



KARL MARX  
*m a sketch by T. L. Poulton)*

# KARL MARX

*by* C. J. S. SPRIGGE

Great Lives

DUCKWOO

3 HENRIETTA  
LONDON

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## FOREWORD

IN composing this brief account of the life of Karl Marx, I have drawn mainly upon the abundant correspondence of Marx and Engels – both with each other and with third parties – and on their works published in the monumental volumes of the Marx-Lenin Institute, while I have also continually referred to Franz Mehring's *Karl Marx*, Gustav Mayer's *Friedrich Engels*, and *Karl Marx : Chronik seines Lebens* (Moscow, 1934), an elaborately detailed record of Marx's life shown in excerpts from the works and the correspondence, and from other chief sources.

I have tried to give in this sketch some account of each of Marx's crusades and feuds, and to illustrate in some detail his early mental development. I have assumed the reader to be not so skilled either in philosophy or in general nineteenth-century history as to be above some elementary reminders. For the specialist and the scholar half a dozen weighty accounts of Marx are available, with which this sketch does not presume to compete.

C. J. S. S.

*Abinger, 1938.*



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## CHRONOLOGY

1818. Birth of Karl Marx at Trier (May 5th).
1842. Editor in Cologne of the *Rheinische Zeitung*.
1843. Married Jenny von Westphalen.
- 1843-49. Life in Paris and Brussels.
1848. Composes (with Engels) *Communist Manifesto*.
1849. Editor in Cologne of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Settles in London.
- 1858-64. Rivalry with Lassalle.
- 1864-72. Secretary of International Working Men's Association ("First International").
1867. Publishes *Das Kapital* (Vol. I).
1881. Death of Jenny Marx.
1882. Death of Karl Marx.

## CHAPTER I

### SON, STUDENT AND LOVER

Life by the Mosel – the Marx family baptised – Karl Marx at school – early piety – Bonn University – a passionate betrothal – Marx moves to Berlin – from Christian to Hegelian – the Berlin Doctors – academic career ruled out – journalism.

TRIER, or Treves, the most westerly town in Central Germany, is a place of beauty and repose. Relics of imperial Rome are strewn among its streets ; early Christianity has left a Romanesque cathedral, and the high Middle Age a superbly soaring church by its side. Elsewhere in the town are ripe beauties of the baroque period. The streets are broad and dignified, but homely, and the river Mosel girdles the town with a fine sweep, while on many sides vine-clad hills frame the horizon – hills well known by name to wine-lovers. Karl Marx was born on May 5th, 1818, in this fair and ancient town.

The Archbishops of Trier for centuries ruled the Mosel Valley as far as the junction with the Rhine at Coblenz. A cultured priesthood, appreciative of the city's varied and visible past, and of the virtues of Mosel wine, set the social tone. Under the rule of the Elector-Archbishop of Trier, the great Metternich was born at Coblenz in 1773, son of a diplomat in the prelate's service. Karl Marx's father, Hirschel Marx was born nine years later than the great reactionary. But while Prince Metternich, all his long life, remembered the

virtues of the old ecclesiastical order, and was when possible its willing defender, Karl Marx's father can have felt no regret when in 1802 the Archbishop renounced his temporal power. To begin with, Hirschel Marx was just too young to remember, as Metternich could, the placid period before the domain became, in 1791, the headquarters of the emigrant French aristocrats, with the eyes of political Europe upon it; next, he was a Jew, the son of Rabbi Marx Levi, and thus indifferent to the spiritual office of the ruler. When the armies of the French Republic marched in, and Trier was classified as a French provincial town, Hirschel Marx took a moderate view of the invaders. His heart had melted to Rousseau, and he revered those who spoke Rousseau's language. But Prussia, rising renewed out of the disaster of Jena, fired his imagination and completely won his loyalty. The *Prussian* victory of Waterloo ranked with him as the turning-point of history towards a greater and better age. And when Frederick William III of Prussia, by the Treaty of Vienna, became lawful sovereign of Trier, he had no more devoted subject than lawyer Marx.

Hirschel Marx must have made a respectable income as a lawyer, for his eldest son, Karl, was born in a dignified residence with a large frontage on the Brückengasse, opening on an arched courtyard behind. Henriette Pressburg, his Dutch Jewish wife, bore him a number of children of whom only Karl and three sisters were living when she died in 1863. One of these, Sophie, was older than Karl.

In 1824 Hirschel Marx made a great decision. His rabbinical father had dropped the original

family name of Levi : Hirschel now changed his name to Heinrich, on being baptised, with all his family, into the Lutheran Church. Protestants were rare in Trier : their cult had been illegal up to 1782. In joining the State Church of Prussia Heinrich emphasised anew his devotion to Prussian institutions. Henriette, the daughter of a long line of Dutch rabbis, took her husband's word for it that this was a change for the good. Not that Jews in Trier were subject to any civil disabilities ; the French invaders had abolished them and they had not been restored. But anti-Semitism was rife in Prussia, and the acknowledged leader of the Prussian philosophers, Fichte, had until his recent death been its powerful voice, denouncing Jewry as a State within the State, and Jewish theology as incompatible with civil loyalty. Fichte's complaint was against the thoughts in Jewish heads, not the blood in their bodies, and the Jews of the post-Napoleonic period could do what their descendants to-day cannot do : they could show willingness to remove the cause of offence by being baptised. None of the Marx family thereafter seem to have complained of being molested or despised on account of their race.

When he was twelve years old, Karl was sent to the local " gymnasium " or secondary school, and studied for five years in its precincts. It was a dignified building with high gables, an ornate doorway, and an inner quad, formed on one side by a late Gothic church. In the summer of 1835, young Karl sat for the passing-out examination to enable him to proceed to the University.

His performance in the examination was

unequal. In mathematics, this time he came out poorly, though in his leaving certificate his masters allowed him to be proficient in the subject; but his three essays, Latin and German and religious, were all of them remarkable. They have been preserved and republished by the Marx-Lenin Institute of Moscow.

The German essay was written round the theme "A Young Man's Choice of His Career." It is on a very high moral tone. A young man is warned not to leave his career to chance but to listen to the inner voice, the guidance of God. He must not be misled by the desire for glittering prizes: ambition is a false index. His parents will help him to make a proper choice, which to some extent will be predetermined by the family background, by things which happened before he was even born. The young man (Karl Marx continues) must further suit his profession to his physical constitution, as if work and health are in conflict there is an end to the peace necessary for true accomplishment. Self-contempt would in that case incline the sufferer to hatred of his kind. But the man who has chosen the right career can never be utterly despondent. His end will be hallowed by the tears of noble men: his deeds will live on.

In the Latin essay Marx had to pass judgment on the age of Augustus. The argument is prefaced by a careful statement of method, and narrowed down to a comparison of the Augustan age, first with the early Roman republic, and then with the age of Nero. The Augustan age was morally inferior to the Republican, but superior to it in culture and intelligence: it

was more efficient than the age of Nero. The examiners were impressed by the essay, but not by the handwriting. ("*Verum, quam turpis litera,*" they wrote across it.)

The religious essay was in a meltingly pious vein. Marx declares that all men feel a deep need for religious comfort. The men of antiquity felt it; savages have a conviction of their own wickedness. The Christian, too, knows that he has a nature inclined to sin, a fallible mind, a spoiled heart, and is an outcast from the face of God. But at the same time he exults in his Redeemer. The examiners were much impressed by this essay, also, with its solemn sermonisation, and a few happier, more natural phrases on the Parable of the Vine and the Branches.

Karl Marx was awarded his certificate with commendations for his character and his accomplishments. It was noted to his credit that he sought to tussle with the hardest problems, but he was charged with the fault of preferring the elaborate to the simple mode of expression. Shortly afterwards he proceeded to Bonn on the Rhine, another riverside town of spires, high gables and windmills, in a luxuriant rural setting. Karl Marx stayed here from October, 1835, to August, 1836, studying at the famous University. He was inscribed as a law-student, but attended, besides the lectures on Jurisprudence and Roman Law, Courses on Ancient Mythology, on the Homeric Question (by A. W. Schlegel) and on the History of Modern Art.

He was now a young man on his own, residing in "digs," and called upon to restrict his outlay to fit his income. This he never succeeded in doing,



either in Bonn or at any other time in his life. He bought a great many bulky books, and sent home expense accounts which Heinrich did not at all appreciate.

Young Marx was an infrequent correspondent, and his letters seldom had any relation to those he should have answered. His parents' letters were replete with good advice. When he is not quite well Father recommends walking, and moderate riding; Mother suggests abstinence from wine, coffee and tobacco. Father warns him against the glamour of duelling, and makes suggestions about his studies. Is he wise to neglect natural history? Meanwhile Marx seems to have had a fairly gay time. There were over thirty young men from Trier at the University, and they had a club which caroused on occasion at the White Horse Inn. Marx was once or twice in trouble with the authorities for making a shindy over a bottle of wine when quiet citizens were abed. But as he was free of all suspicion of an undesirable interest in politics, the University gave him a good-conduct certificate, as well as a testimony to his zeal for learning, when he left them after two terms to go to Berlin.

Karl's father, with his cult for Prussia, would probably have encouraged his son in any case to proceed to the Prussian capital, where Humboldt's University was at the height of its fame. All the more strongly he pressed him, or perhaps commanded him, to continue his studies at that great distance from home when Karl, in the summer, confided that he was betrothed to his sister Sophie's school friend, Jenny von Westphalen.

head, could not take young love lightly, like other fathers, nor dismiss as preposterous Karl's intention to marry a leading Society beauty several years his senior. Heinrich had no strength to resist; besides, he and Henriette had a high respect for Jenny's good sense; and so he aided and abetted. Marx was packed off to Berlin with instructions to become an earner at the earliest possible moment, an aim which rather conflicted with the plan of waiting for certainty of a vocation.

Jenny's father, Ludwig von Westphalen, was for a time left out of the secret. A high official, son of the Duke of Brunswick's former chief Minister and of a well-born Scottish lady, von Westphalen was a man of broad culture and keen intellect, and his daughter might have been considered the first young lady in Trier. He saw that Karl Marx was not an ordinary boy, and gave him the run of his library and sometimes, on holidays, took him for long walks over the hillside. He helped Karl, no doubt, to a more virile view of human nature than what the Lutheran Church, working on Jewish family traditions, had evolved in his growing mind. In fact, Ludwig von Westphalen evidently had a great deal to do with Karl's intrepid incursion into philosophy, which was to be the main, almost the only, occupation of his next five years, apart from love-lorn moonings and unsuccessful efforts in verse-composition in the manner of Heine. Jenny, already a mature young lady of twenty, of robust physique, her masses of black hair piled up in an elaborate coiffure, can be pictured on these occasions pretending to chatter with her school

friend, Sophie Marx, while really engaged in overhearing young Karl's clever questions to her father. Young Karl, perhaps, was sometimes equally distracted, however interesting he found Jenny's father's remarks on Lessing and Shakespeare.

Karl Marx, then, arrived in Berlin in time for the autumn term of 1836, very much and quite straightforwardly in love, and under orders from his father to show himself a man as quickly as possible. Heinrich meant by this that Karl should concentrate all his energies on securing an initial success to raise himself above his age and station in the general esteem. But he can have known little of the languors of romantic love. Karl, according to his own account, posted to Berlin in an amorous fever which turned even the *tables d'hôte* at the wayside inns into tropes and figures of love. Instead of seeking out the society of the successful and influential, as Heinrich intended him to do, Karl shut himself up in his pleasantly situated lodging in the Leipzigerstrasse, close by one of Berlin's quiet canal bridges, and interrupted his readings only to attend an occasional lecture at the neighbouring University, or to pen a poem in the style of Heine.

Heine himself had been a Berlin University student a few years before, listening unwillingly to the "leathery dronings" of professors in dark, dismal, airless lecture halls, while he peeped at the gay scene through the window in Unter den Linden, especially towards the entrance of the Royal Opera just over the road, where the singers and the ladies and gentlemen, driving up in their sparkling equipages, would stop to make way for

a troop of dashing cavalry or for the passage of royalty. Young Marx, though in poetry Heine's disciple, later to be for a time his close friend, had no eye for such delights – and no great talent, either, for verse, as he himself soon acknowledged. Marx was not a keen lecture-goer, but when he went he gave his attention to the lecturer, and not to the window, so that at the end of the first term he was certified to have followed the courses in ecclesiastical law and civil procedure with assiduity. From the first months of his Berlin career he recognised that these subjects were more his true concern than lyrical poetry, though he continued to fill notebooks with odes and ballads for the attention of Jenny and of his father. Heinrich regretted that the versifying talent should be hidden, even if Karl had quite rightly decided against poetry as a career. Heinrich thought that a good patriotic ode, duly displayed in the bookshops, might be a great help to advancement in a respectable bureaucrat's career. He suggested to his son the theme of the Prussian victory of Waterloo, that turning-point of modern history towards its greatest hopes and promises. But Karl's romantic Muse cared only for old ruins, moonlit ghost-dances, poison draughts for cheated lovers, prologues in heaven, and was not to be immolated in this fashion. After a while Karl ceased trying to be a poet, but he afterwards claimed to have caught a glimpse of poetry's fairy realm – a glimpse, he wrote, that was “dizzying,” and sufficed at any rate to keep him from exploiting rhyme as a way to material success.

Meanwhile, through arduous nights of study, he sought his own task. Jurisprudence was to be

the field, but law and philosophy proved to be closely involved, and Marx determined "to come to terms with philosophy." In his home at Trier, and in the Westphalen household, Marx had taken a full dose of the early idealist philosophy, and of the literature which flourished alongside of it. Fichte's thought represented the limit of refinement and subtlety which he had yet experienced, and Marx has left on record that his first months in Berlin were spent in systematising the legal maxims taught at the University in a pattern resembling those imagined by Fichte, complicated and laborious, and the less satisfying the further they were elaborated. For between the details of jurisprudence as taught in the lecture-rooms, and the guiding principles to be learned from Kant and Fichte, an impassable barrier seemed to be fixed. In the hope of finding practice and principles harmonised, Marx now turned his attention to Hegel, the philosopher most in vogue in Berlin, of whom one of his professors, Eduard Gans, was a keen disciple and gifted exponent. Marx did not take easily to Hegel: he complained that the master's style was grotesque, rocky, cavernous, uncomfortable. Joseph Schelling, Hegel's contemporary, rival and in some respects teacher and master, was an easier guide to follow. But Schelling dissatisfied Marx as Fichte and Kant dissatisfied him: these philosophers (he noted) "seek a faraway land in the skies: Hegel seeks to comprehend what he sees in the street." Hegel's thought thus satisfied some deep requirement which Marx felt for a system of classifications that was not abstract and divorced from experience.

Marx never saw Hegel in person, for the master had died five years before he arrived in Berlin. Schelling, however, was living in Munich, and from time to time issued reminders that he by no means considered his task finished. Yet in the University of Berlin the living Schelling was considered to belong definitely to the past, while the deceased Hegel was a most important factor in the present – for Marx, and for other young men of his age, the most important of all. To a great extent Marx devoted the next ten years to the study of Hegel and of Hegel's interpreters, passing from a complete acceptance of the Hegelian philosophy to a criticism of certain interpretations of it and thence – such is his own claim – to a revolutionary transformation of it into the dialectical materialism later preached as “Marxism.” And the influence of Hegel was about the same time moulding the mind of another unknown young Rhineland, Friedrich Engels, who was convincing himself, like Marx, that the human mind had become ripe for a new liberty, and that he was to play a part in the drama of some instant change in the relations of man to the world, and of man to man. For Engels, the renouncing of Protestant dogma in the name of philosophic freedom was a joyous adventure, recorded with rapture in verses and letters to his friends.

Marx fully surrendered his more powerful and ponderous mind to Hegel about six months after his arrival in Berlin. Days and nights of study, varied only by attempts at poetic and literary portrayal of his emotions, had exhausted and depressed him : he had never taken the trouble

to explore the streets of Berlin ; his whole life in the unfamiliar city and the hard winter climate had been spent in his book-choked lodging, save for rare and solitary excursions to the University buildings a few streets away. Driven at last to consider his health, he followed the advice of a doctor and retired in the early summer to Stralau, then a riverside fishing-village, and now an industrial suburb of Berlin. The change of air rapidly restored him, although he arrived at his rest-cure quarters with a trunk full of philosophic works and manuscripts, and lost no time in settling down to composing a philosophic dialogue, *Cleanthes : or the Premiss and Progress of Philosophy*. It was an essay composed in the tradition of Schelling, and it utterly failed to satisfy its author : so much that he took this failure for proof of the necessity of mastering "the present world philosophy" – that is, Hegelism. In "plunging into that sea" (Marx's own expression) he had before him the clear intention of discovering a world of thought (*die geistige Natur*) as indisputable, concrete and clearly defined as the physical world. In the excitement of his mental upheaval, Marx threw himself into an unwonted bodily activity. He ran up and down the banks of the muddy Spree, joined his landlord in a shooting party – which he notes as a very extraordinary proceeding – spent a wild day in Berlin. But meanwhile he had found a system which he could make his own, accepting to be for a time at least a learner and disciple. Later he would discard of Hegel all save a habit of thinking in terms of alternating tension and relaxation (the famous "dialectic") rather than in terms of smooth and steady development. But

to the last he professed himself a disciple of "that great thinker," all the more when the next generation treated Hegel as "a dead dog."

And the deceased Hegel did more than sustain young Marx with the doctrines concentrated in numerous volumes carted to Stralau: Hegel made living friends for Marx among the students of the University. At Stralau Marx had met Rutenberg, a young geography teacher in a military college, who was in trouble with the authorities over some articles he was suspected of having written in provincial papers. Marx and Rutenberg struck up a friendship which lasted long enough for Marx to come in touch with the circle of young Hegelians whom Rutenberg frequented and whom he soon found more brilliant and interesting companions than his introducer.

Among the young Hegelians, Karl Marx found conversation turning chiefly upon a question he had recently been ignoring—the Christian religion. At seventeen years of age he had taken Christian dogma literally and seriously, as shown in his school essays. Then on acquaintance with the romantics he had forsworn dogma without passing on to the deliberate formulation of an outlook on life. He had enjoyed for a year or two that twilight of religious faith, when the intellect has rejected old religious bonds, but still receives impetus from the poetry of the myth which it no longer recognises for truth. That was on the whole the religious compromise of Goethe ("*Gefühl ist alles*"), and the same attitude was in the first quarter of the nineteenth century preached by example if not by precept in the high seat of philosophy—by Kant's chosen



successor Fichte. An older contemporary of Marx, Arthur Schopenhauer (of whose odd appearance and behaviour something is heard in Marx's student correspondence) launched the accusation that Fichte had worshipped the Absolute Ego until this creed began to get him into difficulties, whereupon he had "most obligingly transformed the Absolute Ego into the Christian God" and was thereafter left in peace. Such a compromise indeed obviated open conflict on religious issues for most of the cultured middle classes. Thanks to it, simple Frau Henriette Marx, cultured but easy-going Heinrich Marx (who knelt in prayer with a good scientific conscience because Leibniz and Newton had done so) and virile Herr von Westphalen need not be separated by any open differences of religious profession. And while Karl Marx, under the influence of Jenny's father, had made a conscious inner break with dogma — this we can gather from some warning hints in his father's letters at the time — he could still compose a hymn to the Father of Creation, and a dialogue on the nature of the Deity. The philosophy of Schelling (considered the last word in German thought by Mme. de Staël and Coleridge) gave the model for compositions proposedly both scientific and religious. Marx's *Cleanthes* must have echoed Schelling's *Bruno*.

But, having in Stralau embraced "the present world philosophy" and having been accepted in the café circles as a young Hegelian, Marx was drawn into discussion of the most urgent question these contemporaries had found it necessary to face: was Hegel compatible with Christianity?

Reference to Hegel's own texts did not still the argument, rather stimulated it. In the final edition of the *Encyclopædia of Philosophic Sciences*, Hegel's last word to the public, it was plainly written that "It is essential to the concept of genuine religion, of which the content is the absolute spirit, that it is revealed, and revealed by God." That might seem clear: but just what did Hegel mean by revelation? His very first work had been a study of the life of Jesus eliminating the miraculous from the narrative. The "revelation" which he accepted was certainly not the narrow Christian interpretation of history, not a command to the eye of faith to give unique value to the life of the Founder of Christianity, and to the cult of his personality, raised above criticism.

