

KARL MARX FREDERICK ENGELS

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Karl Marx

A WARNING ¹¹⁹

Some time ago the London journeymen tailors formed a general association ¹²⁰ to uphold their demands against the London master tailors, who are mostly big capitalists. It was a question not only of bringing wages into line with the increased prices of means of subsistence, but also of putting an end to the exceedingly harsh treatment of the workers in this branch of industry. The masters sought to frustrate this plan by recruiting journeymen tailors, chiefly in Belgium, France and Switzerland. Thereupon the secretaries of the Central Council of the International Working Men's Association published in Belgian, French and Swiss newspapers a warning which was a complete success.¹²¹ The London masters' manoeuvre was foiled; they had to surrender and meet their workers' just demands.

Defeated in England, the masters are now trying to take counter-measures, starting in *Scotland*. The fact is that, as a result of the London events, they had to agree, initially, to a 15 per cent. wage rise in Edinburgh as well. But secretly they sent agents to Germany to recruit journeymen tailors, particularly in the Hanover and Mecklenburg areas, for importation to Edinburgh. The first group has already been shipped off. The purpose of this importation is the same as that of the importation of Indian^a COOLIES to Jamaica, namely, *perpetuation of slavery*. If the Edinburgh masters succeeded, through the import of German labour, in nullifying the concessions they had already made, it would inevitably lead to repercussions in England. *No one would suffer more than the German workers themselves*, who constitute in Great

^a "Asiatic" in the original.—Ed.

Britain a larger number than the workers of all the other Continental nations. And the newly-imported workers, being completely helpless in a strange land, would soon sink to the level of pariahs.

Furthermore, it is a point of honour with the German workers to prove to other countries that they, like their brothers in France, Belgium and Switzerland, know how to defend the common interests of their class and will not become *obedient mercenaries of capital* in its struggle against labour.

On behalf of the Central Council^a
of the International Working Men's Association,

Karl Marx

London, May 4, 1866

German journeymen tailors who wish to know more about conditions in Britain are requested to address their letters to the German branch committee of the London Tailors' Association, %
Albert F. Haufe, Crown Public House, Hedden Court, Regent Street, London.

First published in *Der Bote vom Niederrhein*, No. 57, May 13, 1866, reprinted in *Oberrheinischer Courier*, No. 113, May 15, 1866 and *Mitteldeutsche Volks-Zeitung*, No. 184, August 10, 1866

Printed according to the newspaper text checked against the manuscript

^a "General Council" in the original.—*Ed.*

subjugated peoples. After many years of hard oppression, Russian troops under Dmitry, Grand Duke of Moscow, routed the forces of the Golden Horde on Kulikovo plain in 1380 and thus shook the foundation of Mongol domination. The final liberation was won in 1480 under the Grand Duke of Moscow Ivan III. He also scored great successes in uniting the Russian lands into a single centralised state. p. 159

- ¹¹⁷ In June 1605 Moscow was captured by the Poles and Lithuanians who supported their figurehead, the False Dmitry, in his claims to the Russian throne. In May 1606 he was overthrown as a result of a popular uprising. In September 1610 Moscow again fell into the hands of Polish invaders who dropped all pretences this time. In October 1612 Moscow was set free by people's volunteers under Minin and Pozharsky. p. 159

- ¹¹⁸ *United Greeks*—members of the Uniat Church formed by the synod of Brest in 1596 (Brest Union). It recognised the supremacy of the Pope and the main Catholic dogmas but preserved the Orthodox rite and the Slavonic liturgy. The Uniat Church found adherents mostly among the Belorussians and Ukrainians in Poland. p. 160

- ¹¹⁹ Marx wrote this address on the instructions of the Central Council in connection with the importation into Scotland of German and Danish tailors to be used as strike-breakers. This issue was discussed at the Central Council meeting of May 1, 1866. Friedrich Lessner informed the meeting that London manufacturers also intended to have recourse to German workers. For this reason the German tailors living in London formed a committee headed by Lessner and Haufe and took a decision to act jointly with the Council in order to frustrate the plans of the manufacturers and their agents in Germany. The Central Council sent two representatives to Edinburgh who persuaded the newly-arrived workers to cancel their contracts and return home.

