

Chapter 1

What Marx and Engels Bequeathed

In the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Lenin engaged in a heated debate with what would be the intellectual forebears of today's social democrats. He accused them—especially Karl Kautsky, the one-time “Pope” of European socialism—of misrepresenting Marx and Engels's politics. Kautsky, he protested, “has turned Marx into a common liberal...[he] has beaten the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx.”ⁱ Of particular concern was how, in Lenin's estimation, they portrayed Marx and Engels's views on parliamentary democracy and the related issue of involvement in the electoral arena. These were vital questions, he argued, that went to the very heart of the significance of what the October Revolution had just instituted, the process by which it was achieved, and the potential lessons for aspiring revolutionaries elsewhere.

This chapter provides a synopsis of Marx and Engels's views on both themes from their earliest to final pronouncements.ⁱⁱ I also include a summary of what they thought about the prospects for revolution in Russia. Knowing what Marx and Engels had to say about parliamentary democracy and the electoral arena allows for a determination whether or not Lenin was justified in his accusations. A review of what they thought about the Russian movement also answers the oft-debated question concerning whether Lenin constituted continuity with the two founders of the modern communist movement—at least for these issues.

“The European Spring”

The revolutions of 1848–49 required that Marx and Engels address concretely and substantively for the first time parliamentary democracy and the electoral process. Like the participants in the “Arab Spring,” they, along with other activists, had to grapple with all the questions that come with the overthrow of despotic regimes—how to do it, what to replace them with, and how to ensure that the previously disenfranchised are actually in power.

Prior to the midcentury upheavals, Marx and Engels had certainly thought and written about the institution of democratic rule. The daily reality of absolutist Prussia, even in its more liberal domains where the two lived, the Rhineland, almost demanded that they do so. Marx's

first political writings addressed the irritant of state press censorship he faced as a cub reporter. His realization that the most influential mind for his generation, Georg Hegel, offered no real solutions to Germany's democratic deficit propelled him on the road to communist conclusions. Constitutional monarchy, Hegel's proposal, was far from "true democracy—the sovereignty of the people."ⁱⁱⁱ Rather than the world of philosophy, the study, he decided, of "actuality" or "the real movement of history" provided better results. And in the world as it existed when he set out to make his inquiries, history and "actuality" offered only two examples of political overturns that resulted in political democracy: France and the United States of America. The American case, I argue, generated the most valuable lessons for Marx.

What was so striking about the US experience for the young Marx was the combination of the most politically liberal society in the world with the grossest social inequalities, not the least of which was chattel slavery.^{iv} If that was the best that liberal or political democracy had to offer, then clearly something else was required for "true democracy," or "human emancipation." How do we explain this apparent contradiction? In seeking an answer Marx arrived at conclusions that made him a communist. As long as inequalities in wealth, especially property, were allowed and reproduced—political economy—then "real democracy" was impossible. The wealthy minority could and would use their resources to ensure political outcomes that privileged their interests. Then how could "real democracy"—a classless society—be realized, and what segment of society had the interest *and* capability to do so? Political developments in Europe provided the answer—the proletariat. Marx's new partner, Frederick Engels, reached similar conclusions by another route. The task for the two new communists was to link up with Europe's vanguard proletarian fighters. The price for doing so, after winning key German worker-leaders to their views, was to write a document that proclaimed their new world view.

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* sharply distinguished itself from the programmatic stances of other socialist tendencies in its position that the prerequisite for the socialist revolution was the democratic revolution—the necessity "to win the battle for democracy." In related pronouncements clarifying their views, they wrote that, like the Chartists in England, the German proletariat "can and must accept the *bourgeois revolution* as a precondition for the *workers' revolution*. However, they cannot for a moment accept it as their *ultimate goal*."^v In no uncertain terms, the *Manifesto*, in four successive locations, made clear that it would take "force" to "overthrow the bourgeoisie" in order to reach the "ultimate goal."