The fact perhaps was that Hegel had completely justified on the one hand the rise, progress and fixation, but on the other hand also the transformation and dissolution, of Christianity in the fullness of time. He set out to train the minds of his disciples to recognise the necessity of the procession of events resulting from the clash of the forces in the universe, a clash which they were to see at work not merely between, but also within whatever was the object of thought - atoms or personalities. But the more surely he thus reconciled them to the necessity of what had been and was, the less certainty did he leave them about the shape of things to come, which must await, at every juncture, the casting vote of some decisively energetic factor. So if he justified conforming to Christianity in 1830, he left it quite open whether that would be a proper attitude in 1840.

Was Marx aware of the perpetual ambiguity in which Hegel must leave his disciples, or did he seek in the philosopher's grandiose elaboration of thought some sure guidance for life? Perhaps we may answer this question by distinguishing two Hegels—the metaphysician who had carried metaphysics to a point at which this discipline ceased to afford any conclusions of practical importance, and the physical and moral scientist who had taken charge of energies thus liberated and utilised them for a universal exploration of classified facts. We know that at the very moment when Karl Marx was resorting to Hegel for an explanation of “what one sees in the street,” he was composing an epigram in hexameter which tellingly exhibits the impression received from Hegel as an authority on final truths.

Hegel is made to speak :

*“ Words, worked into a pattern of demon complexity  
teach I :*

*Each who hears me may think just what he chooses to  
think ;*

*Leastwise his thought will not be contained in  
cramping confinement.*

*Watch how a river in flood tumbles from peak of a  
rock ;*

*Likewise the poet expresses the words and the thoughts  
of his loved one,*

*As they come up in his mind, feels them, and says  
what he feels.*

*So can each one drink in the flowing nectar of wisdom:  
What I teach is the All, since what I teach you is  
Nought.”*

During his lifetime Hegel's outward conformity with the Lutheran confession had protected him from the hostility of sensitively orthodox theologians. Hegel's complete loyalty to the Prussian State was too valuable to Berlin Ministries for them to weigh the scruples of the ecclesiastics. After his death, for a year or two, a philosophic Minister of the Interior, Altenstein, still upheld the maxim that Hegelianism was the recognised philosophy of the State, and on the strength of it would not interfere even with those Hegelians who put the emphasis on Hegel's doctrine of incessant evolution rather than on his counter-doctrine of conservation of values. But now this radical school of "Young" Hegelians, in sharp contrast with the "Old," began to proclaim its emancipation loudly and boldly. David Strauss had published his *Life of Jesus* in 1835 and was following it up with replies to orthodox critics. In the name of "The Higher Criticism," short work was made of the whole historical tradition of the Church, while a powerful but solitary thinker, Ludwig Feuerbach, putting perilous doctrines in plain language, professed to demonstrate that mankind had always worshipped its own higher self under the guise of different divinities. In the circles which Karl Marx now began to frequent, the theologians were viewed as effete tyrants over men's thoughts, their overthrow as the proper task of the most vigorous thinkers. The most energetic and battlesome man in the clique, Bruno Bauer, had in particular vowed himself to it, and aspired to exploding theology from within the fortress: he was himself a candidate for the Chair of Theology

at the University of Bonn, and Altenstein was ready to let him have the Chair. Bauer soon picked out Marx as a confidant, and would have had him as a co-operator in his schemes.

At the moment of his acceptance by "the Doctors" (as the Young Hegelians were then known) Marx experienced a deep turmoil of the mind and the will. He felt he was at a turning-point, that he had left behind him many abortive beginnings, that he must make a fresh start. The memory of frustrated ventures in poetry, play-writing, story-telling and jurisprudence, months of midnight oil burned over what he now thought worthless, nauseated him. He wrote to his father describing the confusion of his recent life, proposing to return on a visit to the home circle and to Jenny, the only people among whom he felt happy and secure.

But Heinrich Marx, usually so indulgent, refused. He reinterpreted his son's mental agonies in terms of the money and the care which he, Heinrich, had poured out for him, of the waste of health and opportunity, the mispending of a youth that should have been cheerful and convivial. No! Let "Monsieur Karl" pursue his studies through the winter to some more definite conclusions. Then he might return home for a respite.

Before that could happen, however, Heinrich Marx, who had long been ailing, died, leaving Karl master of his own movements.

Karl, in his way, had been fond of his father. Heinrich had been devoted to his son, even when exasperated by his fast-and-loose spending and his failure to give any regular account of his

movements or his money affairs. (He was never even quite sure of Karl's Berlin address.) Both the parents had some perceptiveness in judging their difficult first-born: for Frau Henriette early judged that he would live for the benefit of humanity, while Heinrich trembled to note a certain demonic egoism, which might unfit him for intimate human relations, and the best sort of happiness.

For a further three years after his father's death Karl Marx lived and worked in Berlin, frequenting the Doctors, reading prodigiously, filling notebooks with excerpts, and failing to produce the thesis for his degree. The year after Heinrich's death Bruno Bauer, who wanted Marx to join him at Bonn, was urging him to get through with his "b—— exams": but Marx, already late on his programme, required another two years to put together his thesis on the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus. He finally sought his doctorate not at Berlin, but at Jena University (in Saxony), which conferred degrees on external students, and was less likely to probe into the general opinions of candidates before granting them.

For meanwhile the Prussian Government was departing from its former tolerance. The project of his joining Bauer in a sort of free-thought mission to the Rhineland university was soon shown up as vain. Altenstein had appointed Bauer to a lectureship in Bonn in 1839, as a first step to the Chair of Theology. But that same year Altenstein died, and while Bauer was still eagerly planning for Marx to join him, he was himself, in the autumn of 1840, rejected as candidate

for the chair which had been marked out for him. The rejection was in the form of a refusal by the faculty to endorse Bauer's nomination.

Bruno Bauer is represented in a caricature by Friedrich Engels, who himself shortly afterwards joined the Doctors' circle, as a short, slight, clean-shaven young man — he was then thirty — wildly gesticulating (so far as he can free his arms from his tight frock-coat) with clenched fists. With his young brother Edgar, he represented the extremest radicalism to be found among the Young Hegelians. "Revolution" was a favourite word (devoid of any political significance) in his breezily blasphemous correspondence with Marx from Bonn, and he was ready to continue on new ground the struggle which had cost him his professorship. He still, in 1841, desired Marx's presence in Bonn, whither he had returned as a private propagandist of the rebellion against creeds. But Marx had inherited no private fortune to sustain himself and his desired bride in a career of unpaid agitation. Bauer and Marx now planned publication of a radical periodical in the Rhineland, but on discouraging remarks from the Berlin Government this project was soon dropped. Marx returned to Trier to reconsider his plans; and there immediately afterwards he lost the one friend of the older generation in Trier for whom he had kept a lively respect, Jenny's father, Ludwig von Westphalen, to whom Marx had dedicated his first publication as to his best guide and preceptor, died almost in Marx's arms. But meanwhile Marx had decided to seek a living through the calling of daily journalism, then a power much in the ascendant.

## CHAPTER II

### THE YOUNG EDITOR

The Press in the Rhineland – Marx as staff contributor – class legislation – Marx editor of *Rheinische Zeitung* – breaks with Berlin Doctors – Friedrich Engels as student and journalist.

THE *Rheinische Zeitung* commenced publication as a Cologne daily on January 1st, 1842, superseding an earlier Cologne paper, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, which had been running for two years. The *Kölnische Zeitung*, with 8,000 subscribers, was the solid organ of Cologne, but during recent dissensions of the Berlin Government with the Catholic clergy, this powerful newspaper had taken the popular Catholic side. A rival organ, free of clerical influence, would in these circumstances be forgiven some excesses, even of liberal tendency, if it could be counted upon to uphold the Prussian cause against Rhenish Catholic particularism. The Catholic Party had been recently much exasperated by the arrest of the Archbishop for his refusal to celebrate mixed marriages. The predestined defenders of Prussian civilisation on Rhenish soil seemed to be those Berlin graduates, disciples of Hegel, who had spent their student days elaborating the theory of the ethical State with so much subtlety and enthusiasm. The Cologne shareholders would seek in vain any abler advocates for Prussia against Rome; the "Liberty Club," on its side, was delighted at getting the run of a daily organ. Rutenberg, the geography teacher, in whose company Marx had



first joined the café circles of the Doctors and the Free, was commissioned to write the main German political correspondence. It seems that Marx himself introduced his older friend to the editorial circle of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. At the age of twenty-three, Marx was still one of the youngest of "the Free" but had already made an extraordinary impression upon Moses Hess, editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, a Cologne paper which was just about to be merged into the *Rheinische Zeitung*. This wealthy Rhenish Jew was the most travelled of the young Hegelians. He used the formulas of the Hegelian Doctors, but his hopes for the world's future were not narrowly focused upon the triumph of one series of doctrinal interpretations over another. He had seen France and England, and observed that those nations were making new history without having learned in Berlin the pattern on which history is made. In contrast to the other Doctors, Marx appeared to him (1841) as "perhaps the only real philosopher now living . . . a sort of Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel rolled into one." Georg Jung, one of the co-editors of the new paper, recognised in Marx, with approval, "a terrific revolutionary, but one of the keenest wits I know." In the weeks before the *Rheinische Zeitung* superseded the *Allgemeine*, Marx was already powerful in this paper's counsels, recommending one proposed contributor and objecting to another, with immediate effect.

Before midsummer, he himself had taken a leading place in the columns of the amalgamated paper. The assured circulation was less than 850, not much more than a tenth of its rival's, but in

Berlin its bold style was causing delight and distress. Marx's contributions at times disturbed the editors themselves, who had trouble enough in getting milder matter past the Censor. They were enthusiastic, however, even about some of the articles they refused to print. And it was as the proved master of vigorous polemic that Marx undertook, in the summer, to report the deliberations of the Rhineland Diet then in session.

The provincial estates, or Diets, were the sole elected deliberative-assemblies meeting in Prussia, an invention (in their present form) of twenty years earlier. King Frederick William IV tried to rouse historical sentiment in their favour; but young Germany saw in them only a feeble and defective fulfilment of the promise of a Constitution made long ago in 1815. It was to prepare the country for new taxation that the King summoned the Diets in 1842. A Central Committee chosen from their midst was to examine a national project: the Diets themselves were to consider suitable local affairs. They were not likely to give much trouble to the Court. Even the Rhineland Diet, though elected on a broader base than the others, was wholly in the power of the nobility, who had one-third of the seats reserved to them, while all decisions required a two-thirds majority. The Diet shrank from publicity. A thousand citizens appealed to Berlin for public sessions and a printed report of proceedings. But what small concessions Berlin made the Diet itself sought to frustrate, and the articles which Marx now wrote had to omit any speakers' names. An attentive Censor scanned them line by line before they were printed. On

one topic, at least, the Rhineland Conservatives were expected to give expression to public indignation – on the prolonged detention, without trial, of their Archbishop. But the lethargic majority rejected even this joint Catholic and Liberal proposal. Here was a matter on which the *Rheinische Zeitung*, if it was to be of any use to the Berlin Government, should have supported the majority decision. But Marx, re-examining the problem, felt no obligation to side with Berlin, even against “the imbecile Catholics of Cologne.” His article – each “article” of this sort being a lengthy essay printed in several successive numbers – was prohibited. But the Diet now turned to discussing a motion favouring public sessions, and by way of commentary Marx was allowed by the Censor to develop an argument for freedom of the Press which enhanced his reputation as a cogent thinker. Then at the end of October he found an opportunity to exercise his mind and his pen in the examination of what was to him a novel sort of problem, touching, as it did, not merely upon moral and juridical issues but upon the contrasting material interests of classes. The Diet had been discussing the frequent commission of the offence of timber and firewood lifting from private lands. More than half of all police summonses in the Rhineland at that time concerned this offence, which, for deterrent purposes, the landowners proposed to render a criminal offence. Marx was righteously indignant that the Diet, which had been otherwise so lethargic, should suddenly display great energy in asserting novel and doubtful claims by landowners at the expense of the poorer classes.

If only because the circulation of the paper began to expand prodigiously, the shareholders of the *Rheinische Zeitung* were pleased with these important contributions, however much the Censor and local notables were put out by them. Marx in October was accordingly appointed to the Chief Editorship. Hardly had he taken office when the Prussian authorities issued a stern warning that the policy of the paper must be decisively changed on both the political and the religious questions at issue.

On the religious side, Marx was disposed to acquiescence. Without surrendering the passionately cherished right of universal criticism, he had drawn a distinction between those opinions which were suitable for expounding to a general public and those better reserved for another audience. He was quite willing to pledge himself not to admit direct attacks on religion to the pages of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, if that could diminish the hostility of the authorities. But in giving such a pledge he was bound to cause annoyance to Bruno Bauer and the other old friends of the Liberty Club, the Berlin Doctors. For while Marx was tussling with the details of local politics in the Rhineland, and getting interested in the conditions of workmen and peasantry, the Doctors were still absorbed in their anti-theological interpretations of Hegel's logic. Concerned above all else to deny and to ridicule the personal God in the name of the impersonal Spirit, they regarded the routine of politics and business as sheer boredom. A newspaper might have to give news about such trifles, for this is a contradictory world, but the really important task of the intellectual

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was to disseminate the gospel of Godlessness. In high excitement over this task, the unworldly Doctors frisked and gambolled through the streets of Berlin, making themselves obnoxious to parsons and pietists with queer displays of fleshliness and devilry – Godwins (an Englishman might think) anxious to be taken for Bolingbrokes.

In the last year their anti-theological zeal had been whetted by counter-attacks of an exciting sort. During the 'thirties, Hegel's authority had prevailed so strongly that the most serious philosophic controversy was that conducted between rival interpreters of his thought. Throughout that time, led by Bruno Bauer, and inspired from a distance by the humanist Ludwig Feuerbach, the Doctors had exerted their strength to show that, starting from Hegel, further progress could only be made in the direction of a thought centred upon Man : the opposing " old Hegelians " had taken their stand on Hegel's theistic texts and argued for a permanent concordat between philosophers and theologians. Suddenly the authority of Hegel himself was called in question by will of the Berlin Government. Joseph Schelling was sought out and instated in the Chair of Philosophy at Berlin. To the Hegelian generation of the 'forties, Schelling was not an unpopular name : the old man had his share of reverence as Hegel's predecessor and, in some respects, instructor. During long years of retirement in Munich, he was supposed to have exchanged the role of the precise thinker for that of the absorbed mystic. But Schelling as Hegel's successor, ten years after his death ! The Doctors could only take this appointment as a challenge to the World

Spirit itself. "Should you arrive in Berlin at this moment, and enquire of anyone in the know, where is the battlefield on which Germany's outlook upon politics and religion is being contended for, you will at once be told: 'University Hall No. 6, where Schelling is to lecture on revelation.'" Of all the Liberty men, the writer of these lines, young Friedrich Engels, was the most indignant and excited. This young soldier, was a born journalist. He at once sat down to write up the story of Schelling's lecture, for the Press, and followed up his article with a series of verse and prose pamphlets - a spate of youthful wit and ardour. The circle of the Doctors throbbed with excitement. Bruno Bauer, deprived of his teaching licence at Bonn, was now back in Berlin, a sharp-featured, clean-shaven don lustily firing his literary broadsides against tottering orthodoxy. His young but portly and bearded brother Edgar was yet more fiery, and Guardsman Friedrich Engels himself (who in the intervals of military service attended University lectures in a blue tunic, black-and-yellow collared, with red-and-white epaulettes) joined them in their evening revels when quit of parades and lectures. The talk was of the vast changes in human history to be wrought through the final overthrow of Christian dogma. What were the forces arrayed on either side now that Schelling's nomination made open war a certainty? Leo, Hengstenberg, Krummacher, Sack, were the guardians of orthodoxy: they it was who had induced Altenstein's successor to attempt what Altenstein had recognised for hopeless - to put the clock back on Hegel, to revive the thoughts and thinkers he had



surpassed. Against these, hearty and confident futurists, were ranged the Free Men of Berlin and their absent friends, Köppen, Meyen, Rutenberg, Max Stirner, with Ruge in Halle and Karl Marx in the Rhineland, and their three selves. Would all of them be ready to press their thought to the last conclusions? Would some take fright at the impending dissolution of family, state and property institutions through the sheer urge of the Spirit, which the Bauers were looking forward to? The three friends counted upon themselves to the last inch: of the rest, the "black man of Trier," Karl Marx, would not fail. From the Bauers and others, Engels got the impression that Marx would see any combat through to the ultimate crisis.

Karl Marx, with an eye on the day's news in the Rhineland and in the wider world, did not overlook Schelling's nomination and all it signified for the trend of Prussian official culture. A full year later he was urging Feuerbach to lead a direct attack upon Schelling. But he could not take the view that Lecture Hall No. 6 in Berlin was the decisive battle-ground for Germany's future. A year before he had, it was true, contemplated founding, with Bauer, a literary organ of militant atheism, but he was quickly coming to the view that dogmas, opinions, philosophies were but the expression of human circumstances: that history was the development of circumstances, and brought with it, willy-nilly, a development of ideas – the sheer opposite of Bauer's doctrine that thought makes and unmakes all institutions. With the contributions of the Berlin atheists, and of recruits to the Doctors unknown to himself –

young Engels among them – Editor Marx became ever more impatient. Not only was he tired of their portentous anti-dogma, but from all he heard he guessed that the Doctors – anyway, the narrower circle of the Bauers – were bringing discredit upon the whole radical movement with exhibitionist tomfoolery in night-life haunts. Marx did not hold with the view that Thought, or the Spirit, engaged upon dissolving the institution of marriage, should be assisted in the task by displays of scandalous merry-making. When a Berlin professor – not one of the Doctors – criticised the obligation of sexual fidelity in marriage as too harsh on man's animal nature, Marx sat down to convict him in the pages of the *Rheinische Zeitung* of "frivolous shamelessness": but the Censor cut out the whole passage.

Marx proceeded now to break with the Bauer brothers and their closer associates. He did so by taking sides, against them, with Arnold Ruge, kindly and corpulent veteran of the nationalist student movements of the previous decade, who, after serving a long sentence of internment as a political agitator, had been left free to practise journalism. Ruge had married a fortune and was able to conduct at Halle a review to which the Doctors contributed occasional essays. On a visit to Berlin in company with the poet Herwegh, Ruge observed with distaste, and Herwegh also, the jollifications of the Bauer circle. News of a breach of relations between these prominent radicals, Herwegh and Ruge on one side, Bauer and his friends on the other, with a hint of the reason, was printed in an Elberfeld newspaper. Marx reproduced the message in the *Rheinische*

*Zeitung* for November 29th. The Doctors of the Liberty Club angrily demanded space to put forward their account of the affair. Marx considered that they were trying to dictate policy to him, and snapped his fingers at their threats. Could they suppose a serious political organ was going to change its course to give pleasure to a few Berlin windbags? Did they fancy that, when consummate skill was needed to get the paper past the Censor into print at all, an editor would load it up with donnish outbursts against ecclesiastical institutions in general?

For months Marx had been burdened by his connection with the Doctors, and the breach at the end of November well served his present object of rendering the paper as inoffensive to the authorities as it could be without surrendering its vigorous political independence. There are differences of opinion in the highest quarters about dogma (he submitted to the chief official in Cologne on November 15th), and surely a newspaper need not actively uphold one thesis in an undecided case. The *Rheinische Zeitung* had not exceeded the limits of propriety for a daily paper; it had only discussed Church dogma and affairs when other papers had dragged these into the political sphere. It would in the future show still more care. For the rest (argued Marx), the *Rheinische Zeitung* was a national institution, created by the effort and contributions of many eminent Rhinelanders, expressing their opinions in the language of free men and permitting His Majesty to learn the true state of public opinion. For the moment the authorities were pacified by these arguments, insisting only on the exclusion

of Rutenberg from the editorial staff (for which order Marx was wholly thankful. He had long left Rutenberg in his rear).

Friedrich Engels had intermittently corresponded for the *Rheinische Zeitung* during 1842. Not content with simultaneous attention to the military life and to philosophic study, this youth of many parts lost no chance of getting his thoughts into print. Ebullient on great and small topics, he had made his journalistic signature – two stars in an Andrew's cross – well known to Cologne readers. In August he completed a year's voluntary service in the Prussian artillery guards, and returned to his family home in Elberfeld to prepare for a journey on family business to England. Active Hegelian, keen soldier, brilliant linguist, excellent designer, musician of feeling, swordsman, equestrian, tireless *littérateur*, Engels had more than once caused his pious family to doubt whether he would make a successful cotton spinner or merchant. The doubts were unjustified. In the intervals of revolution and conspiracy, and later on, in the time he could spare from his studies, Friedrich Engels always kept his end up as a business man. His thoughts, as he left for Manchester, were not, however, centred on profits for the family firm. Before him he saw the grandiose and absorbing prospect of a world in renewal, along lines which he could clearly foresee – thought the confident youth.

