Engels and other revolutionists had to escape to Switzerland, where, however, Engels did not stay long, and went, in 1850, to London, where a great number of refugees at that time had assembled. Here commenced hard times for Engels and Marx, as neither of them had any income.

It was about that time that the Communist Club was most active; political refugees of all ways of thinking met here, among them being Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, and Wolff. With so many refugees entertaining different views on past and future political efforts, it was no wonder that great differences existed.

Engels left London in 1850, in order to enter his father's cotton factory in Manchester, in which he became, in 1864, a partner. In 1869, after his father's

death, he retired from business, and returned to London, in order to devote all his time to collaboration with Marx.

In 1859 the Communist section started a German weekly paper, "Das Volk" (of which only 16 numbers were printed), in opposition to the "Londoner Zeitung Hermann," founded by Kinkel.

The outbreak of the Franco-German war interested Engels greatly, and he devoted his time during that period to writing articles for the "Pall Mall Gazette," which proved his military talent, and procured him the nickname "General." He prophesied several defeats of the French. When the concentration of the Germans around the French Northern army was in progress, Engels stated in the "Pall Mall Gazette" that if General MacMahon could not succeed in breaking through with his army to Belgium, he would be forced to capitulate in the plain of Sedan—which really happened two weeks later.

After the defeat of the Commune of Paris, the position of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association became very difficult, especially for Marx and Engels, as a great number of international refugees arrived in London, which occasioned additional work and loss of time. Among those refugees we must not forget the Hungarian comrade Leo Frankel, who had been a member of the Government under the Commune, and after its defeat succeeded in passing through the German lines in the disguise of a match-seller. Frankel was one of the few who were perfectly clear-headed, and sure of our goal. After the amnesty, Frankel returned to Paris, where he continued his propaganda. He died some years ago in Paris; in him our cause lost a devoted comrade. Honour to his memory!

The Commune refugees who arrived here belonged to all shades of political and economical ideas, and accused each other of having caused their defeat. Blighted hopes, as well as the poor circumstances in which most of them found themselves here, were the cause of these disputes. The invidious attacks of the capitalist press, combined with the general ignorance of the Commune and its aims, as well as the open hostility of the Anarchist section, all seemed to tend to crush the international Labour movement about that time.

The transfer of the General Council of the International to New York, according to the decision of the Hague Congress, gave both Marx and Engels more leisure for their economical studies. Marx devoted himself to his great work, "Das Kapital." Engels became secretary of the International. The translation of the Communist Manifesto, as also the translation of other pamphlets, and the writing of articles on topics of the day, occupied Engels at this time. In 1878, he suffered a heavy loss by the death of his wife, an

Irishwoman, who had been heart and soul in favour of the Fenian movement. As Engels had no children, he felt the loss of his wife acutely.

Engels took a great interest in the Trade Union movement, as also in the propaganda for the legal eight hour day. In spite of his age, he witnessed the May Day demonstrations, and usually managed to get on one of the carts which were used as platforms.

Being a member of the Communist Club, the Social-Democratic Federation, and Socialist League, and helping at the starting of the Independent Labour Party, my visits to Engels were always welcome, as I kept him informed on all that occurred in these organisations. I must mention here that Engels did not quite agree with some of the tactics of the Social-Democratic Federation.

Engels kept his freshness for work until his death. He was a good linguist, mastering ten languages, and at the age of 70 learned Norwegian, in order to read the works of Ibsen and Kielland in the original.

Engels, like Marx, seldom appeared as a public speaker; each liked a debate, but as speakers they were not popular. Engels's last public appearance was in 1893. He spoke at the Congress of Zurich, at Vienna, and Berlin. His reception at Zurich, and the enthusiastic outburst at his greeting made a deep impression upon him, as he often told me. His visit to Austria, Germany, and Switzerland was really a triumphal pilgrimage of our ideas. He regretted much that Marx was not spared to visit this *new* Germany, the Germany of the workers.

In 1895 Engels went for the last time to Eastbourne, his favourite summer resort, but returned without improvement, as Eleanor Marx informed me.

Under such circumstances, I decided not to molest him by a visit, and was sorry for it, as I did not see Engels alive again. On the evening of August 5th, Bernstein sent me information that if I wanted to see Engels again, I should make haste, as his condition was desperate. I resolved to see him early next morning, but received the news of his death, which occurred between 11 and 12 the night before.

When I went, I found Engels dead on his bed, similar to the occasion when I saw Marx the last time, on March 15th, 1883.

Engels's will stipulated that he was to be cremated, and his ashes thrown into the sea. This last wish was fulfilled on August 27th, when Eleanor Marx, Dr. Aveling, Herr E. Bernstein, and myself, travelled to Eastbourne, hired a boat, and two miles from the coast threw his ashes into the sea.

That was the last of him. But if Marx and Engels have thus disappeared from the earthly scene, the principles they advocated are alive, and will continue to spread in all countries, until the final victory of International Socialism.