Nevertheless, they maintained to the end that the means to that goal was the conquest of the “bourgeois revolution.” When a critic charged in 1892 that they ignored forms of democratic governance, Engels demurred, “Marx and I, for forty years, repeated ad nauseam that for us the democratic republic is the only political form in which the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class can first be universalized and then culminate in the decisive victory of the proletariat.”^{vi}

Communists for the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution

The ink was hardly dry on the *Manifesto* when the “European Spring” erupted. On February 22, 1848, street fighting and the erection of barricades began in Paris. The monarch Louis Philippe abdicated after two days and a provisional government was installed, the commencement of the Second Republic. The outcome in Paris inspired protests and uprisings in almost fifty other cities in Europe. A new phase in the age of the bourgeois democratic revolutions had opened—the struggle to institute republican government and parliamentary democracy for the first time in most countries on the continent. In France, the fight was for its reinstatement. Armed with a party, the Communist League, the body that commissioned the writing of the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels immediately went into action. From Brussels, where they had been in exile, they moved to revolutionary Paris, where they made plans for realizing their new world view in Germany. They had to move quickly for on March 18, after two days of street fighting in Berlin, Frederick IV conceded to the demands of the demonstrators and agreed to grant a constitution.

The *Manifesto*, they recognized, needed to be supplemented given the new reality. Except perhaps for France, socialist revolution—what the document spoke to—was not on the immediate agenda in most countries, certainly not their homeland. Thus they composed, with the approval of the Central Authority of the League, the much neglected *Demands of the Communist Party of Germany*, effectively the extreme left position of the bourgeois democratic revolution. As a one-page leaflet it was disseminated much more widely than the *Manifesto*. The first three and thirteenth of the seventeen demands are instructive:

1. The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic.
2. Every German, having reached the age of 21, shall have the right to vote and to be elected, provided he has not been convicted of a criminal offence.
3. Representatives of the people shall receive payment so that workers, too, shall be able to become members of the German parliament...
13. Complete separation of Church and State. The clergy of every denomination shall be

paid only by the voluntary contributions of their congregations.^{vii} As well as constituting what they considered to be the essentials of a democratic republic, these were Marx and Engels's first public pronouncements as communists on universal suffrage and representative democracy.

The *Demands* addressed another issue that the *Manifesto* didn't—the peasant question. As the document stated, demands six through nine “are to be adopted in order to reduce the communal and other burdens hitherto imposed upon the peasants and small tenant farmers without curtailing the means available for defraying state expenses and without imperiling production.”^{viii} Other demands indicated that the document did indeed have a multiclass audience in mind: “It is to the interest of the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants to support these demands with all possible energy. Only by the realization of these demands will the millions in Germany, who have hitherto been exploited by a handful of persons and whom the exploiters would like to keep in further subjection, win the rights and attain to that power to which they are entitled as the producers of all wealth.” In other words, an alliance of the proletariat, petit bourgeoisie, and small peasant—what Engels referred to in earlier writings as the alliance of “the people”—was the coalition Marx and Engels envisioned “to win the battle for democracy,” the bourgeois democratic revolution.

Once back in Germany, the Rhineland in particular, Marx and Engels sought to implement their vision. The subhead of their new newspaper the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* [*New Rhineland Newspaper*] or *NRZ*, the *Organ der Demokratie* [*Organ of Democracy*], said it all. But not all Communist League members and contacts were in agreement with the perspective of the *Demands*. Regarding, first, the demand for a unified republic, Andreas Gottschalk, the League's leader in Cologne, objected on the grounds that such a call would frighten the bourgeoisie. A constitutional monarchy was less threatening, he argued. He also complained about the elections to the All-German Frankfurt Parliament and the Prussian Constitutional Assembly in Berlin because workers would be required to vote for electors and have, thus, only an indirect vote. The elections, he urged, should be boycotted. Marx and Engels and the rest of the League leadership disagreed and argued for active participation in the elections.