A few months before, Engels had perhaps been altogether of one mind with Bruno Bauer, who, in all honesty, expected the new age of mankind to spring ready made from a dozen Berlin brains. But already in his twenty-two years Engels had

seen something of the wider world. Quite lately, on his way from Berlin to Elberfeld, he had met Moses Hess, the man who had begun to prophesy that the revolution would be not an intellectual but a social upheaval, and now assigned to England, France and Germany co-equal though different parts in the future drama. Engels, in short, was no longer the sort of pure young Berlin intellectual that Marx took him for. Marx himself, as a matter of fact, was just engaged in the first serious examination of the opinions coming to be known as "Communism." On October 15th, in the columns of his paper, he had rebutted an accusation that it was propagating this doctrine ; he had at the same time promised to give it his serious attention, and, true to his word, just about the time of his first meeting with Engels, he was studying *Qu'est ce que la propriété ?*, the famous enquiry to which Proudhon had just given the famous answer, "Property is theft."

## CHAPTER III

### MARX AND ENGELS

Marx meets Engels - censorship from Berlin - Marx resigns - he marries Jenny - they move to Paris - fiasco of the *Franco-German Annals* - Ruge, Heine, Proudhon - Marx among the workmen - expelled from Paris - to Brussels and Manchester with Engels - Communism.

It was on a November day in 1842 that Karl Marx first set eyes on his young contributor Engels, the cotton manufacturer's son from Barmen. This first meeting between the future joint authors of the *Communist Manifesto*, like the first meeting of their slightly older contemporaries, Cöbden and Bright, revealed no affinity between the predestined collaborators. For once in a lifetime, in fact, Marx felt the presence of Engels as an intrusion.

In physique and bearing the two men were opposites. Marx, not quite twenty-five years old, of middle height, bulky, saturnine, imposing, now displayed with assurance a full-bearded manhood. Engels, two years younger, was tall, slim and blond, and carried himself like a young soldier. At the time, Marx was preoccupied by his gruelling correspondence with the Prussian Censor, and harassed by the advice and warnings of timid shareholders, who feared to see the paper suppressed. He had been Editor of the paper for a month ; he had brought its circulation to 2,000 copies daily, and, in order to ensure its continuance, he had just made up his mind that the

Doctors and Free Men, of Berlin, must be once and for all dislodged from their position of influence with the paper. This meant the breaking up of several established intimacies, and the last thing Marx wanted to do at this moment was to strike up a friendship with a leading member of the Berlin circle whom he had not met. He did not suspect that Engels might be as tired as himself of the antics of the Doctors ; he did not realise that Engels was in the mood to become his partisan and henchman ; he cut their talk short and bade him a conventional "*Bon voyage*" to England.

Even if Engels had turned the talk on his hopes for a social revolution – as he may have done – Marx might still have cut short the talk (as he did) coldly. To begin with, the word "revolution" was not yet in Marx's usual vocabulary ; secondly, he was just making the greatest effort of his life to bring off a working agreement with established authority. Thus Engels passed on his way to Manchester, and Marx, rid of the intruder, resumed his own daily task.

He struggled on against growing difficulties. On New Year's Day, 1843, the Berlin Cabinet forbade circulation in Prussia of a Saxon daily, the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung*. The enemies of the *Rheinische Zeitung* felt, no doubt, that the same providence would soon ban Marx's organ from Berlin – in this case by the method of suppression, since it was published in Prussian territory. They were right : late in January the first warning was given. The enterprise was to be wound up in three months. But Cologne had come to respect its brilliant daily. In a year's existence over 3,000 regular subscribers had now been gained.

The *Rheinische Zeitung* had a way of facing out problems and finding out facts. When accused of misrepresenting these it withdrew the statement, submitted the facts to re-examination – for example, the alleged brutality of Government officials towards the Mosel Valley peasantry – and then, as though in surprise, re-affirmed them. A young Prussian official, newly placed in charge of the censorship, advised, however, that suppression of the paper was not necessary: it would suffice to eliminate the leading spirit, Dr. Karl Marx. On March 17th Dr. Marx announced in the paper that, owing to the conditions of the censorship, he had resigned from his post. The paper lingered on for a short time and then came to an end. With it there came to an end Marx's attempt to make a career as a journalist on Prussian soil within the bounds set by the Ministers of Frederick William IV. Official Prussia afforded no scope for a journalism which professed to look out on the world from a philosophic eminence, and to judge institutions and policy by a code in which not only loyalty, but even prudent compromise (save for tactics) were unrecognised.

On leaving Cologne Marx moved to Kreuznach, where Ludwig von Westphalen's widow was established. In this romantic spot, near Mainz, a month after the end of his first editorship, the marriage was celebrated between Karl and the beautiful Jenny von Westphalen. For a few weeks the young couple lived quietly on German soil. Marx was as far as ever from a career. He had, for the time, renounced all thought of a University appointment, and had broken too roughly with Bruno Bauer to reconsider their old



project for a jointly edited philosophical magazine. But for some months his newer friend, Arnold Ruge, had put forward suggestions of a joint literary venture to be launched outside Prussia, and indeed outside Germany. Ruge had lately been forced to stop publishing a review of his own at Halle, and hereupon undertook a short European tour to consider the best situation for a new venture which he planned to finance out of his private fortune. Ruge visited Strassburg and Brussels, then Paris. Though Strassburg had the advantage of a German-speaking population and Brussels that of an almost unrestricted freedom of the Press, Ruge, a keen business man, decided that Paris offered far the best opportunities. By September Ruge, having won over his wealthy friend Fröbel to back him, could assure Marx a decently paid post. The yearly salary would be 5,000 francs, while a couple with two children (he said) could easily live at the rate of 2,700 francs. To spare needless expense, Ruge proposed renting a house with four single apartments, for himself, for Marx, for the poet Herwegh and for Friedrich Wilhelm Mäurer, a revolutionary teacher of philosophy. The four with their wives would share the services of a male cook, a porter and a laundress; meat and probably vegetables (he assured Marx) would be delivered at the door. In Paris, among 85,000 German residents and travellers, would be found the nucleus of a reading public for whom the new magazine would cater.

Before throwing in his lot with Ruge, Marx lingered throughout the autumn at Kreuznach, filling four notebooks with the conclusions of an arduous course of historical reading. The

standard histories of France, England, Italy, Sweden, Poland and the U.S.A. were read, pondered and elaborately summarised. Rousseau and Montesquieu were in the same way ransacked for significant passages, and these, in small and highly stylised characters, transferred to the notebooks, to be raw material for the master of apt quotation. Marx regarded such studies as a leisure occupation ; late on in life he still referred to days of mere reading as holidays and would, for example, wade through the latest text-books of anatomy or chemistry because he was "too tired to work." The intenser working hours at Kreuznach were devoted to a re-examination of Hegelism in its bearing on those social problems which the Hegelian editor had recently come up against when tackling problems like that of the disputed ownership of timber. At last, in the first weeks of winter, Karl and Jenny were ready to leave for Paris.

They had not been there six months before Marx broke with Ruge, and once again the future was unforeseeable. By now, moreover, he was the father of a daughter. Ruge was an able middleman, and so long as "opposition" politics meant vivacious tilting against authority, he was happy to play his part. Men of audacious outlook he relished : they were good company and good copy. But Marx appalled him with the intensity of his studies, the constant appeal to logical coherence, and the pursuit of social knowledge, not only among poets, journalists and parliamentarians, but in working-class circles, where half-literate craftsmen held forth on the future of the world. Ruge was past his first youth,

was falling into feeble health, and could not keep abreast with the enthusiasms of his young co-editor. Moreover, his business expectations were disappointed – and on this side of the venture Karl Marx was unlikely to bring much assistance. The first and only number of the *Franco-German Annals*, planned to promote understanding and co-operation between the French and the German radicals, was seen through the press by Marx, and little enough in it recalled that Ruge was the originator and senior editor. Along with articles by Marx himself, the most important contribution was an essay on “Political Economy” by Friedrich Engels; Ruge had contributed only some rambling letters on the political mood of young Germany. But if Ruge was mildly dissatisfied on seeing the first number, which for reasons of health he had left Marx to put together, he was frantic when at two points on the Prussian frontier packets of 100 and 200 copies apiece were seized and confiscated by the police. He had counted on considerable sales in Germany and was loath to bear a big loss himself. He actually proposed paying a part of Marx’s salary in the form of extra copies of the *Annals*. By the summer, the two editors were in open conflict, and Ruge, looking round for an insult, referred to Marx as an impudent Jew. No more was heard of the *Franco-German Annals*, which were to have provided the Marx family with a livelihood.

Earning an income Marx could never regard as the first task of man, and for the time being he was able, with a little help from friends, to persist in the serious business of building up his mental armaments. Jenny and the daughter now

returned for a season to Kreuznach, leaving Karl in the company of Heinrich Heine, the Russian idealist Michael Bakunin and the other friends he had made in polyglot Parisian circles. Heine at this time complained that insanity was the national disease of the Germans in France; manias which in Germany would have developed slowly, grew at once to monstrous proportions on the Paris boulevards. Perhaps, he added, anyone who ate the bread of exile, moistening it with tears, had already given proof enough of madness. But Marx, he testified, was at once the most resolute and the most intelligent of the German Parisians of 1844.

Heine must have had much to do with the clearer mental contours, the more definite purposes which Marx was now conceiving: much with his acceptance of the word "Communism" to describe the schemes he was beginning to evolve.

At the moment when he was investigating the timber problem, Marx had strongly repudiated an accusation of sympathy for Communism. Writing in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (October 16th, 1842) he had questioned whether Communism could be taken seriously in theory, let alone in practice. It was Heine, writing from Paris, who had already hinted for German readers at the prospect of a war on a world scale, to be waged not between rival religions and nationalities, but between haves and have-nots. For in Paris, various sects of Socialists had not ceased to flourish since the Great Revolution. Heine watched these with anxious interest. Groups were forming which he compared with the earliest Christian churches. These groups, Heine

reported, made up a small community, animated by a zealous faith, a dark urge to destruction, and awaited by the men of destiny due to bring great events into being. Who were the men of destiny? Heine did not know: but he knew they were not the Socialist philosophers, Saint Simon's and Fourier's disciples, whose part could only be that of Fathers of the Church, not founders of it.

Little though Marx may have known of Parisian Socialism and Communism before Heine showed him round, he quickly singled out Proudhon as the keenest thinker in the movement, and with Proudhon, on arrival in Paris, he made contact. Nine years older than Marx, this labourer's son from Besançon had been enabled by the bounty of his townsmen to study at the Sorbonne; at thirty years of age he had composed a book of European notoriety, *What is Property?* and in answer to this question a catchword, "Property is Theft," which he claimed as one of the greatest sayings of all time. Proudhon was one of those in the crowd of French students of society who fell on the thought that German philosophy could bring light to bear on their problems; but, knowing no German, he was limited to such fragments of Hegelian doctrine as he could pick up in translations or in conversation. Marx spent many nights with him administering the Hegelian dialectic between sips of black coffee.

Other evenings were spent in working-class circles. Ruge, half-puzzled and half-angry, wanted to know what Marx sought in the company of the emigrant German workmen whose little gatherings he attended. "Presumably he likes their society. He can't possibly take them

seriously in politics." But Marx was finding in these working-class circles what the leader of men naturally seeks — men to lead. And the true leader seeks to put himself at the head of men worth leading. In his first approaches to those little groups whom his friend Heine had compared with the first Christians, Marx found a sociality which seemed to him the expression of the higher, disinterested life on earth, the philosophers' Heaven.

"When Communist manual workers meet," he now wrote, "the purpose of their converse is instruction, propaganda. But thereby they develop a new need — the need of social intercourse. What was at first means becomes an end in itself. This development can be seen in its first consequences in a gathering of French Socialist workmen. Smoking, drink, food are not the purpose of sociability — not even aids to it. Company, society, conversation for the sake of good company, these are enough — the brotherhood of men is here no mere phrase, it is the truth: the nobility of man shines out from these work-worn faces." The quotation is from a lengthy essay, *Nationalökonomie und Philosophie*, composed in Paris that summer, after a first reading (in French) of the works of Adam Smith, Ricardo, James Mill and MacCulloch, and of their French rival, J. B. Say. In this intimate outpouring (unpublished until discovered in Berlin in 1931) Marx asks himself how the urge to gain material satisfactions, the ultimate purpose of economic man, is related to the spiritual development of man studied by the German philosophers.

The *Franco-German Annals* served one purpose.

Marx and Engels had each summarised in its pages the mental history of a young Hegelian brought up against a refractory reality. Marx, first in a Cologne newspaper office, and later among the upstarts and bankrupts of Balzac's Paris – himself Balzac's most voracious reader – had been forced to a very much less complacent view of the State than that which he had first accepted from Hegel. The story of this development he recounted in a "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law." To take over from Hegel his picture of the harmonious State, the State of Freedom, and to try and make reality conform to it – that was the profession of the Young Hegelians. It led them to desire political revolution. But what (Marx now asked) could political revolution bring except the domination of the particular class which wanted and made the revolution, the class with money and culture? What right had such a class to push itself forward as representing the people? Only the proletarian class which felt in its own circumstances the deficiencies of the social system could claim to be serving the whole social system in asserting its own claims. Eduard Gans, Professor of Criminal Law in Berlin, a personal disciple of Hegel, had already found it necessary to make room in the Hegelian system for an uprising of the proletarian class, and Marx, who heard him lecture in 1837, could not have forgotten the strong views of this pre-Marxist preacher of the class struggle. The phrases of Gans and the intuitive flashes of Heine were combined now in the pattern into which Marx was composing his thought and his zeal for action.

The other Young Hegelian, Friedrich Engels, arriving in Manchester, had been astounded to find the Corn Laws under discussion without a hint of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, the Hegelian formulas of controversy used in Berlin. This was all the stranger since the Corn Laws were being discussed not only from the standpoint of what is proper in political society, but of what, on sound "scientific" grounds, could be proved to lead to the maximum wealth. What was this "Science"? What was its relation to the philosophic "Science" of Germany? - It was Engels who first subjected English and French political economy to analysis from the Hegelian standpoint. J. S. Mill had just finished his *Logic*, but had not yet commenced his *Political Economy*. The masters of economics in vogue were McCulloch and Senior, and among commercial people in Manchester Engels met the crudest application of their generalisations. There were, it was true, Manchester merchants like Cobden who, in 1836, clearly asserted that what the medical man forbade as injurious to health could not be justified in practice by any theories of wealth, however true in themselves. But ordinary business men proclaimed the necessity of unchecked competition, justifying by the plea of "economic law" the longest hours, the shortest wages, and the grimmest working conditions. The prevailing theories of the Cobdenites (less wise than Cobden) were criticised with lucid vigour by Engels, even while he recognised, at the time of this famous contribution to the *Franco-German Annals*, that English economists had made property the subject of intellectual discussion, a



point to which German theorists in their merely political analyses of society had not yet advanced.

Marx and Engels were now made aware, each by the other's contributions to the *Annals*, of their close affinities as ex-Hegelians looking for a social solution of the philosophic problem. In the ten days of Engels' stay in Paris, the two recognised that they were devoted to the same cause, which Marx, the slower mover of the pair, was now prepared, like Engels, to term "Communism." Engels left Paris with the firm determination to rejoin Marx as soon as possible. Their place in the great movements of history now pending was to be side by side.

But meanwhile the Prussian Government had not forgotten the ex-Editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. In the miscellaneous crowds of poets, critics, reformers and redeemers of mankind representing Germany in the Parisian Bohemia, Marx was the most formidable politician. A bi-weekly journal, the *Vorwärts*, was the chief medium of publication for the occasional literature of this colony. This journal had been of no political importance until the Prussian Government, in 1844, banned it. One of Marx's friends, Bernays, had then assumed the editorship and quickly gave it a virile and combative tone.

Besides the Berlin Government, the Paris Government also had its attention fixed upon the German intellectual colony and its relations with French movements. The constitutional monarchy had remained in existence for fourteen years since the Revolution of 1830 that brought it into being, and some warnings of the next revolution, four years ahead, had begun to rumble in Paris. The

noisier malcontents spoke out their mind at public banquets, but certain opinions could not be safely proclaimed on the boulevards, and secret societies assembled in remote inns, not only to celebrate the brotherhood and equality of man, but to draw practical consequences from the faith. With these French societies were closely affiliated several German communistic leagues to which numerous German workmen then seeking a living in France, Switzerland, and other foreign countries adhered. One of these, known as the "Federation of Exiles," had merged into the "Federation of the Just." During some riotous months of 1839 this association of German workmen and intellectuals – one of them was Marx's friend, Maurer – had been discovered in close co-operation with the old revolutionary Blanqui's Société des Saisons. Its leaders, Schapper, Bauer, Moll and Eccarius, all manual workers, had shifted their headquarters to London. Its chief theorist, the tailor Weitling from Magdeburg, had lately been imprisoned in Switzerland. With an eye upon the part of the German intellectuals in these circles, the Government of Louis Philippe agreed, at the instance of the Prussian Government, to put an end to German radical journalism on French soil. Thus on January 11th, Bernays, the Editor of *Vorwärts*, Bakunin, the young Russian Hegelian who had helped Marx with the *Annals*, and Marx himself, were given orders to quit France. It was the first of many times that a nervous Government chivied Marx off its territories and forced him to seek a new home.

The least oppressive of European régimes was reported, in the Marx circle, to be the Belgian,

and Marx proceeded to Brussels. Engels, on hearing what had happened, opened a subscription among Communist friends in the Rhineland, and was able to send a cheque on Brussels for some 150 thalers (over £20). For on arrival in Belgium Marx had not only been obliged to promise not to write any articles on Belgian questions ; he had also been forced to pay a quarter's rent in advance before he could take a lodging in Brussels.

The Communist friends whom Engels circularised on Marx's behalf were certain groups of Rhenish and Westphalian young men, aware of the new social problems of mechanical production, among whom, since his return from Paris, Engels had conducted an energetic campaign. The revolution which he held to be already on the point of maturing in England – for reasons which he had written (and was now publishing) a weighty volume to explain – was to be discerned close at hand also in the Rhineland. Communism, Engels firmly believed, was spreading swiftly among thinking people who two years before had scarcely heard of it. And, in company with Moses Hess, he had begun to harangue gatherings of manufacturers' sons and others on the shape of things to come. Friedrich Engels, senior, found no means of dissuading his heir from making this sort of exhibition of himself. The heir, on his side, found life in the surroundings of wealth and piety hardly bearable, and groaned at the destiny marked out for him as successor to the property and responsibility of the Engels cotton mills. Resolved somehow to evade it, he could not bring himself to administer the shock

of such an announcement. One March day, however, a hint of police measures that might be in preparation for him sent young Engels to Brussels, where he took lodgings next-door to the Marx family in a working-class suburb.

Marx and Engels now had all too much leisure for the exchange of ideas : for days at a time Marx was able to cross-question Engels on the subjects of his special competence. For Engels, in his Manchester months, had witnessed English political economy as a code in practice : Marx as yet had but read of it in the economists' books. Engels began now to prime Marx with the lessons of his own experience — that direct experience of industrial revolution which he also had come to with a mind schooled by Hegel to find in all human affairs the clash of opposites and their conciliation in a greater unity.

Political economy, Marx was becoming convinced, could give a systematic explanation of society in just the regions where philosophy was of no avail. Neither could Marx sate his curiosity, nor Engels his zeal to impart knowledge, without a visit to the metropolis of the industrial revolution.

Leaving Jenny and the children, the two accordingly set off on a jaunt to Manchester. Engels did not pretend to Marx that revolutions were his sole interest in life : there had been a young woman at Barmen, and in Manchester there awaited him another sweetheart, his pleasantest attachment to the city of leaden skies. Marx, however, was a great deal more interested in the treasures of the city library than in the female beauty of Manchester. A foreign language was never more than a brief obstacle to readers

like Marx and Engels, and in these six weeks Marx followed the track already traced by Engels through the classical economics of England. Language must still have been a bar to conversation with the Chartist Harney, to whom, as the best English ally of Communism, Engels introduced him.