On Marx's request, Lessner and Haufe sent him on May 3 details about the events in Edinburgh.

"A Warning" written by Marx on May 4 was published in several German newspapers.

The author's rough and fair copies of this document have survived.

At the same time Lessner and Haufe published a leaflet which set forth the aims and tasks of the German tailors' London Committee and contained an appeal to German workers in London to collect funds. In July 1866 the committee issued a second leaflet, also signed by Lessner and Haufe, and addressed to the tailors in Germany.

This document was published in English for the first time in *The General Council of the First International. 1864-1866*, Moscow, 1962. p. 162

- ¹²⁰ A reference to the trade union which was formed in London in March 1866 when the London journeymen tailors went on strike. It had an executive committee and, jointly with the Central Council, successfully directed the tailors' strikes. In April 1866 this union joined the International. Their delegate, Matthew Lawrence, took part in the Geneva Congress. p. 162

- ¹²¹ In accordance with its decision of March 27, 1866 the Central Council made an appeal to the tailors, asking them to refrain from going to England in view of the tailors' strike there. The appeal was published in several local papers of the

International, among them the Belgian *Tribune du Peuple*, No. 17, April 29, 1866, the Swiss *Vorbote*, No. 4, April 1866 and *Journal de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs*, No. 5, April 8, 1866 and also *La Rive Gauche*, No. 15, April 15, 1866. p. 162

- ¹²² Engels devoted this series of articles to the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 which rounded off the long rivalry between Austria and Prussia and predetermined the unification of Germany under the supremacy of Prussia. Several German states—including Hanover, Saxony, Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden—fought on Austria's side. Prussia formed an alliance with Italy. In June and July military operations were conducted on two fronts: in Bohemia and in Italy. After a grave defeat at Sadowa on July 3 Austria began peace negotiations and signed a treaty in Prague on August 23. Austria conceded Schleswig and Holstein to Prussia, paid small indemnities to her and gave the province of Venetia to Italy. The German Confederation, which was founded in 1815 by decision of the Vienna Congress and embraced over 30 German states, ceased to exist, and the North German Confederation was founded in its place under Prussia's supremacy. As a result of the war, Prussia annexed the Kingdom of Hanover, the electorate of Hesse-Cassel, the Grand Duchy of Nassau and the free city of Frankfurt-am-Main.

In the first articles, Engels expressed the assumption that the Austrians might win the war, but withdrew it as soon as information on military operations enabled him to obtain a more accurate knowledge of the real balance of forces. Engels had made his preliminary forecast proceeding from the interests of achieving Germany's unification in a revolutionary way, believing that the defeat of militarist junker Prussia would be a contributory factor.

The Manchester Guardian published articles Nos. I and II under the heading "Notes on the War in Germany", and Nos. III-V under that of "Notes on the War". p. 164

- ¹²³ The reference is to the quadrangle formed by the fortresses of Peschiera, Mantua, Verona and Legnago in Northern Italy. The Austrians, who were in possession of these strongholds, fortified them thoroughly after the 1848 revolution. On its military and strategic importance see Engels' "Po and Rhine" (present edition, Vol. 16, pp. 227-30). p. 164

- ¹²⁴ See Note 31. p. 164

- ¹²⁵ See Note 37. p. 165

- ¹²⁶ Engels is referring to the tactics used by the Austrians in the war against France and Italy in 1859 (for details, see Engels' articles "The Campaign in Italy", "A Chapter of History", "The Battle of Solferino" and others, present edition, Vol. 16). p. 166

- ¹²⁷ See Note 32. p. 166

- ¹²⁸ The *Battle of Custoza* (Northern Italy) was fought by the Italian army under Victor Emmanuel II and the Austrian troops under the Archduke Albrecht on June 24, 1866. The Austrians won. The rout of the Italian army, however, had no impact on the general outcome of the Austro-Prussian war, in which Austria was defeated and lost her last possession in Northern Italy, the Province of Venetia. She had already lost Lombardy in 1859 following the defeat in the war with France and Piedmont. p. 173