Another difference of opinion concerned the coalition of class forces for instituting the democratic revolution, an issue that had implications (to be seen shortly) for Marx and Engels's electoral strategy. Not only Gottschalk but another key figure in the workers' movement,

Stephen Born, thought that priority should be given to issues that directly affected the working class and looked skeptically on an alliance with the petit bourgeoisie and peasantry. This stance, which Marx and Engels criticized, betrayed the tendency on the part of craft workers still saddled with a guild or *straubinger* mentality to dismiss the importance of the democratic revolution—a kind of working-class provincialism. To be sectarian toward these other social classes threatened the realization of that revolution, given that workers constituted a minority of society. Such a posture meant effectively conceding the franchise for that fight to the bourgeoisie, who, as Marx and Engels had already begun to point out, would increasingly vacillate on the issue of democracy.

The differences of opinion that surfaced in the League pose the related question of democratic decision making within the organizations that Marx led—an issue that can only be briefly treated here. Suffice it to say that in Gottschalk’s case, owing to his disagreement with the League’s leadership about its electoral strategy, he was asked to tender his resignation. One of its rules stipulated that “subordination to the decisions of the League” was one of the “conditions of membership.” He told Marx that he disagreed with the rule and would indeed resign because “his personal freedom was in jeopardy.” What transpired gives credence to the argument that the League’s norms anticipated those that Lenin is most associated with: democratic centralism.^{ix} Many years later Engels told a supporter in Denmark that the “labor movement depends on mercilessly criticizing existing society...so how can it itself avoid being criticized or try and forbid discussion? Are we then asking that others concede us the right of free speech merely so that we may abolish it again within our own ranks?”^x There is no evidence that he and Marx ever acted contrary to this stance, including in the case of Gottschalk. It was his actions—opposition to the League’s electoral strategy—and not his right to voice disagreement that were curtailed.

It is not entirely clear from the extant historical record how the League participated (if it did so) in the initial elections to the Frankfurt and Berlin parliamentary/constituent assembly bodies in May 1848.^{xi} What is known is that sometime in June, Marx, acting in his capacity as the organization’s leader, decided to suspend activities in its name owing mainly to perceived political realities—an issue to be revisited shortly. In its place, the editorial board of the *NRZ*, with Marx in the lead, served as the effective body to carry out its perspective and organize its work. The axis of its activities—at times quite successful—was the effort to realize the alliance of “the people”—that is, the coalition of the proletariat, the peasantry, and urban petit

bourgeoisie—and the popularization of the *Demands*.

Virgin Steps into the Electoral Arena

Just as in the “Arab Spring,” the course of the “European Spring” was impacted by developments in the neighborhood, and no country was more important in this regard than France—the Egypt of the revolutions of 1848–49. In hindsight, the bloody defeat of the working-class insurgents in Paris in June 1848 was the beginning of the end of the continental-wide upsurge—though, also in hindsight, it signaled the inauguration of the age of socialist revolution. The routing of the democratic forces in Vienna in October was the final nail in the coffin but, again, only in retrospect, since it would be another half year before it was clear that the democratic revolutions had been stillborn. Basically, what happened, Marx and Engels argued, is that the cowardly behavior of the bourgeoisie emboldened the reactionary forces. Ignoring whatever progress the deputies to the Prussian body had made in the constitution they were writing, Frederick IV decided to impose his own on December 5. It provided for a constitutional monarchy—granting him, thus, ultimate power. His coup d’état presented revolutionary forces with a dilemma, because his imposed constitution authorized elections for the new Prussian Assembly. To participate or not to participate in the elections, and if so, how?