A few weeks later – it was in the early autumn of 1845 – they returned to Brussels, the twenty-seven-year-old Doctor of Philosophy, with no prospective means of support except assistance from ever more sceptical relatives, and with a wife and swelling family of his own to maintain, and the twenty-five-year-old business man who could not stand business, but relied on an allowance from an aggrieved father, together with the odd sums which he could earn by writing. Such were the two who now consciously dedicated themselves to leadership of the forces they perceived arising in Europe, forces pressing forward towards a vast revolution for which they had traced out a predestined course. But how should two young men of no particular political standing achieve such importance in the world? Marx had no doubt whatever but that mental superiority conferred on him the title to this leadership; Engels was drawn not so much to leadership as to pioneerdom. Marx would suffer nobody above him, Engels nobody in front of him. In this spirit they strove forward and upward out of their obscurity, strong in the belief that humanity was entering into a new era of enhanced self-consciousness and intensified pressure toward a rational reordering of society, an era of what the men of that generation termed indifferently “Socialism” or “Communism.”

## CHAPTER IV

### “ COMMUNIST MANIFESTO ” AND COMMUNIST PARTY

Marx and Engels in Brussels – teachers in search of a doctrine – leaders in search of a following – the *Communist Manifesto* and the Communist League – Marx and Engels ready to captain a revolution – the French Revolution of 1848 and some others.

To stake out their claim to be leaders of the new world movement, Marx and Engels now applied themselves to a dual labour – literary and social. Assertion of their own as surpassing all rival statements of Socialist doctrine was the literary task. This would insure Marx and Engels against the fate of being mere disciples of any other thinker ; while to attain the spokesmanship of a group that could be termed, not too fancifully, “ the Party,” was the social task, insuring them against a helpless isolation amid the great events to come. During three years of residence in a Brussels suburb, the two men condensed their first clumsy and voluminous criticisms of the Hegelian State philosophy to the concise and brilliant phrases soon to be worked up into the *Communist Manifesto*, and, not less important, took their position as acknowledged spokesmen of a small but alert group on the watch for a great crisis and its opportunity.

A beginning had been made upon the first or literary task at the moment of the Paris meeting in 1844. Engels, so recently suspected by Marx of allegiance to the Bauers and their circle, had

promptly agreed to co-operate with Marx in an elaborate exposure of those former heroes of liberty the Doctors, who planned to change the world by banishing the personal God. In Brussels similar exposures of the other Young Hegelians were composed with a view to publication, though in fact no publisher was found until eighty years later, by which time Marx's roughest drafts were the holy writ of a new church. The first series of diatribes was judged to have finally discredited the Bauers, Feuerbach, Max Stirner and all others whose Hegelian Radicalism had not developed into Socialism. The second series attacked those who had arrived at Socialism by another than the Hegelian process, or – as in the case of Hess – had sought to grasp it without a decisive leave-taking from the earlier phases of mental development.

But the intellectual rival from whom Marx and Engels had most to fear was Proudhon, that one Frenchman who accepted the pretension of German philosophy to be the way to the new social vision. In long hours with Marx himself, Proudhon had discussed the Hegelian dialectic. The doctrines which Proudhon now produced amid much applause in Paris were put forward as a product of French politics and German philosophy. Strongly individualistic yet full of zeal for a just state of society, Proudhon eagerly applied the Hegelian logic of successive contradictions in interpreting human history. His *Philosophie de la Misère* was a dialectical examination of the theories of political economy. Although Engels might have considered this subject his own speciality, it was Marx who now undertook to

refute Proudhon, in a book which, for a completer triumph, he composed in the French language. Proudhon could not even read German, and Marx, blasting Proudhon's pretension to have mastered the Hegelian dialectic, termed his reply, *Misère de la Philosophie*. Marx and Engels now felt that they had worsted and discredited all their intellectual rivals in the Socialist movement. The process was imperfect to this extent, that several of the rivals never felt the missiles hurled at them, because no German publisher could be found to produce them. But in the view of Marx and Engels the mere composition of their polemical works, though read by few or none, had put all their rivals out of court. Henceforth the Bauers, Stirner, Proudhon, Hess, were treated as antiquated and long-surpassed doctrinaires. Thoroughly assured of their own pre-eminence as Socialist thinkers, Marx and Engels now found occasion to draw up, in the name of a small group proudly styled the “ Communist Party of Europe,” the first comprehensive creed of revolutionary Communism. Engels was the author of an early draft ; Marx took responsibility for its final form. In the first sentences throbbed the expectation of a period of unrest and upheaval ; and actually the *Manifesto* was completed a bare month before Louis Philippe was frightened into abdication by an outburst of long pent-up popular discontent in Paris. “ Communism is already, by all the other Powers in Europe, recognised as a power,” the authors announced at the head of it. “ It is high time that the Communists should expound the point of view of their party before the whole world – and this Manifesto has been



drawn up by Communists of the most varied nationality assembled in London." The work of Marx in Brussels from 1845 to 1847, and of the more mobile Engels in Brussels, Paris (whither Marx could not venture) and London, achieved for them this right to issue their words in the name of "the Party."

The *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 was a document of about the length of one of the gospels. The Socialism it preaches is no mere political programme, and no mere venting of the grievances of the poor. It is a summons to a new age for mankind, issued to a world where religion and ethical tradition, long since decaying, are kept partly alive only by a vested interest in their hypnotic power, where science and applied science – that is, modern industry – have rendered the old religion and morality obsolete, but the new masters of mankind, the industrialists, batten still upon them. It would be for the Communists to demolish all hypocritical compromises, and to prepare for a newer, more human morality. The first sentences proudly aver that Communism is not only feared, reviled and persecuted by the Governments of Europe, but is repudiated also by the opposition "parties of progress" – that is to say, Communism is recognised by all as a Power : and therefore it is time for the Communists to come forth with a bold declaration of the views and aims in which Communists of all nationalities concur.

With a sweeping review of the orders of society in the ancient and mediæval world, the *Manifesto* quickly reached the crucial assertion about the modern world, which is this : that those who in

the name of liberty and progress have fought to curtail the powers of kings, churchmen and nobles have themselves climbed into the place of power, for, as owners of the means of production without which none can partake in the work of production, they hold all who are not owners in subjection. In fact, whereas in earlier history successive oppressors held one another in check, the *bourgeois* or property owners in modern society have been so successful that they tend more and more to form a single governing class confronting that other, far more numerous class, the expropriated, the proletariat.

But the *bourgeois* have won their place as the promoters of change and improvement against the older powers who stood for conservation. Therefore they cannot now rest content, but must for ever be pushing forward to extend the scope of that power which they gain as profit. They must carry goods to new markets, breaking down the old order of production in the remote parts of the world. They cannot desist from pressing always into new markets, or neglected portions of the old markets, for the working forces which they control are continually bringing forth what is requisite for markets of virgin appetite. But since they cannot steadily discover new markets, the productive energies in their charge are doomed periodically to accumulate unsaleable goods in vast quantities. This is the trade crisis, or crisis of over-production, unknown before in the world's history: each is more acute than the last, and each, because the world is limited, is more difficult to overcome by the forcing of new markets. Hence the *bourgeois* must curtail the

wage which they pay to their workers ; those who cannot and do not will fail, and be sold up to the most energetic and ruthless, who in ever smaller numbers progressively concentrate the proletariat in great works where they can exploit all the advantages of large-scale production, specialisation and army-like discipline. All this the *bourgeois* do not accomplish smoothly, for the old royal, noble and ecclesiastical forces will still at points be resisting them, and the workers, oppressed beyond a certain point, will break out, and Socialists by alliance with the older powers will temporarily get the better of the *bourgeois* in some question of hours and wages.

But these are only temporary respites that occur until at last the class war approaches a decisive phase. The ruling class then feels that it is in dissolution. Some of the *bourgeois*, and more especially "the *bourgeois* thinkers who have won through to a theoretical understanding of the whole historical process" pass over to the revolutionary proletariat, which alone has the future in its hands, and will make a revolution far more complete than any previously known : because while all previous conquerors of society have had something they sought to preserve in the new order the proletariat have nothing to preserve, for industrialisation has broken up all religious and family tradition and morality.

The Communists (the argument proceeds) are not followers of ideas excogitated by philanthropists : they are those who, observing the class conflict actually in progress under their eyes, have resolutely set themselves to forming a proletarian class, overthrowing the *bourgeoisie*, and capturing

political power for the proletariat. Is it objected that they plan to destroy freedom, property, personality, the family, the nation? The Communists wish to destroy the power of the *bourgeois* in society by which these alone have freedom, property, personality, family life and nation, and the huge majority are enslaved and disinherited. They can achieve this only by despotic interferences with property rights, having regard to the various conditions of different countries. The most progressive countries can envisage forthwith nationalisation of the land and use of rents received for public purposes, steep progressive taxation, abolition of inheritance, confiscation of rebels' and emigrants' property, nationalisation of banks and transport, publicly owned factories, public development plans, compulsory work for all, free education.

The *Manifesto* then passes in review at some length the various schools of Socialist thought which have offered programmes of improvement and transformation without revolution. All are dismissed : only the Communists can stand their ground as fighters for the cause, though in each country the Communists seek to advance by alliances with other groups, which they thus bring into the general community of the democratic parties of all countries. “ The possessing classes may quake at the Communist revolution : the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.”

As the *bourgeois* thinkers who had “ won through to an understanding of the whole historical progress,” Marx and Engels thus clearly defined their claim to be leaders of humanity in a great coming age. Yet not for nothing had they

learned their early lessons from the all-comprehending Hegel, for, on a careful reading, the revolutionary *Manifesto* is found to allow (if necessary) of compromises and provisional understandings. A cautiously gradual approach towards the moment when the proletariat, become the governing class, should itself abdicate from the place of power was not altogether excluded. It was not the first or the last time that Marx reinsured against the failure of short, sharp methods by admitting that success must always wait on the fullness of time. In fact, while the *Manifesto* was addressed to the whole world, calling upon the world proletariat to strike for freedom, at a certain point the authors admit that the countries of the world are in many different stages of social and economic development. It is only for the "most advanced" countries that the *Manifesto* recommends, as a "fairly general" policy, the above-said programme of national ownership of land, steeply graded taxation, abolition of inheritance, confiscation of the property of *émigrés* as rebels (that is, rebels against Communism), nationalised banking and transport, planned industrial and agricultural development, compulsory work for all, interpenetration of agriculture and industry, free education for all, no child labour. In the absence of a time-scale for these reforms one school of interpreters of Marx has thus always been able to understand by "revolution" the almost timeless emergence of a Society in which "the free development of each will make for the free development of all," while the Marxist in the street has assumed that it must mean armed insurrection.

Such was the doctrine. But who were the Party? A few dozen studious workmen – exiles from Germany – and one or two disgruntled graduates. The new “ Power in Europe ” might not seem much more than that. But Marx, the mental warrior, foresaw mankind irreconcilably divided on the issue of collective organisation versus property rights. However small their number, he had marked out these few men as the chosen group which could forthwith sacrifice everything to attain a position on the victorious side of a yet concealed and, in the vulgar view, a chimerical conflict. And the little group could look back to the past as well as forward to the future. Schapper, Bauer and Moll, the German artisans with whom, in 1847, Marx and Engels founded the Communist League, had for eight years captained the Federation of the Just in London, whither they had fled from Paris when the same society, in 1839, went down alongside of the Société des Saisons in the round-up of subversives after outbreaks in Paris in 1839. The Federation of the Just had grown out of a clandestine group in which German exiles had long seconded those French societies which, under various names, harked back during the Restoration and the July Monarchy to Robespierre, Babeuf, the great French Revolution, and the philosophies of Liberty and Reason.

The Communist League was to be dissolved in 1852, and Marx later distinguished it sharply from “ the party in a broad historical sense ” to which his life was dedicated. Yet in the years before 1849, he and Engels were putting forth, for this small company, all their energy and guile to

gain recognition as its spokesmen. Weitling, the philosopher tailor, whose genius Marx had not long before celebrated, was manœuvred out of his primacy among "the Just." At a meeting in Brussels in 1846 Marx browbeat him face to face as an irresponsible muddler. Engels, in periodical visits to Paris, made a fine art of securing nominations to represent one small organisation at the gatherings of another.

Since Marx's arrival, German refugees had collected in strength in Brussels, and the *Brussels German Gazette*, published twice weekly, was used for debate within the group and for attack outside it, the distinction being sometimes blurred. Marx, but still more Engels, were in touch with Harney and Ernest Jones among the English Chartists, and Engels—Marx being still forbidden to set foot in France—had got into close touch with the Socialist politicians in Paris, Louis Blanc and Flocon, who, amid the unrest of an acute business depression, had become conspicuous candidates for Government posts. International associations of progressives and radicals were much in the air. In the ranks of a London organisation, the Fraternal Democrats, followers of Louis Blanc, of Mazzini, and of Mickiewicz, communed with Chartists, and the League of the Just was already in touch with this union before Marx and Engels imposed themselves on its leaders Schapper, Moll and Bauer and renamed it the "Communist League." Now, in 1847, the young champions stimulated the Communist League to new developments of its own organisation, and at the same time to more explicit relations with the democratic progressive and radical parties in

Europe. Marx and Engels laboured indefatigably to assert themselves as leaders, while Europe was still calm enough for a raised voice to be heard. Soon the storm would be too loud.

Hardly, in fact, had the *Communist Manifesto* been drafted by Marx on the basis of a first sketch by Engels (after such delays that the London Communist League called Marx sharply to order) when, amid the first reports of upheaval in Paris, Marx received notice that the French Republic had conferred honorary citizenship upon him. The Belgian Government, however, took fright, and held him and even his wife Jenny under lock and key for a night, thereafter expelling them from the country, which they were only too impatient to leave. For, at the signal of Louis Philippe's dethronement, the exiles in London and Brussels had rapidly converged upon Paris and with them the English Chartists, Harney and Jones. The revolutionaries of all Europe were looking for a lead from Paris. Marx, arriving there on March 4th, found the excitable lyricist Herwegh, an old friend, already planning to lead a German legion into the Rhineland with the aid of Republican Paris. He roundly condemned this romantic aberration.

Schapper, Bauer and Moll were all there, and the Central Committee of the Communist League was reconstituted under Marx's presidency, with Engels, their close friend Wolff, Moll, Bauer and a Brussels printer, Wallau, as members. In the name of the League Marx drew up and issued a programme of demands for the German Revolution, a Republic; arming of the people; nationalisation of great properties, mines and



transport ; national workshops ; free schools for all. Meanwhile popular meetings in the Berlin Tiergarten had acclaimed the news of revolution from Paris ; on March 15th Vienna extorted the promise of a constitution from the Emperor Ferdinand, and on the 18th the people of Berlin rebelled against the King's army, besieged Frederick William in his palace, and wrung from him (March 20th) the promise of a National Assembly, a constitution and an immediate amnesty for political offenders. The hour had come. The Communist Committee men scattered quickly to their posts of action, Marx to Cologne and Engels to Barmen.

## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT YEAR

Marx back in Germany – scorns Berlin – a Cologne editor once more – loses faith in the French Republic – Popular Front or Communist Orthodoxy? – Bismarck smashes German Liberals – Marx's campaign for a taxpayers' strike – suppression of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* – Marx flits to England.

1848 was a year in the middle of the nineteenth century when the Courts of Europe hurriedly abandoned their capitals or remained by the indulgence of upstart assemblies, when the Pope himself seemed for a moment to join in the dance of progress. Marx was in the thick of the turmoil, able for once to put forth his full strength in the struggle for power on his native soil. True to his convictions, he made Cologne, the centre of western industrial Germany, the field of his activity, hardly considering the claims of the political capital of Prussia, whither Ruge and the other Hegelians sped on journalistic ventures.

The superiority of western Germany, with its contacts to north and south, over Prussia was for Marx and Engels axiomatic. To liberate industrial enterprise from the impediments of feudal and military privilege, but at the very same moment to subject that enterprise to social discipline, to the rule of philosophers, to their own rule, was the ambition which flamed in Marx and vitalised his "*intimus*," as he called Engels. Such a project must entail rapid and seemingly incoherent tactics. For the moment the task was to become

the recognised spokesmen of commercial enterprise, and the shareholders of Westphalian industry were to be dunned into financing a great newspaper to be the organ of the young men who had just framed a programme for their expropriation. "If anyone here got a glimpse of any one of our seventeen points," wrote Engels, referring to the Paris programme of demands which they had drawn up a month before, "not a penny could we raise here." And Herr Engels senior, knowing more about Marx than most of his class, would certainly not put up a penny. On younger friends and acquaintances, Engels was able to plant a few shares, and he was specially gratified when at the same time they made over their voting rights by proxy to Marx.

In Cologne, even before Marx's arrival, a democratic daily for promoting local interests was being projected in circles formerly associated with the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and Marx, in the glow of his roused passion, managed to capture and convert this proposition into his own national political organ. Those concerned were won over (Engels said) in twenty-four hours.

Enough money was somehow raised for the new paper to start publication on June 1st, 1848. Marx, welcomed back in Cologne as an editor of uncontestable authority, watched events in Paris as closely as the course of constitutional change in Berlin. Engels, as foreign editor, replaced Marx when he went off on money-raising expeditions as far afield as Bremen and Hamburg, or on political reconnaissance to Vienna: Engels' attention was first chiefly fixed on England, where he still expected the Chartists to exploit the

inspiration of the Paris revolution for the purposes of a great uprising; on Russia, whither he supposed that the tottering German kings would turn in the last instance for support; and on Denmark, which was now invaded by Prussian troops at the request of the Assembly of Frankfurt. The Assembly of Frankfurt was a body that now claimed to speak for "greater Germany." It began in March, 1848, as a sort of spontaneous gathering of Parliamentarians from all Germany in loquacious session alongside of the slow-moving official German Federal Council set up by the Treaty of Vienna. The Assembly had gained some sort of recognition from the German states, including even Austria. It thereupon appointed an Austrian archduke as "Vicar of the Empire," and even nominated a central Government of Ministers, claiming jurisdiction throughout Germany (and Austria) — a claim which was more or less recognised, at least in Berlin and the small capitals, so long as the constitutional parties in the several states caused the courts some apprehension.

But the constitutional parties, after the first flush of triumph, showed no spirit for an assault upon institutions. Marx, in his recent few days' visit to Paris, had closely watched the relation of the various classes in the uprising against the July monarchy. He concluded as follows: The revolutionary labourers of Paris, led by men who had waited upon this moment for years and now brought them out on the streets at the hour of confusion and change, had entered the struggle as unwelcomed allies of their *bourgeois* "betters." The middle-class malcontents had already

achieved what they wanted through gently pushing Guizot's Ministry aside, when the workers, putting their weight behind the cause of reform, forced them not merely to proclaim the Republic but to liven the proclamation with heraldings of a new social doctrine. A Ministry of Labour was included in the Government; the *bourgeois* gaped. Surely the Ministries of Finance, of Trade, of Works were themselves the proper authorities for Labour? As a compromise, something short of a Ministry of Labour, a Commission of Enquiry into Labour, was established at the Luxembourg, while Louis Blanc, advocate of State industries, and Alexander Martin, a workman, sat in the provisional Government along with Lamartine and Ledru-Rollin. While the Commission discussed the creation of national industries, the Government, in order to mobilise and discipline the unemployed, established *ateliers nationaux* – "open air workhouses on the English model," translated Marx. But now the hard-up traders of Paris mistook these workhouses for the true beginnings of a socialised industry: to them they attributed the budgetary deficit, the menace of new taxes, all the woes of the times.

On May 4th the Republican Assembly newly elected by universal suffrage began to sit, Louis Blanc and Martin dropped out of the Government, and the Assembly addressed itself to cutting down expenses on the *ateliers*: the day-wage was changed to a piece-wage system, the non-Parisian unemployed were sent away from the capital, and, by decree of June 21st, all unmarried workers were discharged, with the option of entering the

Army. From that day, for Marx, the second French Republic, which had three months earlier conferred citizenship upon him, was the declared enemy of the proletariat.

In the working-class quarters of Paris a furious revolt answered the decree, and the revolt was suppressed with a massacre by Cavaignac's troops. This "foreign news" eclipsed, for Marx, the simultaneous events in Berlin, where on June 14th crowds of civilians had captured the arsenal, while Camphausen's Ministry, in the course of the next ten days, broke up. "The last official relics of the Revolution have been scattered like dust by these grave events," wrote Marx in the issue of June 29th, with eyes not on Berlin, but on Paris. He blazed out against the excuse that the massacre was a disciplinary action. "'Discipline!' was Guizot's watchword in the July Monarchy. 'Discipline!' shouted his pupil Sebastiani when Russia subdued Warsaw. 'Discipline!' now shouts Cavaignac, brutally echoing the French National Assembly and the Republican *bourgeoisie*. 'Discipline!' thundered his bullets as they pierced the bodies of the Proletariat!" (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, June 29th, 1848).

The French Revolution of 1848, Marx later observed, had developed not in a forward direction like the great Revolution of 1789, in which each party had been superseded by one more energetic and more extreme, but backwards, by a series of class betrayals. The working class forced through the Revolution in February. In June the lower middle classes abandoned the workers; next the wealthier middle class abandoned the lower middle class; and a bit later the

men of great property turned against the middle class, till finally they themselves surrendered the Republic to the armed bands of Louis Napoleon. In the famous leading article of June 29th, Marx showed that for the moment France counted for him as dead; there remained only the hope of a more or less speedy resurrection.

The Berlin Revolution of 1848 had at best been a pale reflection of Paris, the achievement of men with no ambition or liking for great social changes. It was already doubtful whether the merely constitutional reforms wrung from the King by the Liberals could be maintained now that inspiration from Paris had failed. In March King Frederick William had ridden through the streets wrapped in a tricolor sash as the People's Monarch. He soon took heart again and before winter resumed the discarded style of King by the Grace of God. Nowhere but in Cologne did the democratic opponents of the Court uphold their cause with any vigour, and here Marx was at the centre of resistance. A few days after the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* began publication three unions combined to form a central democratic committee, of which Marx quickly became the leading figure. These were the Democratic Union proper, an organisation captained by Marx himself, the Workers' Union, in which Schapper and Moll of the Communist League stood up for Marx against a powerful opposition, and the Union for Employers and Employees dominated by Becker. While the democrats weakened in Berlin and Frankfurt, Marx, Engels and their friends strove to rouse the Cologne democrats to renewed energy. But Marx would have nothing

of schemes for sporadic revolt : he used some of his fiercest invectives on romantic insurrectionaries. Meanwhile, he kept watch for conditions in which the revolutionary forces might be measured with dignity against those of reaction.

A new Prussian Ministry of mildly liberal complexion had now taken office. But the Junkers thought it was time to register their scorn for the constitutional system. Otto von Bismarck was one of the extremists who assembled along with noblemen of more moderate views in Berlin on July 24th to testify their disgust at the Parliamentary proceedings. Three weeks later the King himself appeared in Cologne and in a ceremonial speech called the Frankfurt Assembly to order, reminding it that "there are still princes in Germany, and I am one of them." The West German democrats still showed fight. In mid-August a congress of seventeen democratic societies recognised Marx's Committee as the central democratic authority for western Germany. In this gathering of forty delegates the swarthy and sturdy figure of Marx, his eyes ablaze, was dominant : he ruled by the weight and precision of his language and by an arrogant disregard of every conflicting opinion.

Even in Berlin the constitutionalists had not yet abandoned all initiative to Bismarck's friends : on August 9th the Assembly, by 180 to 179 votes, bade the War Office require all Army officers to show loyalty to the Constitution or, if conscience forbade this, to resign. The Ministry hesitated : the Assembly pressed, and early in September the Ministry resigned. Frankfurt meanwhile was in turmoil. In the All German Assembly, the



Democrats stood against the Courts as spokesmen for the greater Germany. The Assembly had given Prussia a mandate to occupy the Germanic lands of Schleswig-Holstein in the Danish domains. The Danes were able to put up a resistance, and the Prussians came to terms with them. Amid riotous scenes, the Assembly finally ratified the armistice. The pan-German patriots (not excluding Engels in the Cologne newspaper) protested hotly, and two aristocratic deputies, voters for peace, were murdered in a Frankfurt suburb.

Feelings ran so high that Marx had difficulty in restraining his friends from an armed uprising, especially as the Rhineland garrisons were being replenished with an evident view to repression. Some rioting actually occurred on September 25th, and Moll and Schapper, the heads of the Cologne Workers' Union, were arrested. Moll was rescued by a crowd from the police, and subsequently harangued an open meeting, at which a false alarm was raised, leading to the erection of barricades. The authorities hereupon forbade the appearance of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and Engels, who had divided his time between the newspaper and the narrower propaganda of Communism in Westphalia, was persuaded to escape into France before measures could be taken against him. Still Marx's moment had not come.

The paper was allowed to re-appear after a fortnight. Bereft of Engels, who wandered for some weeks on foot through France, forgetting politics in wayside pleasures and diversions, Marx continued to keep abreast with the rapid

and intricate changes in Europe. In October the Viennese Democrats, whom Marx had lately visited, displayed a new vitality : the Court fled from the rebellious capital and the Emperor prepared to abdicate. Hungary was in revolt. Keeping touch with all that was happening in Europe and with all that might yet happen, watching above all for stirrings in St. Petersburg, that last sure hope of threatened monarchies in Germany, Marx argued with his shareholder-proprietors, restless over the risky courses of his policy ; pushed his circulation with the bold expedient of daily posters ; always and above all canvassed for funds and shovelled out those he had wherever the need was most urgent. " I got 1,950 thalers out of the Poles on the last journey," he wrote to the absent Engels in November. " 100 went on travelling. I advanced 1,000 to the paper, yourself and the refugees. There are 500 to pay this week for the machines : so I have 350 in hand. I have not touched a penny of salary yet. . . . As to your position, I told the asses of shareholders they could deprive you of your regular post if they chose, but that I as Editor can pay what fees I choose for contributions, so they will gain nothing. . . . It was silly perhaps to make over so much money to the paper with three or four actions pending against us, but the great thing was to carry on and to hold up our political end. . . . Your father is a *Schweinhund* ; we'll write him a beastly letter." The sum advanced by the Poles on this occasion was about £280 ; and Engels senior had presumably earned the explosion by further tightening his purse strings.

But now the Berlin Court, irritated by a Berlin democratic meeting which had openly proclaimed the German Republic, showed the Prussian Assembly how little it cared for its constitutional vows. An authoritarian Ministry, unacceptable to the Assembly, was nominated, and the Assembly was ordered to quit Berlin for the town of Brandenburg. By Government orders, the Assembly Hall was closed and a protesting majority of the Chamber were chased from one hostelry to another, until at a last meeting in the Mielentz Hotel they declared that taxes imposed without their consent were illegal. At this point Marx saw a chance of raising the standard of a grand united front against the Court. The odds were great against success — but supposing France were to flame up anew, would not Prussia again glow in response?

Dead set as he had been against sporadic revolt, Marx therefore put the full weight of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and of the Democratic Union behind the last act of the disbanded Berlin Parliament. The feudal Court had flouted Parliament, the modern institution desired and supported by every moderate liberal in the country. The Communist, he declared, was in his due place as one, the most energetic, of the opponents of feudalism; none could fail to support him, save those who were half-hearted even in the demand for a Parliament.

In the name of the Democratic Central Committee of Cologne, Marx, with Schapper and Schneider, issued a manifesto calling upon the affiliated societies to resist collection of the taxes by every means, to organise a militia to repel

any aggressors, to arrange for the arming of the poor by assistance or contributions, to form Committees of Public Safety (where possible in agreement with the Municipalities) if the authorities refused to recognise the resolutions of the National Assembly. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* propounded the dilemma that either the Constitution was still law, and the majority of the Assembly in its rights, or the Constitution had been torn up. A young Jew, Ferdinand Lassalle, who came forward in public advocacy of this democratic programme in Düsseldorf, was the first to be arrested on account of it.

But Marx was left unmolested and even Engels thought it safe to return to Cologne early in January, 1849. He was brimming over with health, and found hopeful features in south and eastern Europe. Kossuth's national campaign in Hungary was baffling the Habsburgs and the Pope, who, having quite changed his mind about constitutional liberalism, had been driven out from Republican Rome. More than ever Engels watched Russia, rightly divining that Vienna would call in St. Petersburg to help subdue rebellious Hungary. Would the Tsar but bring his forces on to German territory, the German Revolution would live anew. Marx allowed Engels to indulge these hopes. The local situation had not come to a clear head on the publication of the democratic manifesto. Of organised resistance to tax-collection less was to be heard than of plots for sporadic rebellion against the tightening military pressure of Berlin. Marx sought to avert such outbreaks as ardently as he pressed for organised resistance.

Seeing his difficulties, the Berlin authorities now instructed the Public Prosecutor to take action against Marx and the co-signatories of the democratic manifesto. On February 8th they had to answer in the Cologne Court to a charge of incitement to armed resistance. Marx conducted his own defence without more than secondary regard for legal details. The question whether Crown or Parliament was in the right was a question of history, he insisted, and not of law. And the charge against him arose out of a conflict, not between two parties in a single society, but between two states of society, the feudal versus the modern, competition versus the guild system, land-tenure versus industry, faith versus knowledge. The tax-refusal order voted by the Berlin Assembly could not be termed illegal, but a rider in which they had laid down that resistance should be passive only – that was illegal ; for it was the people's right to defend themselves in any way – and not merely passively – against illegal exaction. Not only was Marx hereupon acquitted, but the foreman of the jury thanked him for the illuminating speech he had delivered in his own defence. After this triumph Marx returned with renewed energy to leadership of the paper and of his political supporters.

The working alliance with the Constitutional Democrats to which for the last year Marx had given his whole energy, leaving Engels in his spare time to propagandise the formulæ of the *Communist Manifesto*, was fading away for want of active constitutionalists.

Marx turned back to the narrower circle of the Communist Workers' Unions. Earlier in 1848 his

position in the unions had not been so strong. But since mid-October he had been president of the Cologne Workers' Union, replacing Schapper, who was in gaol, and Moll, who had escaped from arrest. A new constitution of the Union was evolved and after the trial Marx yielded the presidency to his friend Lessner. He now prepared formally to annul the participation of the Union in the Central Democratic Committee. Like the Prussian Assembly in Berlin, the pan-German Assembly in Frankfurt, where democracy had occasionally found revolutionary tones, was now no more than a demoralised talking-shop. Marx and his friends openly broke with the Democratic Union on April 15th and began working on a scheme for tightening up the Workers' Union.

Yet the way must be kept open for new initiatives, perhaps for new alliances. Possibilities might even now be opening for astute and uncompromising political leadership. The in-pouring of Prussian troops was rousing resentment in the Rhineland and Westphalia, not only against the Berlin Court but against the wealthy constitutionalists who watched it without stirring. On May 5th a congress of municipal authorities from thirty Rhenish towns called on the Frankfurt Assembly to give a lead in organising resistance to the counter-revolution. In Engels' native locality excitement was extreme, and he would hardly have been kept away from the spot had not Marx now undertaken a five weeks' journey in north Germany in search of funds, leaving him in charge of the paper, with instructions to hold his head high, for *les choses marcheront*.

They were indeed marching. Just over the bridge from Engels' home in Barmen, early in May, barricades were erected and the prison assaulted. And in Dresden, Breslau, Baden and the Palatinate there was agitation, excitement, some violence. Engels could no longer be restrained. He conceived a plan for organising the whole Rhineland against the invading troops from Prussia, but, quickly dropping this when he arrived on the spot, placed himself as a military man at the service of a Committee of Safety which had taken charge of Elberfeld. The Committee instructed him to raise a squad of pioneers, and gave him authority to dispose the local guns as he thought fit. Engels now urged on the Committee the destruction of certain bridges, disarming of an alleged band of "neutral" militia and an emergency tax on citizens. The worthy tradesmen of Elberfeld cared little for that sort of politics and requested Engels to depart. And he left, not before, at a chance meeting with his father at the barricades, bitter reproaches had been exchanged between the two generations.

Engels could not safely stay in Cologne, and meanwhile Marx also had received notice to quit. He had renounced Prussian citizenship (without assuming any other) during his residence abroad, and the authorities now expelled him as a foreigner. The last number of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* appeared on May 20th in red print, with a front page of rattling stanzas by the editorial poet, Freiligrath. Marx and Engels, departing from Cologne, took one look at the demoralised Assembly in Frankfurt, and then Engels diverged southwards towards military adventures in Baden,

where a revolutionary officer, Willich, had collected a corps of Communists and Constitutionalists to resist the army of Prussian Prince William. Marx's route was through Paris, and thence, by way of a prompt expulsion, to London. Jenny, with two young children, followed, as usual, wherever her husband sought better fortune for his bid to be the master-brain of world revolution.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE SCIENCE OF REVOLUTION

Socialist sects and schisms in London – Marx seeks economic key to political events – theory of trade cycle – watching out for slumps – “The crisis develops magnificently.”

“EACH successive trade crisis threatens more profoundly than the last the whole existence of *bourgeois* society.” In advance of the revolutions of 1848 Marx and Engels had established this connection between the periodical stresses of nineteenth-century industry and the periodical tremors of social upheaval. They now claimed this truth as their special doctrine regarding the prospects for new revolutionary ventures designed to avenge the utter defeat of the revolutionaries throughout Europe in 1849. In the eyes of Mazzini, Kossuth and the other representative revolutionaries of south and eastern Europe, the fluctuations of commerce counted for little or nothing in their plottings and plannings. Mazzini, the “great conspirator,” whom Marx in the next years mocked and derided not merely as an arrogant phrasemonger but – such were Marx’s aberrations when judging a rival – as a cowardly absentee from the front line in Italy, sought conditions for a successful upheaval in the moral nature of man, not in the disorganisation of commerce. Mazzini’s inspired rhetoric was far more in tune with the spirit of the European exiles gathered in London after 1849 from every quarter

of Europe than Marx's and Engels' disputatious logic. In the quarrels among revolutionaries of the succeeding quarter century, Marx and Engels confronted, on the one hand, rivals who were champions of national moral regeneration, hailing from industrially backward countries, and, on the other hand, leaders who like themselves had their eyes fixed on the social problems of the industrial system. At first the former appeared the serious adversaries. Not only Italians, Poles, Spaniards, Hungarians, and so forth — "people whose business it is to keep their mouth shut on all matters of modern organisation," snapped Engels—but many of the French and German *émigrés* were content to follow Mazzini's lead. Ledru Rollin, fugitive leader of the French Social Democrats, Arnold Ruge who had arrived in England, and Engels' recent military superior, Willich, were prominent in association with the founder and master of "Young Italy."

Looking back on the explosion and sudden subsidence of revolution in 1848, Marx and Engels found every reason to emphasise the importance of the trade cycle in recent and impending history. To Mazzini and his friends the recent stirring history of the Roman Republic might appear the chief event of 1849, a piece of high-spirited tragedy with which economic considerations had nothing to do. To Marx and Engels, Rome seemed of little more importance than Lhasa or any other decayed holy city: the mutual excommunications of a Catholic Pope and a reforming Prophet were not for them significant in modern history. On their theory of "Economic Determinism" or "Historic Materialism" all history had always been the

history of class struggles. Rival religions denouncing each other in epochs like the Reformation had themselves been no more than rival economic claims voiced in language of peculiarly impressive and intimidating solemnity. The rival Churches might have been deceived by their own disguises, but in the nineteenth century society had reached a high degree of self-consciousness : classes which in this century still only dared to advance their claims under the fanciful forms of religious and philosophic uplift were sadly behind the times when compared with classes which pushed their economic aims frankly and nakedly. The first care of Marx and Engels, when, in autumn, 1849, they again forgathered in London and were able to envisage a period of steady work, was to diagnose recent events in terms of the economic struggle, and to prognose the likely conditions of the continuance of this. With sharp scorn, the two judged the activities of revolutionaries who were content to fight in the dark with weapons of which their opponents knew as much and more than themselves. They raged when one of their own disciples, sooner than achieve, in their wake, the state of enlightened economic realism, chose rather to consort with the ignorantly and impotently discontented romantics. Over such an apostate Marx and Engels would shed not tears – that was not their way – but violent anathemas.

Elucidation of the state of industry and trade before, during and since the revolutionary outbreaks of 1848 was the main task which they now set themselves. Journalism was still to be the means of propounding their views. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had gone under in Cologne,

like the *Rheinische Zeitung* before it, but the two exiles boldly gave the same name to a small review in which they planned now to survey world politics. While convinced that only a new trade depression could bring a new revolution to success, they still thought of the delay in terms of months, and the plan was to expand and to speed up publication of the review as the trend of the times grew favourable to their projects, until, at the propitious moment, their organ would be transferred to Germany as a large and powerful daily. Pending that, life in London was to be an interlude of vigilance and preparation. Marx foresaw no overwhelming financial difficulties. Before leaving Paris he had made sure of part of the funds for financing the review in London, and he relied upon this promise in inviting Engels' collaboration on what was certain to be "good business." (The writer should earn in order to work, though he must not work in order to earn - that was his old maxim.) But as, towards winter 1849, authoritarian Governments in one country after another reasserted their strength, the European exiles gathered in London appeared a sect more and more forlorn, and the Communists an extreme subdivision of this. Who ever had been counted upon to finance the *Neue Rheinische Revue* failed Marx, and, far from assuring a livelihood to its authors, the venture consumed what little funds they - in particular Engels - still had.

From the moment that Engels arrived in London by sea from Genoa late in the autumn, 1849, the two also set about reorganising the old Communist League, most of whose leading

members were now again in London. They participated further in a non-party Refugees Aid Committee, Engels becoming its Secretary, and in a Communist Workers' Educational Society. For a few months the common fate of the whole exiled community held the factions in these organisations together. Marx himself expected to be back in Europe, in the thick of new uprisings, within a few months. But in the course of six months' residence in London he found reason to summon up all his patience ; he began to perceive clearly that circumstances were propitious for a further consolidation of the reactionary triumph. Meanwhile the romantics, inside the Communist League as well as outside it, could feel only more and more impatience to get back to the fray, and through it in triumph back to their homes.

In the name of the London headquarters of the Communist League, Marx and Engels composed an exhortation to the party groups in Germany which a veteran of the cause, the cobbler Bauer, was sent from London to convey to them. The Prussian Court had now fully regained the mastery in its domains, and the Communists, who during the revolutionary year had come out into the open, could henceforth meet only in secret. The lesson from London to the German cells was that in the next revolutionary uprising Communist workmen would have to fight alongside the lower middle classes. But the workers must be forewarned that the lower middle classes would seek to go just far enough to get satisfaction of their own aspirations ; beyond that point they would turn round on the working-class party, and make common cause with reaction, just as in 1848 the

upper middle class had betrayed the revolution as soon as its own still slighter appetite for change was sated.

Marx, being established in London, soon persuaded himself that London must be the centre of future world history. The more he lived in London the more he tended also to bring the English scene into the centre of his picture of the recent past. Engels had emphasised the great part of England in the modern world five years before, and if during 1848 he had somewhat forgotten this island, he and Marx now joined in stressing its leading share in the events of the Continent. Reviewing French history from February, 1848, up to date, Marx not only argued that the revolution had originated in a commercial depression in France, but he demonstrated that commercial depression on the Continent must be closely dependent upon industrial depression in England, the greatest producer and consumer of all the commodities in world trade. At the height of the revolution England had recovered prosperity, and this prosperity was duly extended to France. "The process - either of depression or of prosperity - always commences in England. England is far the greatest market for Continental exports, and Europe's exporting business depends thus on the condition of England, and particularly of the overseas markets for English goods. . . . Trade crises produce revolutions on the Continent, but the origin is always in England. Disorders in the extremities of the *bourgeois* system naturally precede disorders at its heart, where the possibilities of compensation are greater. The degree in which Continental

revolutions react on England measures the degree in which these affect *bourgeois* life really and truly and not merely on the political surface. When there is general prosperity, when production is booming up to the limits of what is possible in a *bourgeois* society, a real revolution is unthinkable. A revolution is only possible at a moment when these two factors, modern productivity and *bourgeois* forms of production, come into conflict."

In these words, at the end of this first London year, in the last numbers of the commercially hopeless *Neue Rheinische Revue*, Marx outlined the science of modern European revolution.