For Marx, participation in the elections was obligatory. The only question was whether to vote for liberal bourgeois democrats who would oppose the constitution, or put forward candidates representing the “people’s alliance” of workers, peasants, and the urban petit bourgeoisie, or abstain. He advocated for the first option. The “party of the people,” in his opinion, was not strong enough to run its own candidates (a position that would undergo self-criticism the next year); it “exists in Germany as yet only in an elementary form.”^{xii} The principled stance, as he argued at a meeting of the proletarian component of the alliance, was opposition to feudal absolutism—that is, the imposed constitution. “We are certainly the last people to desire the rule of the bourgeoisie... But we say to the workers and the petty bourgeoisie: it is better to suffer in modern bourgeois society, which by its industry creates the material means for the foundation of a new society that will liberate you all.” Thus it was necessary to “unite with another party [at least that wing of the bourgeoisie] also in opposition, so as not to allow our common enemy, the absolute monarchy, to win.”^{xiii}

Even though opponents of the constitution won overwhelmingly in the Rhineland, its

proponents in the rest of Prussia, with the backing of the bourgeoisie, were successful. The fact that big capital supported a document objectively against its interests confirmed unambiguously for Marx that the German bourgeoisie was incapable of acting in a revolutionary way. The opposition Rhineland vote, however, which was mobilized by the joint efforts of the working class and urban petit bourgeoisie organizations of the province, convinced the *NRZ* party that the potential for building the “people’s party” was better than ever. In the elections “the petty bourgeoisie, peasants and proletarians [‘the specifically *red* class’] emancipated themselves from the big bourgeoisie, the upper nobility and the higher bureaucracy.”^{xiv}

About three weeks after the January elections, an opponent newspaper accused the *NRZ* tendency of having been duped by the liberal democrats, whom it supported on the expectation that they would oppose the constitution—a hope that was quickly dashed. Marx’s reply is instructive because it provides perhaps the first glimpse of his and Engels’ approach to electoral politics in a concrete setting. After explaining why “we put *our* own views into the background” during the elections, he declared, “Now, *after* the elections, we are again asserting our old ruthless point of view in relation not only to the Government, but also to the official opposition.”^{xv} As for the charge of having been duped by the liberal democrats, “It could be foreseen that these gentlemen, in order to be re-elected, would now recognize the imposed Constitution. It is characteristic of the standpoint of these gentlemen that *after* the elections they are disavowing in the democratic clubs what *before* the elections they assented to at meetings of the electors. This petty, crafty liberal slyness was never the diplomacy of revolutionaries.”^{xvi}

Thus the “party of the people”—while obligated, owing to the particular setting of mid-nineteenth century Germany, to ally with the liberal democrats in the elections—should entertain no illusions about the latter and should take political distance from them as soon as the elections are concluded. A year later, to be seen shortly, Marx and Engels would distill and codify the revolutionary implications of this position by calling for complete working-class political independence from liberal democrats, specifically by running workers’ candidates in future elections.

Lessons of Struggle

With the “European Spring” in full retreat and thus diminished political space, Marx and Engels withdrew from the battlefield. In London, they, along with other League members, sought to

regroup and to plan their next moves. History would reveal that their most important work were the balance sheets that they drew on the preceding two years—the lessons of struggle. Three documents/writings proved to have long shelf life.

The *Address of March 1850*

The first and most immediate task was to assess the performance of the League itself. As its reelected head, Marx, with the assistance of Engels, wrote on behalf of the other leaders what has come to be known as the “Address of the Central Authority to the League, March, 1850.” A ten-page document (see Appendix A), it is a concise distillation of many of the conclusions they had already reached based on what they had witnessed. What makes the document so significant for present purposes is that “Lenin, who knew them [it and the “Address...June, 1850”] by heart,” according to the Bolshevik archivist David Riazanov, “used to delight in quoting them.”^{xvii} Employing them and the other balance sheets in the heat of Russia’s 1905 Revolution—a veritable laboratory of the class struggle—allowed Lenin to rightly see that “in the activities of Marx and Engels...the period of their participation in the mass revolutionary struggle of 1848–49 stands out as the central point. This was their point of departure when determining the future pattern of the workers’ movement and democracy in different countries.”^{xviii}