His own business, with Engels' help, was to watch out for the new commercial crisis in England, without which – as his science taught – the new revolution could not emerge. That Engels now retired to Manchester and resumed his work as family representative in the merchant firm of Ermen and Engels signified that they no longer expected the crisis within weeks or even months, and that somebody must earn money to tide over the period. Marx noted the great importance of the recent Californian gold discoveries as a stimulant to world commerce. Engels, indefatigable student of statistics, kept him supplied with all available information about the state of markets. If Calcutta merchants were overstocked, Marx heard of it as soon as the spryest middleman in Manchester. On his side, he followed attentively the weekly statements of the Bank of England for evidence of stress in the credit system. Year after year the two exchanged opinions on whether the inevitable and indispensable crisis was close at hand. Thus in April,

1852, Engels in Manchester wrote : " The cotton industry is now so flourishing that despite a harvest of 300,000 bales more than 1848-49, cotton prices are still rising. . . . It is easy to understand how Louis Napoleon can quickly prepare his imperial plans amid such prosperity. But," continued Engels, " according to all rules, the crisis cannot be delayed beyond this year." " Gold losses by the Bank of England," reports Marx a little later, " Wild speculation in the City, also in New York. *Ist das nicht* approaching crisis?" (By this time Marx, Engels, and even Fanny Marx corresponded in a wild jumble of German, English and occasionally two or three other languages.) Marx was now alarmed lest crisis, and therefore revolution, should overtake them unprepared. In 1855 " in the City panic colossal [*sic*] - the greatest optimists expect disaster." In 1856 " there must be a monetary crisis before next winter." This time they were not far from the facts. In November, 1857, Engels : " The crisis develops magnificently. The idiots in Manchester Exchange say we are round the corner because cotton is up a penny. . . . But no crisis has ever yet suddenly come to an end at this stage : least of all is this likely when it follows on ten years of prosperity and swindle." In December Marx reports that in Hamburg things are going splendidly (*sieht es grossartig aus* "). One bank has failed for 12 million marks. In England, one big industrialist has sold his " hunters, foxhounds, greyhounds, etc., dismissed his servants, thrown his palace on the market." The London clubs, Marx added, are crammed with capitalists taking to drink.

By the time of these later letters a capitalist



crisis was in fact there, but where was the revolution? Only in despised Italy, whither Garibaldi and Mazzini, both as ignorant of economics as of astronomy, had sped; the one to conquer a country with a thousand men, the other to warn his countrymen that a hereditary monarchy of the Savoy dynasty, though it swore to a hundred constitutions, would not long stand for the liberties of the Italian people. Would war, with all its possibilities, spread to Germany? The notion sent Engels headlong into military studies, while Marx cleared his thoughts in his first big work on economics.

## CHAPTER VII

### CRISIS AT HOME

Chronic crisis in Marx family – Chelsea, Leicester Square and Soho – Marx writes for American Press – three of Marx's six children die – Engels in Manchester – his financial support to Marx – *Critique of Political Economy*.

AN economic crisis in Europe was the great hope, anxiously waited upon year after year. The personal economic crisis of Marx was chronic. The sale of a small property at Trier provided the only small sum of money on which, after 1848, he could count to support his family and his projects. He who had unstintingly – recklessly – thrown his own resources into the cause in the great year at Cologne, accepted as a matter of course the assistance which Engels at once – and not for the first time since their association – began to dispense. According to Frau Marx's account, they had paid over 250 thalers, or about £40, of rent for their first London home in Chelsea when they were expelled on a merely technical breach of the agreement. They had, in any case, accumulated debts in the neighbourhood which could only be paid off by the sale of all their bedding and effects. After this they moved into a German hotel in Leicester Square, and thence into two rooms in Dean Street, Soho. Husband and wife, four children and Lenchen, the maid whom Jenny had taken from her mother, took up their abode in these quarters. (Cooking had to be done in one of the two rooms.) On the revenue

side of the budget were inscribed, at the outset, nothing but such donations as friends would advance or relatives could be constrained to part with. The debts owed to Marx, or which he figured to be owed to him, by comrades and ex-comrades in the cause were at first vaguely envisaged as balancing assets.

After a year in Soho he came upon a means of income, small, not very secure, but genuine and realisable. The *New York Tribune* invited articles from his pen at £2 each, not more than two in a week. The paper had semi-Socialist traditions. Its Editor, Dana, had been in Cologne in 1848 and had picked out Marx as a man to be kept in mind. Now he offered him his columns for political articles without specification of subject. Many a time during his ten years of association with Dana did Marx have cause to curse the *Tribune*, and Engels had equal or greater cause, for on him it fell to discover subjects, to collect documentation, to translate from Marx's German when Marx's English failed, and not seldom to write the articles himself. Not all the articles were used, and those unused were not paid for. Payment even for those used was sometimes delayed, and the Marx family, with nothing in the kitchen cupboard, would wait in sick hope while its head paced to the City to find whether his bill had been accepted and returned. According to the method of finance then in vogue, Marx, immediately after posting an article, would draw a bill on Dana and make it over to a City banker in communication with the U.S.A. The bill, forwarded to Dana, was "accepted" by him, and then discountable by Marx. Sometimes the bill

was mislaid, sometimes Dana informed Marx that he had overdrawn on him, presuming on the publication of articles which had been rejected. Days of anxious, hungry street-pacing ensued for the head of the Communist Party and of the Soho household.

Moreover, though at liberty to write on any subject, Marx soon decided that contributory journalism was a great weariness. That he, instead of devoting himself to "pure science," must take account of the tastes of editor and readers, Hegel had not prepared him for this. Engels, who often enough returned from his day's office work to find that Marx, through sickness or other reasons, relied on him for the half-week's article, added this labour to the burden of financially supporting the Marx family, which he already largely carried. For, as Marx wrote to him in the third year of the *Tribune* work, he could not meet current expenses, let alone pay off old debts, on his *Tribune* fees. (In the same letter he characteristically urged: "You must please knock an article together — perhaps about the Greek revolution?") Occasional contributions for a Vienna paper brought in, meanwhile, a very small supplement.

From time to time the Marx household affairs ran into a special crisis. In mid-1854 the doctor refuses to come any more until some supplement is made. Marx makes a small payment with bitter comments (the doctor shortly after went bankrupt). Then ("a very happy event") Jenny's uncle dies, and a little cash comes in. Late in 1855 her mother dies, leaving a little legacy. Engels has to advance money against

the expectation of the legacy, and again immediately after its receipt, as the money has "all gone on the new house." In 1857 the financial problem is "worse than ever": in July "the brokers are here"; in December "final threats by the tax-collector": and in summer, 1858, net debts of over £100 outstanding. Each time Engels responds: he sends £5 weekly (1851), raises an immediate £30 (July, 1858), and in later years, waxing himself more prosperous, produces much larger sums (from evidence in the letters, he is reckoned to have disbursed £480 in the year 1868 alone). The best measure of the cost of this to Engels is that so long as Marx maintained his connection with the *Tribune* at £2 a printed article – and perhaps less than half those written were printed – Engels found it worth while to sweat over this ill-paid prose. Some lucky movements in railway shares came in very fortunately at one of the worst times: for the rest Engels managed to increase his yearly revenue from the firm by some hundreds a year, until in 1859 he drew £978. He owed his position in Manchester to his family, and worked something well short of maximum hours for his pay, but Engels senior was genuinely delighted with his eldest son's market reports, and treated him well in his will when he died in 1860. Otherwise, even Engels might have trembled when, after being placed on half pay earlier in the commercial crisis, Marx lost his connection with the *Tribune* in 1862. True, about that time Marx extracted £160 from a relation in Holland, and, a little later, £800 as a legacy from a fellow-Communist, Wilhelm Wolff, in Manchester; but not for that did he

cease to rely on Engels throughout his life for annual sums occasionally near the £1,000 mark, when health failed and expenses multiplied without control.

Wherever history beckoned her husband, Jenny had followed with a growing train of children and with a dwindling store of belongings, for the dowry of a lady of degree had been thrown into the treasury of the Party along with the relics of Heinrich Marx's conscientious savings. Jenny bore a daughter in Paris in 1844, another the next year, and a son in Brussels. A second son was born in Chelsea in 1849, a third daughter in Soho in 1851 and a fourth in 1855. Three of the six children died before 1856, when the family moved to better air in Hampstead.

Little Guido - "our little gunpowder-plot mannikin" - died without warning of a sudden seizure while at play. Franziska lived only a year; her burial, at a moment when funds could hardly be raised for a coffin, was more painful than her death. But ten-year-old "Musch" (Edgar) lay for weeks with gastric fever, while Marx for once let private anxieties almost dominate the mind vowed to history in the making. Musch adored Engels, who had taught him songs, nicknamed him "the Colonel," and had written him notes in Italian addressed to "Signor Colonello Musch." Musch knew what exile life meant and was skilled in snatching the bread from the arm of the baker's boy and running upstairs with it to his parents, shouting that there was nobody at home to pay the bill. Marx recovered slowly from the loss of his firstborn, and the healing thought was that "you [Engels] and

I can still work together to some effect in this world.”

In the Soho house seven people had occupied two rooms, one of them the kitchen. At Hampstead (1857) Marx had a commodious study. But even here and with a family reduced to three daughters, both parents succumbed from time to time to illness and exhaustion. Now Marx was incapacitated by a ghastly boil between nose and mouth, now by eye-trouble, coughs, headaches and piles. Jenny had a miscarriage in 1857. Marx would not describe the atrocious circumstances even to Engels, who plied the sickly household with cash, with articles for the *Tribune*, representing cash at one remove (rather a long one), and, when possible, with wine and cheering delicacies. Nor did he show the slightest irritation or surprise when Marx, in one of the worst periods of their financial and physical distress, included music-lessons for the elder girls (who already studied French, Italian and drawing at a highly respectable young ladies' seminary) in the expenses of the household.

Marx and Engels exchanged visits in Manchester and London, which sometimes culminated in a drinking-bout with sick headache to follow, at least on Marx's side; and Engels also, on occasion, had visits from Jenny and the children. Wilhelm Wolff (“Lupus”) and Freiligrath, both ex-members of the *Neue Rheinische* staff, were established in respectable posts, “Lupus” as a German teacher in Manchester, and Freiligrath “eating the beefsteaks of exile” (he said) as manager of a Swiss bank agency in London. “Lupus” found strong beer necessary to cheer

existence in Manchester, and was apt to drift into trouble with strangers in bars. Often Marx and Engels found reason to censure him in their almost daily correspondence. Freiligrath came off more lightly, for Marx held that poets were not to be treated like ordinary mortals. (Heine was even allowed to misuse Marx's name in personal controversy without reproof.) "Lupus" and Freiligrath were in a rank by themselves, and, of the other exiles, few were ever mentioned between Marx and Engels save in terms of distrust or contempt, though it might sometimes be pitying contempt, as when one Imandt was classified as *Deus minorum gentium, canis domesticus communismi germanici*. Occasionally Marx or Engels had to complain a little of the other's overhasty adverse judgments, but the two men shared their hatreds, antipathies and suspicions as freely as their cash resources – and the stock of the former was enormous. Besides, in one of their phrases, "Émigré life is a school of scandal and meanness." Quarrels arose abruptly in that circle. At one time Marx was solemnly accused of having purloined somebody else's Spanish grammar. The highly-bred Jenny was fully ready to take the strongest line regarding "dirty Jews," plebeians, swashbucklers, and the other classified types of fellow *émigrés* who butted up against her husband – even against the poet Freiligrath when on one occasion he consulted his business interests instead of Marx's political line.

The first duty which Engels had assumed towards Marx was to protect him from absorption in the dead round of earning a living. How could it be other than a dead round for the declared



enemy both of the general earnings system ("capitalism") and also of the privileged institutions into which the sensitive usually take refuge from capitalism - Church, Universities, State Service - in a word, feudalism? Not but what Marx, at one juncture, was driven to seek a job as a railway clerk, only to be at once rejected for his illegible handwriting. He did not pursue the search, for Engels believed that Marx had now a task to perform for which, in the first stages, nobody would remunerate him. Nor when, on one or two occasions, Marx was approached with offers of paid journalistic work of a sort that would have betokened submission to the Berlin Government, did Engels for a moment press Marx to relieve him at the cost of such a sacrifice. But Marx must not only be freed for real work, he must also be spurred on to master his intellectual scrupulousness. The editor who could choose his policy with lightning speed, and condemn an interlocutor on his first few phrases, was for ever mastered by the fear of hastiness when he addressed himself to the work of "science." Long ago, Bruno Bauer had jogged Marx for months to get him to conclude his doctor's thesis on the lore of Democritus and Epicurus; Arnold Ruge had waited as many months for promised essays on Christian Art and other subjects; the Communist League had extracted the *Manifesto* from its chief author only under threat of expulsion; and now Engels adjured him to collect his economic doctrines in a weighty volume, without too many years' delay.

In the tenth year of the second exile Marx produced an introductory volume of the work

intended to establish the two of them in the forefront of the revolutionary party, ready for the long-awaited return of a revolutionary situation. The business depression was acute in these months of 1859 in which Marx read the final proofs of his *Critique of Political Economy*, cursing the publisher for his tardiness, accusing his best helper in Germany of wilfully holding back his manuscript, but himself recklessly breaking his contract. Engels had been preparing in his own way for his own part, as cavalry leader in the great revolutionary times ahead – fox-hunting furiously and never so pleased as when he had been seven hours in the saddle away from the loathed office in Manchester.

Meanwhile, the two were now detached from any party or group, and at the moment of publication of the *Critique* Marx informed visitors from Germany that he and Engels were spokesmen of the proletariat by right of self-appointment and by none other. They professed to glory in the hatred with which others had responded to their scorn. But they were profoundly concerned at the conduct of one who, professing himself their disciple, had begun to gain adherents and a national fame of his own in Germany. To set bounds to this development, they needs must turn their eyes back on half-forgotten Germany, and on that particularly scorned metropolis, Berlin.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION

The Communist League resuscitated - long arm of Prussian police - Lassalle - Marx and Engels suspicious of him on private and public account - the Vogt affair - Marx with Lassalle in Berlin, and Lassalle in London - Lassalle and Bismarck - death of Lassalle.

FOR a year or two after 1849, the German exiles in England enjoyed some prestige in the eyes of the world as the opposition, the other Germany, the alternative to the royal Courts, if there was ever to be a change of Government at all. For leadership among the exiles, Marx had therefore struggled unremittingly. Old and new enemies blocked the way. The reconstituted Communist League in London soon split into two factions, the Marx-Engels group being stoutly opposed by the friends of Willich, Engels' late military commander in Baden. The Marx group dominated the Central Committee and late in 1850 drove Willich and his friends out of the League. But Willich in turn drove Marx for ten years away from the German Workers' Educational Institute, and was so seductive that Marx induced the London Communist League to proclaim itself subordinate to a Committee in Cologne, where Willich was without influence. In very much the same way, twenty years later, Marx shifted the First International out of Bakunin's grasp to New York. Transference in both cases shortly preceded dissolution; but the Communist League

survived long enough to encounter the might and spite of restored absolutism in Germany.

The Prussian police had not ceased to watch Marx since he left Cologne. A delegate of the Communist League visiting Leipzig fell into police hands early in 1851; from his papers the police got on the track of the League's new headquarters in Cologne and of the branch in London. Eleven Cologne Communists were now arrested, while an agent of the Prussian police obtained from London documents purporting to be records of discussions in Marx's circle which were worked up into evidence of a "Franco-German plot," said to have been hatched by the "Marx party."

Marx and his family worked with tough energy to furnish counsel for the defence in Cologne with proof of the falsity of important parts of the evidence. In business envelopes supplied by Engels, they posted dozens of handwritten copies of lengthy documents to those who might help to save the comrades, among whom were Becker and Lessner, two of Marx's closest associates in the last phase at Cologne. They strove to interest the English Press, on grounds of pure justice, in the conduct of the Prussian Courts. The decisive evidence was, in fact, soon dropped by the Prosecutor as false, despite which seven out of the eleven accused were sentenced, on a charge of high treason, to imprisonment for three to six years. Marx did not rest until he had collected and summarised the whole evidence in a brochure for distribution in and out of Germany.

Among those who were particularly active in the defence of the accused Communists was that same young Ferdinand Lassalle, who had been

the first man arrested in 1849 for advocating the tax-resistance programme of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Like Marx himself, Lassalle had on that occasion conducted his own defence, and had won round the jury by his own eloquence. He now undertook to disseminate Marx's pamphlet in the Rhineland.

Lassalle was ten years younger than Marx, a Jew from Breslau thrust as a boy into a trade apprenticeship, but insatiable in his desire for culture and eminence. He had taken to Hegel about the time that Marx had, in his own expression, turned Hegel's logic upside down so as to render it applicable to real life. Lassalle worked hard to fit philosophy to the uses of politics, but his learning remained no more than an accomplishment. As a politician, he had an approach to the common man which was far more serviceable. He was an orator of glowing temperament. Towards Marx he showed the deference of a disciple, towards Engels the more distant courtesy of a younger fellow-enthusiast. (He addressed Marx as "*Du*," Engels as "*Sie*.") They used his help with no hesitation in the days of the Cologne trial, after which he was almost their only eminent correspondent in Germany.

Elegant and impulsive, Lassalle made enemies even while he spread his influence in Rhenish-Westphalian circles. But his friends in England still relied on him. "Despite everything," Marx noted in 1853, "Lassalle is hardy and energetic." Engels agreed. "He has his foibles, but then he has party spirit and ambition, and we know all about his little private amusements and intrigues which he must always cloak under pretexts of

policy." From the first, Marx and Engels would give him no more than this qualified approval ; but then to be hardy and energetic, and to have ambition, was not the way to win their full confidence.

The private intrigue that Engels complained of was the Hatzfeld affair. Although no lawyer, Lassalle had undertaken, with the airs of a knight errant, to conduct an interminable lawsuit in favour of an injured wife, Countess von Hatzfeld, in return for the promise of a large share in the fortune of this lady if he succeeded in preserving it from her husband's claims. Lassalle ultimately won case and fortune. Marx this time admonished Engels to take pains to keep on the right side of this painfully sensitive ally. But letters which Lassalle wrote to Marx in 1854 on the progress of the Crimean War annoyed Engels with their amateurish discussion of strategical problems, which he himself had taken pains to study. Marx came quickly to share the annoyance. Freiligrath, the poet-banker, had for his part long decided that the Hatzfeld suit was a tiresome family affair, not the struggle of innocence against oppression. This indeed was a widespread opinion in Rhineland Communist circles, and the Cologne group had refused membership to Lassalle in 1850, disliking his connection with Countess Hatzfeld. With every year, Marx and Engels became more suspicious of the successful and relatively prosperous agitator. In spring 1856, Marx was visited by a Communist tradesman from Düsseldorf, who brought two arguments into close relationship – the distrust felt by working-class Communists in Düsseldorf against

Lassalle, and the readiness of the workers in neighbouring Rhenish towns to rise in revolt under the leadership of Marx and Engels. Marx accepted Levy as the emissary of "the Düsseldorf workers," and listened attentively to his gossipy complaints that Lassalle had won the Hatzfeld case not by professional skill, but by treachery, that he had gambled in foreign bonds and cheated his partner, had dictatorial leanings and would go over to the *bourgeois* in an emergency. Marx was deeply gratified at the other part of Levy's remarks, by which he and Engels were recognised as the political and military chiefs in case of revolution, though he hastened to give the usual warnings against sporadic revolts. And, as to the accusations against Lassalle, after "very severe examination," as he records, he concluded that they were justified. Whatever right Levy had to speak for "the Düsseldorf workers," Marx was in no mood to be sceptical about his vague accusations. Engels, professing himself pained at the thought of the loss of first-class capacity in the party, entirely concurred. By silent consent, Marx and Engels agreed to regard Lassalle as a proved defaulter from the cause, but to make every practical use of him that they could. Meanwhile they relegated him to the class of persons never to be mentioned without a gibe or a sneer.

For Marx, Jenny and Engels, Lassalle was henceforth "the Berlin Jew boy," "Jewy Braun," "Baron Itzig," "Ephraim know-all," etc. Every man his nickname, and the harsher the better was the rule of the clique, and Freiligrath himself could be termed "the philistine bug" on occasion. But the "Jew boy" was found

unpleasant and ridiculous in every manifestation. He wrote a book on Greek philosophy : " Thinks you can get over not being a philosopher simply by learning Greek." He plans a big work on economics : megalomania : he can think of nothing but great works ! He delays his project on economics : obviously he is waiting for Marx's next volume to crib the contents ! He publishes it : obviously he must pay to get his own books published. How could a publisher hope to sell such stuff ?

But meanwhile, why should not the Jew boy be used to get a publisher for Marx's own works ? Lassalle offers his services, fixes up an exceptionally good bargain for Marx, who, however, is a year behindhand in delivering the manuscript. Duncker, the publisher, takes a few days to acknowledge receipt, and cannot begin printing the very week he receives the text. " Why ? " asks Marx in hot suspicion. Because he has something of Lassalle's to print - one of the Jew boy's immortal, inflaming works. Lassalle meanwhile has not written to Marx to say what he thinks of the text. Why ? Because the superiority of Marx's analysis of money must have been an appalling blow for him. A month, two months, three months, and the *Critique* is still not in print - the plot is patent : Lassalle, " cursed, vain fool," is purposely holding it back to get his own excremental effusions out first, and the publisher no doubt is delighted to cheat a hungry family of payments due. Thus did the suspicion and jealousy of Marx's first impressions crystallise into passionate hatred.