The central theme of the “Address”—again, based on the experience of the two preceding years—is that the working class had to be organized independently in the expected revival of the German revolution; “independently” or some variant appears on nine of the ten pages, sometimes more than once. The suspension of the League—here Marx made an implicit self-criticism—led its members to dissolve themselves into the work of the broader democratic movement and thus conceded unnecessarily leadership in the democratic revolution to urban middle-class democrats. But the bourgeoisie’s betrayal of the antifeudal cause (the *Manifesto* held open the possibility of a worker-bourgeois alliance) meant that in the revived revolution it was precisely those democrats that the working class would have to ally with—a class, however, whose track record in the two-year fight for democracy left much to be desired. Much of the document is about how to avoid another betrayal and what to do next following the successful overthrow of the feudal order, including preparation for armed struggle. The document stated repeatedly that a working-class alliance with the “petit bourgeois democracy” was just that—an alliance and not unity. Only the working class, independently organized, could provide the leadership needed to

consummate the democratic revolution. And only then could the “revolution in permanence” be assured—that is, socialist revolution.

The “Address” proposed an electoral strategy—Marx and Engels’s first detailed statement. In another implicit self-criticism—of the stance that Marx took regarding the aforementioned elections to the Prussian Constituent Assembly in January 1850—Marx and Engels laid out a perspective designed to avoid the kind of betrayal that the liberal bourgeoisie had committed in the electoral arena. In the next elections to the national assembly, workers had to pursue a course completely independent of not only the liberal bourgeoisie but the petit bourgeoisie as well. To be clear, what they outlined was a strategy for the postfeudal period where a degree of political democracy existed for the working class to contest elections. Most relevant are the instructions for the working-class party:

[T]hat everywhere worker’s candidates are put up alongside the bourgeois-democratic candidates, that they are as far as possible members of the League, and that their election is promoted by all means possible. *Even when there is no prospect whatever of their being elected, the workers must put up their own candidates in order to preserve their independence, to count their forces and to lay before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint.* In this connection they must not allow themselves to be bribed by such arguments of the democrats as, for example, that by so doing they are splitting the democratic party and giving the reactionaries the possibility of victory. The ultimate purpose of all such phrases is to dupe the proletariat. *The advance which the proletariat party is bound to make by such independent action is infinitely more important than the disadvantage that might be incurred by the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body.* If from the outset the democrats come out resolutely and terroristically against the reactionaries, the influence of the latter in the elections will be destroyed in advance.^{xix}

The first sentence I’ve italicized makes clear, in no uncertain terms, that for Marx and Engels electoral victories were subordinate to independent working-class political action. Rather than the number of seats won, the test of an election for the working-class party was how much it revealed its real strength—“their forces.” Implicit here is an unarticulated way of how “to count” other than “being elected.” Related and just as important is how well the party conducted itself in the election. Did it truly “lay before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint”? Also significant are the subsequent sentences, because they address the conundrum that would bedevil many a progressive and working-class party in the next century and afterward—the “wasted vote” and “lesser of two evils” dilemmas in the electoral arena. Marx and Engels asserted, again unequivocally, that the potential gains from independent working-class political action outweighed the risks of “reactionaries” being elected. As for what they meant by “terroristically,” one can only speculate, because nothing here or in subsequent pronouncements

provides clarification.

Three Notable Balance Sheets

Marx and Engels produced three other assessments of the 1848–49 events that make points relevant to this discussion. One has to do with how they saw universal suffrage: what it could and could not do. In a series of articles written in 1850 that came to be called *Class Struggles in France*, Marx drew a balance sheet on the French revolution. He noted the “fundamental contradiction” of the political arrangements that came with the new provisional government and the constitution under which it governed:

The fundamental contradiction of this constitution, however, consists in the following: The classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate—proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie—it puts in possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society. From the ones [first group] it demands that they should not go forward from political to social emancipation; from the others that they should not go back from social to political restoration.^{xx}

The granting of universal manhood suffrage created an inherently unstable situation for the bourgeoisie that could “jeopardize” its interests. The fundamental incompatibility between the interests of labor and capital was aggravated by the newly obtained political rights of the working classes. But even with universal suffrage, the bourgeois character of the constitution prevented the working class from going “forward from political to social emancipation.”^{xxi}