Side by side with purely private quarrels, the



rivals had already some explicit differences of policy. At the moment when Marx was raging against Lassalle over the publication arrangements for his *Critique*, Engels and Lassalle had produced rival pamphlets on the prospects of peace and war, and the hopes of the opposition if war should break out. A commercial crisis and war : Marx and Engels had long speculated on this outlook. Now in 1859 the crisis was there, but so far Europe was disturbed only by the campaign of Piedmont, backed by Louis Napoleon, against Austria. Engels frankly desired to see war developing between France and Prussia out of the Franco-Austrian hostilities. His first wish was to see the new French Empire go down in defeat. Though rejecting Austria's claim to the Lombard-Venetian territories, and thus far sympathising with the Piedmontese and Italian uprising, he saw behind Piedmont France, and Engels held it to be a vital German interest that France should not be installed in northern Italy. Lassalle was altogether against a Prussian war with France. He did not believe that in such a war Prussia would march as a revolutionary nation to break up the régime of Napoleon ; he feared almost to see the parts inverted. Such were the arguments of the pamphleteers, but neither fully revealed his privy thoughts. Lassalle, while publicly opposing a Franco-Prussian war, was reckoning upon it. He wanted to get into public opposition before it started, so that the Communists could come forward as the popular party when the Court and generals were discredited by defeat. Engels and Marx believed that Prussian war against Imperial France would bring Imperial Russia marching

against Prussia, a conflict which they had long assured each other would afford a grand opportunity for Communist leadership in Prussia. Meanwhile, on the plane of a more intimate squabble, it was Lassalle's pamphlet which crowded Marx's *Critique* for a week or two out of Duncker's presses. But Duncker was also, through Lassalle's kind offices, the publisher of Engels' retort!

Marx's rage against Lassalle, his violence against the policy of reconciliation with Louis Napoleon's France, was not, as a matter of fact, all politics and not all jealousy of the "Jew boy." Some part was due to a sense of injury at Lassalle's attitude in a recent wearing controversy between Marx and Vogt, the former democratic leader in the Frankfurt Assembly. After 1849 Vogt had settled in Switzerland, and was composing pamphlets on European policy which were subtly favourable to Louis Napoleon. Marx heard and believed that Vogt was in Louis Napoleon's pay. It was one Blind, a South German democrat, who gave Marx details of Vogt's corruption, but Blind was angry and frightened when he saw his allegations printed by Marx's disciple Liebknecht in a Bavarian newspaper, and swore that the documents in Liebknecht's possession were forged. Vogt sued the Bavarian paper and strung together in print all the available scandal about Marx and his friends that could be collected from his enemies. The Bavarian paper failed to convince the court that Liebknecht's contentions were well-based, but it escaped condemnation on the grounds that Vogt, an exiled democrat, was an outlaw as far as libel was concerned. Vogt thus

gained reputation among the exiles as an injured martyr, while Marx appeared to have inspired grave accusations on unsifted or false evidence. Lassalle and Freiligrath did not disguise their scepticism ; and, indeed, at the time the evidence told heavily against Marx. Lassalle went still further in arguing that Liebknecht, one of Marx's closer friends, in working for a conservative Bavarian paper (the *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*) was only too likely to compromise the party on other occasions.

Marx set to work and in a fighting pamphlet rebutted all Vogt's accusations against himself, reiterating, with an array of new evidence, the charge against Vogt as made, and then repudiated, by Blind. Years later, on the fall of Louis Napoleon, the receipts were discovered for large assignments to Vogt out of his secret service funds, and Marx was entirely vindicated. Moreover, to the neutrality of his friends when appearances were adverse was added another irritant : Marx had entered into partnership with a young printer friend for the printing of *Herr Vogt*. The young man failed after contracting debts which Marx, as an unlimited partner, was forced to pay up. Thus he lost a considerable sum on his authorship, despite the popularity of this famous pamphlet, which Trotsky found he could still read with gusto, some seventy years later, in a train on the way to exile.

Meanwhile Prussia had not made war on France, and neither Lassalle's policy of revolution for Prussia by defeat at the hands of France, nor Engels' policy of revolution by victorious war against Russia had been put to an acute test.

Lassalle, who made extraordinary allowances for Marx's temperament, now invited Marx to visit him in Berlin. The controversy with Vogt had taxed his health and finances to the utmost and the family had been in such a pitiable condition that Marx had gone in person to apply for help from a maternal relation in Holland. It was thence that he passed on to Berlin, after extracting a sum of £160 and some weeks of pleasant hospitality from this benevolent "Uncle Philip." The Prussian Government had declared a political amnesty, and not only could Marx return without peril, but the two were able to discuss projects for a Communist campaign to be conducted within the framework of the law. Lassalle, as usual, treated Marx with a show of deference, which Marx divined to be not quite heartfelt. Lassalle, enjoying a handsome income from the lady whose case he had contested in thirty-six courts, was now living in elegant style in Berlin, holding forth at fashionable supper-parties to admiring listeners of both sexes. Marx, on his side, having for once some money in his pocket, kept up appearances, so that Lassalle felt no shame in displaying a style so different from the standards of exile life — a style which, however, Marx observed with misgivings and bitterness. Lassalle protested that this Berlin life was unutterably tedious to him, that not Marx but he himself was in spiritual exile, separated from the friends in London. Marx saw a brilliant careerist helping himself to popularity and prestige with the phrases of the *Communist Manifesto*. Yet he would not break with Lassalle, for on whom else could "party headquarters" ("you and me," as he would frankly interpret

such expressions to Engels) rely to represent them in Germany? Lassalle now suggested that they should jointly found a daily paper in Berlin, on funds to be supplied by Countess Hatzfeld. But Marx let the proposal drop; he would not consider accepting Lassalle on an equality as joint director of a party organ. At the very least Engels must come in as a third coequal – a proposal for which Lassalle showed no enthusiasm.

The *Critique of Political Economy* had failed to make any impression in Germany. It had certainly not given Marx the status of a national figure, of a leader too eminent to require an organised following. Lassalle, on the other hand, Marx could see, was on the way to getting a following; not only this, but Lassalle was beginning to seek touch with foreign leaders like Mazzini, as one who intended to have a personal say in the general progressive movement in Europe. For twelve years Marx and Engels had refused to trouble themselves with the enlistment of numerous supporters, sure that they could time the moment of action to enable them to carry the Party with them at the right juncture. Meanwhile, however, even the great trade depression of 1858–59 had not given them their chance. Lassalle was not going to wait and watch with them for the next critical moment in the economic situation: he was going to see what he could make of the situation as it was. When Lassalle visited London the next year, Marx had him to stay at 9, Grafton Terrace, Hampstead, as a return for the hospitality in Berlin. Lassalle only discovered at the end of his stay that the household was keeping up appearances for his benefit, at the

cost of a new series of pawnings and borrowings. While Lassalle ate and drank heartily at their board, the Marx family morally reckoned the pounds and shillings against him, just as they reckoned against him, for grotesque vanity, the calls he paid upon Mazzini and other revolutionary exiles.

During his London visit, Lassalle (now further nicknamed "the Revolutionary Richelieu") told Marx something of his plans for stirring up the working-class movement in Germany and giving it the form of a political party, and he again invited Marx's collaboration. He sketched plans for a Prussian political party, centred in Berlin, agitating for universal suffrage and for State aid to workers' co-operative institutions. Such was not the sort of purpose upon which Marx would concentrate his activities, even had he believed that the young, rich and elegant orator would easily yield him the first place. So Lassalle returned to Germany to found the German Working Men's Associations in which Marx and Engels were represented only by their undistinguished friend, the journalist Liebknecht.

Contempt of Prussia and of Berlin, unwillingness to centre their activities as European politicians on regions so barbarous, assisted in dissuading them from any other share in Lassalle's venture than by way of Liebknecht's participation - and that was designed more as a check than as an aid. When in 1863 the new Prussian King appointed that typical Prussian Junker, Bismarck, as Chancellor, Marx and Engels mocked all the more heartily at the antiquated Hegelian metropolis. But Lassalle felt no such contempt for Berlin or

for Bismarck. In fact, he entered into secret relations with Bismarck, on the strength of their joint hostility to liberal parliamentarism. He was ready, he told him, in a letter only recently discovered, to view a monarchical dictatorship as a step towards the goal of a "social revolutionary popular monarchy." But Lassalle's political plans were cut short by his death at Geneva the following year in a duel to which he had challenged the preferred suitor of a Bavarian beauty : and while Marx is for all time and everywhere the author of *Das Kapital*, Lassalle is merely, for English readers, the man round whose adventures George Meredith wrote *The Tragic Comedians*.

## CHAPTER IX

### A POWER IN THE WORLD

Rival groupings among German Socialists - Liebknecht, Schweitzer, and Bebel - Marx adheres to "First International" - contact with English trade unions - Marx "Head of the International."

ON Lassalle's death their friend Liebknecht, who had for some years managed to scrape together a journalistic livelihood on German soil, and was treated by them with affectionate condescension, urged Marx and Engels to step in and take charge of the German working-class movement which Lassalle had succeeded in organising with a thousand original members a few months before his death. Liebknecht urged them to take this chance and J. B. von Schweitzer, Lassalle's most gifted follower, made advances to them. But Lassalle had left a political testament nominating as his successor a subordinate partisan named Becker, while Countess Hatzfeld kept a close watch on her friend's memory, regarding Marx as his enemy beyond the grave. Meanwhile Schweitzer, ambitious and subtle - an aristocrat schooled by the Jesuits - soon broke off from Becker, and two unions, both adopting the name and claiming to be the continuation of Lassalle's German Working Men's Association, competed for the working-men's adhesion. With Schweitzer Marx remained on terms of polite letter-writing, though he and Engels condemned much of the



policy of a political review, the *Social Democrat*, on which their friend Liebknecht now collaborated editorially with Schweitzer. Schweitzer, in fact, continued, as Lassalle had done, to speculate on Bismarck's usefulness as a joint ally against the German Liberals or Progressives, who had in the last five years – with the insanity and practical dethronement of Frederick William IV – begun to cut a figure as a possible Government party in Prussia, and had long since ceased to regard themselves as fellow-victims with anti-capitalist workmen. For a time the Prince Regent William tolerated, if he did not actually favour, the Constitutional Liberals. But they made trouble in the Diet over his projects of military reform, and in 1862 William, now king, called in Bismarck to rule for him in defiance of the Diet. At this stage Bismarck found it worth while to bid for Lassalle's and Schweitzer's support.

But if the exiles condemned Schweitzer for intriguing with the Court Minister, soon they were down on their close friend Liebknecht for the opposite error of too close an identification with the middle-class parties. After the three weeks' war in which Bismarck humbled Austria (1866), annexed Hanover, and constituted the North German Federation, there were agitations against the extension of Prussian power wherever it began newly to press – in Saxony, Hanover and Hessen and in the South German States also. Liebknecht, no subtle brain, could not keep pace with Marx's and Engels' shifting valuation of Bismarck, whom they despised as a Junker courtier in Prussia, but admired as the breaker-up of feudalism in the minor German states. In the

year of Bismarck's victory, Liebknecht helped to found a workers' party in Saxony, and he took his allies where he found them, in the anti-Prussian cliques of Hanover and South Germany, revilers of Bismarck all, but strange associates, in other respects, for the Communist Party.

But Liebknecht now gained a new ally, August Bebel, who had got control of a working-class organisation of non-Socialist origin, but was guiding it towards the Socialist way of thought and action. For this fiery orator and cool reasoner, Marx conceived a respect, and after Schweitzer had contemptuously referred to the "antiquated Marxist clique" – consisting (as he quoted from old Moses Hess) of the Master (Marx), his Secretary (Engels), and their agent (Liebknecht) – Marx had all the more reason to cultivate relations with this Bebel as the one man of energy and intelligence who seemed fitted to lead the German working-class movement on Marxian lines. Even with Bebel, however, Marx now remained on his guard, because he felt it necessary to keep his German connections flexible in view of new ambitions elsewhere that had opened up to him.

Since the end of the old Communist League in 1851, Marx had perhaps had no choice but to concentrate his practical ambitions in the field of German politics. He had discussed returning to Germany, and even taking up residence in Berlin. He had been genuinely concerned at Lassalle's advantages in a bid for leadership of a German working-class party; and after Lassalle's death he had manœuvred to assert a right of overseership for himself and Engels in the affairs

of the various competing Communist and Socialist groups in Prussia.

He had meanwhile worked indefatigably, though seldom in accordance with programme or time-table, on his great "scientific" work. But in the very month of Lassalle's death, he suddenly found open to him a way of return to the field of international agitation. Out of a fraternal meeting of English and French working men, convoked in London to protest against Russian atrocities in Poland, there took shape, without Marx's particular interest or active co-operation, an International Working Men's Association — the "First International" of Socialist history. Drawn into the affairs of the "International" by a casual acquaintance, Marx very quickly discovered in it opportunities for influence which caused him to relegate his scientific work to the second place. For eight years now Marx, and Engels with him, was to give his full passion and energy to dominating the new organisation and making it a power and an instrument of their own power in Europe.

Mazzini and his friends had also been called in to assist in giving shape to the new association, and when Marx came to the scene, Mazzini had proposed a constitution and a programme in the romantic Italian style with prophetic appeals to "the people." For all Mazzini's prestige, the English and French delegates felt that this programme was useless for their purpose. Marx, who had been invited by a French acquaintance to attend the inaugural meeting on behalf of the German working men, was chosen to sit on the committee which examined Mazzini's draft.

Before long Marx had submitted a draft of his own, and obtained its acceptance. Six months later, in a letter to Engels, he termed himself "Head of the International."

It was by composing the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847 that Marx had gained the spokesmanship of the Communist League ; and in 1849 he had rallied the West German opposition behind him with a manifesto. Now again he rendered services to a committee in search of a manifesto. And the headquarters of the International, like those of the Communist League, rapidly came under his guidance, when, in place of Mazzini's noble rhetoric, he marshalled in a logical pattern the multiple protestations of the Socialists against the Governments and ruling classes of the day. The great European Powers appeared in those years perpetually on the verge of armed conflict. The Russo-Franco-Prussian War awaited by both Lassalle and Engels had not materialised in 1862 ; only the Empires of Vienna and Paris had come into short and quickly resolved conflict. But the new Italian frontiers towards Austria could not be regarded as permanent ; the French, grotesquely enough, were garrisoning Papal Rome against the new Kingdom of Italy which they had just helped into being ; Louis Napoleon had his eye on the left bank of the Rhine ; and Austria's nominal primacy in Germany as a whole overlapped with Prussia's real primacy in the north. Russia's bloody repression in Poland had brought the International Working Men's Association into being.

Even London, seat of the International, after narrowly avoiding embroilment in the American

Civil War, hummed with talk of a French invasion. The English trade unionists with whom Marx now came into contact had indeed put up what he held to be the decisive resistance against a warlike alliance of Great Britain with the slave states, a most important act of working-class self-assertion. Hence the *Address* penned by Marx in 1864 was partly devoted to a theme not thitherto touched upon by him – the function of the proletarians of the world in opposing national wars. And as the English trade unions claimed the merit of having secured the new Ten-hour Day Act, and of the growth of co-operative enterprise, these achievements had also to be celebrated. These were not exactly revolutionary triumphs, but, after spending fifteen years of his manhood waiting for a new revolutionary situation, Marx was in any case more inclined to give value to the “provisional” achievements of a waiting period, than he had been when in earliest years he had seen revolution ahead as the necessary explosion of the modern philosophic mind, or even when, after 1849, he had seen it as ready to be released when a few English merchants had to sell their hunters or their shooting-lodges to meet sudden losses.

The English trade unionists for whom he now had to speak were not the proud rebels of the Chartist school he and Engels had known in 1848. They were worthy leaders in the day-to-day struggle over wages and hours. Whatever their shortcomings – perhaps national more than personal – they stood for the biggest factory population in the industrial centre of the world, and Marx, his own mental rhythm slowed by detailed historical study, accommodated himself to the

tempo of these allies nearly enough at least to keep close to them and stir them up by his presence. "A hundred times better to agitate here through the 'International,'" he wrote to a new friend, Dr. Kugelmann, who in 1865 wanted to know why Marx would not join Schweitzer. "Our influence over the English proletariat is direct, and of the utmost importance."

The Britons might be slow, but Marx felt they were in motion. In 1866 English trade unionism had, in fact, been reawakened to national self-consciousness by the enquiries of a Royal Commission into the unions' activities after acts of violence in some northern towns had been traced to the incitement of union officials. Eager to show that they knew of other political methods than sporadic violence, the union leaders got active in the manhood suffrage movement of those years. Marx told Kugelmann that he himself had been busy in the background of this agitation, and claimed merit for the International in the achievement of "Household Suffrage" in 1867. This seemed to justify hopes that the Britons would in turn support the International, and in particular the man who privately styled himself its "head."

Marx's official post in the International was only that of Secretary for Germany. Constitutionally each participating nation was grouped in a local federation, directed by a local federal council, which corresponded with the central council at headquarters. But, greatly to Marx's advantage, the central council in London served also as federal council for England and in this council he could mediate between England and

Europe. Indeed until 1872, when for the first time a Marxist and an anti-Marxist wing came into open conflict, Marx attended none of the Annual General Congresses of the International, held successively in Geneva, Lausanne, Brussels, Basel and (where Marx did appear in 1872) The Hague. His interest in watching the Congresses was to scotch any attempt to weaken the London central council which habitually spoke with the voice of its Secretary for Germany.

## CHAPTER X

### THE LAST STRUGGLE

Engels provides an income - Marx offends, Engels forgives - "League of Peace and Liberty" - Michael Bakunin - Orthodox and schismatics in the International - Marx supports Prussian War on France - he changes, and supports Paris Commune.

IN 1869 Engels retired from business in Manchester, withdrawing £7,000 of capital and obtaining compensation for the "goodwill" he had built up. He could then offer Marx a definite £350 a year. Since the loss of the *Tribune* income, Marx had depended, save for windfalls, upon Engels for the whole upkeep of the *bourgeois* household in Haverstock Hill, as it passed from crisis to crisis. (The windfalls had included small and large legacies, loans extracted with the utmost difficulty from relations, and on occasion even a remittance from Lassalle.)

On one single occasion Engels addressed to him words, not of reproof but of reproach, after receiving from Marx one of the customary recitals of woeful family and financial complications. Mary Burns died in 1863. This Irish woman of the people had been the comrade of Engels - he did not pretend she was the one love of his life - throughout his Manchester years. Marx himself had known her for many years. Yet the news of her death drew from him not warm words of sympathy for his dearest friend, but only redoubled invectives against the misfortunes of life,



in which, as he observed, Engels too was now for once involved. Three-quarters of the letter dealt with Marx's own chagrins. Engels, deeply hurt, interrupted the correspondence: when he wrote, it was to complain bitterly of Marx's egotism. Marx may indeed have come to think of Engels as, by constitution and circumstances, utterly exempt from his own measure of cares and miseries. Mary Burns was not another Jenny von Westphalen; she brought her lover no family ties, no duty of keeping up appearances, nothing but relief and gaiety. For some months, though his apology had been heartily accepted, Marx watched, in painful apprehension, for signs of renewed vexation on Engels' part — signs which never came, for the forgiveness had been complete as well as prompt. But this unhappy incident had long been forgotten when, in the fourth year of the International, Engels left Manchester to reside as a *rentier* in Regent's Park, bringing Mary's elder sister, Lizzie, with him. If Marx was by now wearing out under the strain of conducting or manipulating the headquarters of the International, while at the same time storing up fundamental doctrine in *Capital*, Engels was buoyantly healthy and ready to plunge again into European politics for refreshment from twenty years of *hündischer Commerz*.

In the first four years of the International Marx had been engaged in manœuvres for position against all those rivals who failed to solicit and obtain his approval for their conduct of their own part in the working-class movements. In his perpetual vigilance against competitors, Marx continued these combats beyond the grave. He

glimpsed the deceased Lassalle in the person of Schweitzer, and the deceased Proudhon in the persons of the French section of the International, who claimed to be its founders and were by no means humble servants of London headquarters. In 1868 most of the leading adherents of the International in Paris were thrown into the gaol of Sainte Pélagie. Marx was frankly delighted, as he had feared they would appear at the Brussels Congress as adversaries of the London Central Council. The unwilling absence of the Proudhonists from Brussels seemed to spell safety for his own position. But at that very moment Marx was now menaced by a ghost – a very substantial and corporal ghost – from the past, who had outlived Lassalle and Proudhon, and now revisited Marx as the very spirit of mischief and heresy.