Implicit in Marx’s argument is a crucially important distinction. The “possession of political power through universal suffrage” for the working class and its allies was not to be conflated with the actual exercising of that power for “social emancipation.” The latter would require inroads on the “very foundations of bourgeois society”—that is, private property—exactly what the constitution prohibited. The “fundamental contradiction,” Marx argued, was resolved in May 1850 when the National Assembly, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie, abolished universal suffrage. Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the body’s leading lights, had characterized its rule, after the crushing of the Parisian proletariat in June 1848, as a “parliamentary dictatorship.” For Marx, it was the “bourgeois dictatorship.”^{xxii}

Marx put the actions of the Assembly in perspective. “Universal suffrage had fulfilled its mission. The majority of the people had passed through the school of development, which is all

that universal suffrage can serve for in a revolutionary period. It had to be set aside by a revolution or by the reaction.”^{xxiii} For the revolutionary process, universal suffrage was means to an end, not an end in itself.

The end of universal suffrage emboldened, as Marx had anticipated, Louis Bonaparte to end the Second Republic with his coup d'état in December 1851. In his well-known analysis of the coup written in 1852, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx pointed out that any assessment of bourgeois democracy had to take context into account both in space and time, specifically continental Europe on the one hand and America on the other. In Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century, where capitalist relations of production were rapidly expanding along with the necessary class differentiation within feudal governmental forms, the republic was the governmental form that an insurgent bourgeoisie needed. In the United States, which lacked a feudal background and where class relations and thus the class struggle were still fluid and not fixed, the republic by the middle of the nineteenth century had come to embody the conservative form of bourgeois rule.

Engels drew a balance sheet on the German revolution also in a series of articles titled *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*. Although important gains, following mass working-class revolts in Berlin and Vienna in March 1848, were made in the convening (based on a limited franchise) of both a Prussian and all-German constituent assembly, respectively in Berlin and Frankfort, both proved incapable of leading a fight to advance and thus save the revolution. As was true with the National Assembly in Paris, the middle-class reformers in the two bodies (almost a fourth in Frankfort were professors on the state payroll) were more afraid of the masses in motion than the threat of the Prussian monarchy to end this brief democratic opening. Those in Frankfort honestly but tragically believed that the writing of a democratic constitution, more liberal than what was produced in Paris, would be sufficient for instituting liberal democracy in Germany for the first time. Engels is unsparing in his criticism of them:

These poor, weak-minded men, during the course of their generally very obscure lives, had been so little accustomed to anything like success, that they actually believed their paltry amendments, passed with two or three votes' majority, would change the face of Europe. They had, from the beginning of their legislative career, been more imbued than any other faction of the Assembly with that incurable malady, *parliamentary cretinism*, a disorder which penetrates its unfortunate victims with the solemn conviction that the whole world, its history and future, are governed and determined by a majority of votes in that particular representative body which has the honor to count them among its members, and that all and everything going on outside the walls of their house—wars, revolutions, railway-constructing, colonizing of whole new continents, California

gold discoveries, Central American canals, Russian armies, and whatever else may have some little claim to influence upon the destinies of mankind—is nothing compared with the incommensurable events hinging upon the important question, whatever it may be, just at that moment occupying the attention of their honorable house.^{xxiv}

Engels's biting sarcasm gets to the heart of his and Marx's view of the legislative arena. While the parliamentary process was not to be ignored and could be of benefit for the revolutionary process, the developments that were decisive in understanding the course of history took place not within but rather outside its apparently hermetic walls—not the least important being revolutions. Marx's previously quoted comment about the fate of universal suffrage in the French upheaval—"It had to be set aside by a revolution or by the reaction"—is an instantiation of his claim. What's decisive, in other words, in the fate of the electoral process itself takes place outside its very parameters. No one, as we'll see, identified as much with this position as did Lenin. "Parliamentary cretinism" came to be his favorite label for those who failed to understand this basic political truth.