In summer, 1868, the Brussels Congress of the International had concluded, like the previous ones in Geneva and Lausanne, with the Central Council (that is Marx) left in undisturbed authority. There was in session, however, at the same time a gathering which had been convoked at Berne by another international organisation, the idealistic, democratic, middle-class “League of Peace and Liberty.” This “Peace and Liberty” movement, jealously observed by Marx, had invited the Brussels Congress to collaborate, but had received in answer an intimation that more than one international organisation was excessive: the “Peace and Liberty” movement should therefore disband itself and merge its respective national sections in those of the International. Marx would have troubled himself no more about “Peace and Liberty” had not

Michael Bakunin, Marx's friend of a quarter century before – the hero since of barricades, trials, imprisonments and escapes, also of gargantuan banquets and lighter adventures – hit upon this well-meaning gathering, sponsored by men like Bright, Mill and Garibaldi, to be the stage of his political rebirth after a long Siberian exile. Bakunin submitted at Berne an anarchist programme for reforming the world which was singularly out of tune with the mood of so mild a gathering and was promptly rejected by it. But a minority of these friends of peace were moved to accept Bakunin's leadership in a new organisation that was to be hostile to all existing States and Churches, the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy. When this body offered to co-operate with the International Working Men's Association, Marx saw instant threat of rivalry. To force his way in, Bakunin next announced that the International Alliance accepted the Statutes of the International Working Men's Association, and had affiliated itself to it. "If that damned Russian plans to wriggle to the head of the working-men's movement," wrote Engels to Marx, "it's time he got the attention he wants." The two now made it their first task to prevent the affiliation of Bakunin's Alliance to the Association, which, they doubted not, was designed to oust themselves from their position of control.

Control was already difficult enough to exercise. Only a Hegelian schooled in the identification of opposites could have coped with the task of leading the "Workers' International" in opposition to almost all the workers' national organisations affiliated to it. The French were actively hostile

to Marx, the Germans at best divided, the English at best passive. Next year at the Basel Congress (1869) the French delegates, who arrived in defiance of the dissolution of their Paris Bureau by the Imperial Police, voted solidly, save for four abstentions, against certain resolutions advocating succession duties and inheritance rights. These resolutions Marx had himself drawn up; and since the reforms advocated presupposed at least a provisional compromise with a property system, he had designed them to silence the catastrophic revolutionaries of Bakunin's school. The Germans, being divided, were a little less difficult to manage than the French. Both the Schweitzer and the Liebknecht parties in Germany were affiliated to the International. Liebknecht was agitating for Schweitzer's party to be excluded. Marx hesitated, for between 1867 and 1869 Schweitzer had been following a line that Marx thought reasonable. He had broken with Lassalle's tradition by stressing the importance of organised trade union action as a means to power, instead of staking everything upon parliamentary action: and if, following Lassalle, he maintained a sort of understanding with Bismarck, this was no longer so odious to Marx as Liebknecht's understanding with such anti-Bismarckists as the Hanoverian Court party. Marx had begun to feel what he later said quite frankly, that Bismarck's aggrandisement of Prussia helped to bring the international Socialist movement under German rather than French control — that is, it sent up the stock of Marxism as against Proudhonism. Still, when Schweitzer, maddened by Liebknecht, entered into a united front with the pure

Lassalleans, Marx took new alarm at this resurrection of Lassalle through Schweitzer. And to the posthumous opposition of Lassalle in Germany was added the posthumous opposition of Proudhon in France, for Bakunin was finding support in France chiefly among the Proudhonists. With the English trade unionists, Applegarth, Odger and Lucraft, Marx maintained his influence only by never interfering with them and by feigning contentment with a line of policy which at heart he found slow and dull. For the present, however, they gave him their voting power, and so ensured him at all events a position in German politics so long as Schweitzer and Liebknecht found the favour of the Central Council worth competing for.

Bakunin's awkward request for affiliation of his own International Alliance to the International was side-tracked by the central council, on the grounds of incompatible doctrine. In the programme of the Alliance, Bakunin had demanded the equalisation of classes and the abolition of inheritance rights. Marx claimed that the International was committed to abolition and therefore not equalisation of classes, and to nationalisation of property, which when accomplished would render all questions of inheritance obsolete. But Bakunin could not be impeded from dissolving his Alliance and remaining personally within the International, and attending the Basel Conference (1869) as delegate of the silk-winders of Lyons. And his followers, too, having constituted themselves now into local associations of working men, demanded admission to the International on terms which could not be rejected.

Bakunin had won over to discipleship an energetic Swiss leader, under whose guidance the French Swiss Federation, affiliated in all regularity to the International Association, became Bakunin's instrument – the visible representative within the International Association of that invisible International Alliance which Marx and Engels were had not been dissolved, but kept secretly in existence for the purpose of overwhelming the Association. Marx and Engels, on their side, were fully equal to insinuating their own men into Bakunin's ranks. In the French Swiss Federation notably, a Marxist opposition captained by a Swiss Russian financier, Utin, disputed the leadership of Bakunin's able and valiant supporter, James Guillaume. Immediately after the fourth Congress of the International at Basel in September, 1869, where Bakunin appeared as delegate for Naples and Lyons, while Guillaume concocted mandates *in partibus* for some of his followers, Utin got control of the Socialist paper at Geneva, *L'Égalité*. Guillaume had at his disposal *La Solidarité* (at Neuchâtel). *L'Égalité* had in recent months given Marx a deal of trouble, crossing his designs with demands that the Central Council should definitely decide between Liebrecht and Schweitzer, that is, that Marx should surrender his position as arbiter between rival factions of the German working-class movement, and that a separate national federation should be set up for England. This would have disposed of the claim of Marx to have a direct influence on the English working-class organisations through the Central Council, which served also in lieu of an English federal council.

But from these shadowy controversies, vitalised only by the rivalry of the competitors for power in the Socialist movement, greater events now summoned attention. While Marx set himself energetically to frustrate the Bakuninists' plots, Louis Napoleon at last fulfilled Marx and Engels' predictions of the previous twenty years, when he marched against Prussia on August 2nd, 1870.

In Marx's inaugural address to the International (1864) the Working Classes had been represented as ready to counteract the workings of secret diplomacy by every means in their power, and to force governments to observe the morals of private life in their intercourse with one another. Liebknecht and Bebel, now members of the North German Reichstag, carried this principle so far as to abstain from voting Bismarck's military credits. The Paris sections of the International, which in the first half of 1870 had been visited by renewed police persecutions, called upon their "German brothers" of the working classes to ignore the provocations of Napoleon, and to prevent fratricidal strife.

Marx and Engels did not stand neutral between Bismarck and Louis Napoleon. They definitely preferred Bismarck, whom they had not yet quite ceased to regard as a lumpish rustic, to the annihilator of the Second French Republic. Engels, the old Prussian Guardsman, followed the triumphs of Moltke with technical if not emotional approbation. In the name of the Central Council Marx pronounced that the Prussians were fighting a defensive war, and he privately arraigned Liebknecht for letting his hatred of Bismarck lead him to forswear the German cause. For his part

he held that the French needed a "drubbing." Private also was intended to be a statement by Marx that a German victory would mean German leadership in International Socialism, and a diminution of the prestige of the Proudhonists. When Marx shortly afterwards found this remark reproduced in a German Socialist manifesto, he could only curse the obtuseness of his friends and trust that the Parisian workers were too busy to keep a close watch on the German Press.

In fact, by this time, the German ruling and middle classes had rapidly revealed as crass a Chauvinism as that which Marx had denounced on the French side at the outbreak of the war, when (ignorant of Bismarck's sharp practice with the Bad Ems telegram) he had, as spokesman of the International, designated France as the sole aggressor. In a second address on the war, penned immediately after the Prussian victory at Sedan, Marx committed the International to a change of view. The German working classes were praised for having supported the Prussian cause while it was just: now the French workers were exhorted to rally round the new Republican Government. "Any attempt to upset the new Government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the gates of Paris, would be a desperate folly" (September 9th, 1870).

But this "desperate folly" the Parisian workers, led to some extent by the "Proudhonists" of the Paris International, committed a few weeks later (October 31st) when they captured the Hôtel de Ville, henceforth menacing the Government of National Defence which, after the capitulation of Paris (January 8th) had obtained an armistice on



January 28th, 1871. Marx observed, first doubtful, then fascinated, at last enthusiastically convinced that this was the proletariat in creative action.

## CHAPTER XI

### DECLINE AND ACHIEVEMENT

End of the First International – death of Bakunin – *Das Kapital* – economics, history, or philosophy? – death of Jenny and Karl Marx, fate of their children, destiny of his work.

ON March 18th, 1871, a group of revolutionaries, among whom the leaders of the Paris International were prominent, headed the rebellion of the working classes of Paris against the Government, which was disbanding the National Guard, a corps mainly composed of working-class volunteers, and disarming its members. In fervently taking the part of the Communards in the name of the Central Committee, Marx now drew down on the International the suspicion of being at the bottom of plots for similar upheavals in every country. The French and German Governments, between whom peace was barely restored, were equally ready to take measures against the supposed international plotters. The Spanish Government proposed a conference of Powers to combat the menace of international conspiracy, and, though the British Government declined the suggestion, two of the most prominent British trade unionists, Odger and Lucraft, severed relations with the International, and those who remained insisted on an English local council to handle English affairs.

As soon as he found it in existence, Marx had supported the insurrectionist Paris Commune with

all his power, but, up to the moment of its outbreak, he had notoriously advised against the revolt. Bakunin's support had, on the contrary, been whole-hearted, as always for any spontaneous rising against authority, before, during and after the event. Buoyed up with renewed enthusiasm, Bakunin now extended his propaganda far and wide through central and southern Italy – where Mazzini's preaching still kept youth ready for romantic exploits – and Spain. Engels had taken up the secretaryship of those two countries, and tirelessly combated Bakunin. But his personal friend and emissary in Italy, a young and brilliant student, Cafiero, deserted to the other side, indignant at the wild invectives and accusations against Bakunin accumulated by Marx and Engels in a printed denunciation of the dissident Latin Swiss Federation, which had held a separate congress late in 1871. Spain was not quite so hopelessly lost to the Marx faction, but Belgium was contested territory, France not easily to be influenced – the heroes of the Commune were flocking to London and brought with them the old romantic restlessness of unresigned defeat – while the English, further estranged by Engels' speeches about the British oppression in Ireland, in part abandoned the International and in part entered into contact with the anti-Marxist group in French Switzerland. Marx and Engels were losing grip of the organisation which they had laboured so fiercely to keep in hand.

A packed conference was held in London in 1871, from which Marx's enemies were excluded. This conference failed to impose its authority on the Continent, and next year, at The Hague,

Engels succeeded only by extreme expedients in getting a Marxist majority of German, American and French delegates to outvote a Bakuninist minority of Italian, Spanish, Swiss and English delegates. Hales, the Secretary of the Central Council, Eccarius, an anglicised German tailor who had long been Marx's henchman, and other tried supporters deserted to the adversary. Once again, as with the Communist League in 1852, Marx resolved to put the mechanism out of action sooner than risk seeing it in alien control. By a vote of the Conference, the headquarters of the International were declared to have been transferred to New York, and there for all practical purposes the International ceased to exist.

Bakunin, against whom Marx had preferred far-fetched charges of peculation and vice – not merely, as against Lassalle, in private letters, but in public and official pronouncements – died in 1876, having in his last years been a helpless and ignorant instrument of Nechayev, a terrorist megalomaniac since celebrated by Dostoevsky and other Russian romancers. Like Lassalle, Bakunin professed to be Marx's disciple in economics. He had even undertaken to translate *Capital* into Russian. But, just as Lassalle's assistance with publishers had earned him only Marx's suspicions when the book was not in the shops within a few weeks of completion, so Bakunin's failure to finish the translation was magnified to a scandalous breach of contract, on the strength of which (among other accusations) Bakunin was formally expelled from the International in 1872. As Bakunin had let the ferocious Nechayev handle his private correspondence, the whole affair was

easily given a lurid tone. But if Bakunin had failed to capture the International, his departure had shattered Marx's position to nothingness. For Marx, Bakunin had represented all the irregular Slav impulses that he most distrusted and despised ; for Bakunin, Marx represented a method of agitation against authority that would lead to a new and harsher authoritarianism. The struggle between their factions persists, up to the moment of writing, in the ranks of the Spanish republicans.

The International was now practically dead, and Engels, not altogether sorry, urged Marx to settle down to " scientific " work. He had great hopes of seeing the second volume of *Capital* soon brought into being.

Thanks to Engels' advantageous settlement with his late business partner, and to various legacies, notably £800 left to Marx by his old friend " Lupus " (Wilhelm Wolff), the two of them were now comfortably established without need of care for the morrow. In a new residence at 41, Maitland Park, Mrs. Jenny Marx had no more need to fear the butcher's knock or the doctor's ring : the daughters' schooling, too, was finished and paid for. Proudhon, Mazzini, Lassalle, Schweitzer and, in a year or two, Bakunin also were all dead. No rival could be seen threatening to lead the oppressed towards world revolution, leaving Marx forgotten by the wayside. If there was no longer any coherent workers' movement in the wide world, Marx had dominated such a movement so long as it persisted : nobody could dispute the claim. And in Germany Bebel and Liebknecht, though often disobedient to guidance, yet, on the whole, brought the Socialist

movement to look to Marx and Engels as the masters of the great art and science of politics. Marx was nearing the last decade of three score and ten. He must now or never reduce to orderly form the legacy of half a century of study – the close-fitted synthesis of German philosophy, English political economy and French revolutionism that his disciples expected of him. He must make plain to the new generations how Kant's and Hegel's philosophy of the free spirit, Adam Smith's and Ricardo's technique for the measurement of society's material resources, and Voltaire's repudiation of things held venerable by frightened man, led, singly and jointly, to the only struggle fit for modern man's attention : the struggle to overcome the divisions of society, which are the manifestations of conflict between falsely opposed finalities. He must demonstrate to mankind that it can unitedly achieve a totalitarian solution of its economic problem, instead of endlessly opposing partial (class) solutions to one another. Then and then only could mankind advance towards barely conceivable achievements of self-development. He had scattered these doctrines through many pamphlets, speeches and manifestos, but the definitive book had always been promised and waited for.

He had, indeed, seen two bulky volumes through the press, the *Critique of Political Economy* in 1859 and *Capital* in 1867. Each was given to the public as the first volume of a series. Instead of completing the *Critique*, Marx incorporated the argument in *Capital* : and of *Capital* he was able in his lifetime to bring only one volume to full completion : Engels, who survived him by twelve

years, pieced together what are known as the second, third and fourth books. From time to time, during the twenty years before his death, Marx would give assurances that he had new volumes ready for publication within five or six weeks ; and no doubt he had always beneath his hand great accumulations of disjointed manuscript. But he needed eighteen months to "polish up" the first volume from a manuscript that had been brought into preliminary shape at the beginning of 1866. A scholar can spend years trying to understand the intended design of the full work.

"*Das Kapital*," writes Benedetto Croce, "has been taken in its time for a Treatise on Economics, a Philosophy of History, a System of Laws of Sociology, a Moral and Political Indictment, and even, in some opinions, for a historical narrative." Indeed, something of all of these is to be found in a work that is unclassifiable. Some modern editors have excised or compressed the chapters in which Marx described the exploitation of workers throughout the centuries in different countries—descriptions that are always flaming denunciations. These editors have left the subtle argumentations about value, price and profit to stand as the abiding part of the work. Yet the historical asides, in which the passionate hatred of the oppressor and exploiters is naked, are fully as distinctive as the syllogisms and the formulas. Or is *Capital* to be considered a work of philosophy rather than of political economy? Marx started life as a Hegelian philosopher, and claimed in one of the last of his writings to have turned a system, which the great philosopher had left standing on

its head, upside down, that is, into its proper balance. Hegel, in fact, endeavoured to interpret the life of man as a condition to which man could become fully reconciled by attaining a complete understanding of it. Thus what appeared accident, injustice, disorder in the material world would be found harmonising and necessary and systematic in the light of pure thought. His disciple Marx, however, would not be content with a harmony to be achieved only in the inner consciousness. And thereby perhaps he proved himself no philosopher by vocation. Yet Hegel also was aware – at all events in his younger days – that he was advancing and systematising knowledge “the inferences from which,” he wrote to Schelling, “will one day astound a great many distinguished people. They will be giddy at the supreme elevation by which man will be so highly exalted.”

Marx himself proclaimed that much of *Capital* was composed on the method of Hegel. Now it seems to be the final message of Hegel that the mind of man, in which the nature of life comes to know itself, must be for ever at the parting of the ways. At the very moment of making a judgment we are to know that this judgment in its completeness implies a transition to a new situation. Both the mind and the world are for ever in a precarious balance, and the act of judgment is like the lunge of a skater who, sooner or later, will turn round and face the opposite direction.

Marx's work as a methodical thinker was the subjection of political economy, as taught in mid-Victorian England, to a criticism from the point



of view of Hegel's dialectic. Marx gave the economists his close attention precisely because they showed up, in a comprehensible arrangement, the material facts of daily life in a modern society, in all their moral chanciness – thus, in our excellent modern phrase, “debunking” all claims that the social structure is divinely or purposefully ordained – and yet they had reduced these brute facts to a sort of system. Marx took cognisance of this system of political economy, with land, labour and capital co-operating to produce and duly sharing the product and likely to do so for all time. The Hegelian could not but note that, where there is a setting of forces into a pattern, necessarily there must be a parting of the ways. If a human society had just learned to experience conscious co-operation between elements that have just been distinguished from each other, then a strain, a tension against such co-operation must have already set it. If land, labour and capital were recognisably co-operating for the supreme advantage of capital, then, by the law of tension, a struggle among them must be brewing, and the fortune of the struggle would go against capital.

Marx was not the first to approach the study of industrialised England, and of English theorists, in this attitude of acceptance and contradiction. But by his criticism he forced all students of our industrial society, from that time to our own, to a new sense of relativity in their conclusions.

But the great work remained a torso. For, failing in health, Marx was in the last decade of his life unable to reduce his multiple researches, the fruit of whole years spent in the British Museum library, to a firmly conceived pattern. Plagued

with headaches and insomnia, he became increasingly disposed to bronchitis; was forbidden by his doctors to smoke; ordered frequently away from London. With extra subsidies from Engels, he travelled with one or other daughter to Carlsbad, the Riviera and Algiers in search of a renewal of health. And even yet he had not embraced theory as his single task. In a last return of combative energy (1875) he uttered warnings against the compromise with the old Lassallean programme which Liebknecht and Bebel were ready to make in order to fuse all German working-class movements into a single powerful party, the German Social Democratic Party, that was to be (till 1933) one of the progressive forces upon which the modern world was recently counting: now (1938) a small band of prisoners and exiles branded as "Marxist" outlaws.

When on March 14th, 1883, Engels with the faithful Lenchen found Marx quietly dead in his arm-chair he blessed the fate which had spared "the greatest living thinker" a long invalidism in widowhood and bereavement. Jenny von Westphalen had died in 1882. Forty years earlier she had passed from the social circle of the highest bureaucracy (her half-brother was at one time Minister of the Interior in Prussia and from his Ministry once or twice corresponded amicably on family matters with Marx) to share the life of exile and hardship, wrangling and polemics. If she sometimes winced, she never complained. Karl Marx had been a difficult son to his father, he had been later on no very affectionate terms with his mother, and had regarded other relatives

chiefly as heaven-sent victims for his aggressive borrowing instinct. But he had remained a devoted and single-hearted husband and a cordial kindly father, only somewhat cantankerous when it came to putting up with sons-in-law. The younger Jenny, their daughter, married to the French Socialist Longuet, had died only a few months after her mother. Of the rest of the family group Eleanor (Aveling), unhappily married (after her father had obstructed her first choice), was to die by her own hand fifteen years later, while Laura (Madame Lafargue) lived to within three years of the World War. The younger Jenny's son, Jean Longuet, has survived it as a most respectable French parliamentarian of the present day.

In this world where Marx's grandson is an old man, to be a "Marxist" is in his native Germany a crime punishable by severe official and severer unofficial penalties. But over to the east, in a country for which Marx himself showed scant respect, it is a matter of life and death to prove oneself a Marxist and a Marxist of no heretical brand; and throughout Europe and America and Asia a man's approach to the problems of his time is symbolised by his relation to Marx.

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