"A New Era" in the Class Struggle

The end of the "European Spring" in 1849 resulted in a more than decade-long lull in revolutionary politics in that part of the world. While Marx and Engels, in their new residence, closely watched British politics and made occasional comments about its electoral arena, it was only in 1863, when Marx declared that "the ERA OF REVOLUTION has now FAIRLY OPENED IN EUROPE once more," that they would not only engage in a sustained discussion about the electoral arena but actually act to shape it in the interest of the working class.^{xxv}

Presciently, Marx, speculating on the outcome of the German revolution, said at the end of 1848 that its fate was tied to the successful outcome of the worldwide revolutionary process that combined national liberation and antifeudal and anticapitalist struggles "waged in Canada as in Italy, in East Indies as in Prussia, in Africa as on the Danube."^{xxvi} Armed with a global perspective, he accurately recognized in 1860 the importance of two developments that foreshadowed a resurgence of the class struggle in Europe—the attack of the abolitionist John Brown on Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and the abolishment of servitude by the Russian Czar. Ending slavery and other precapitalist modes of exploitation was essential for the democratic revolution, a prerequisite for labor's struggle against capital.

The International Working Men's Association

If there is one thing Europe's working classes learned once the US Civil War was under way, it was that *their* governments did not represent their interests, particularly when it came to foreign policy. This was especially true for British workers. London, beckoning to the call of the textile barons and their need for Southern cotton, took the side of the slave owners and threatened to intervene on their behalf. Despite the fact that textile workers in their thousands lost their jobs owing to the Northern blockade of ships taking Southern cotton across the Atlantic, they instinctively and consciously mobilized to support the antislavery cause and oppose London's threats. Workers increasingly recognized that they had to have their own foreign policy. This exigency was one of the factors that led to the founding in 1864 of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), the First International.

From the beginning, Marx, who had already lobbied in the press on behalf of the Northern cause, played a key role in the new organization as the representative of the German workers and soon emerged as its effective leader. The central message of the founding document he wrote, *Inaugural Address*, was that while a reform such as the British Parliament's limiting (in law at least) the work day to ten hours was a victory for the working class, "the lords of land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defence and perpetuation of their economic monopolies...they will continue to lay every possible impediment in the way of the emancipation of labour... *To conquer political power has therefore become the duty of the working classes.*"^{xxvii} What this meant and how it would be implemented would take another seven years before it was concretized. In the meantime, the main task was to ensure the survival of the organization. Instrumental in doing so, it earned for Marx the moral authority needed for that moment.

In the second foundational document of the IWMA, also written by Marx, *Provisional Rules of the Association*, the other central message that guided its work was stated at the very beginning: "[T]he emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves."^{xxviii} The key lesson of the 1848 revolutions weighed heavily on Marx's brain when he wrote this. Unlike that of the *Inaugural Address*, this message was given force and executed within weeks of the organization's founding. After more than a month of working with some of the petit-bourgeois figures on the General Council (GC), the executive committee of the IWMA, Marx told Engels that "one has to be all the more careful the moment men of letters,

members of the bourgeoisie or semi-literary people become involved in the organization.”^{xxxix} To address that concern, Marx initiated organizational norms that severely limited middle-class participation in the IWMA leadership. When a prominent lawyer who had collaborated with it sought a seat on the GC, Marx convinced other members to reject his request. “I believe him an honest and sincere man; at the same time, he is nothing and can be nothing save a Bourgeois politician.” Exactly because the lawyer aspired to a seat in Parliament, “he ought to be excluded from entering our committee. We cannot become *le pedestal* for small parliamentary ambitions... [Otherwise] others of his class will follow, and our efforts, till now successful at freeing the English working class movement from all middle class or aristocratic patronage, will have been in vain.”^{xxx} From its commencement, therefore, Marx opposed any attempts to turn the International into an electoral conduit for, certainly, the petit bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie itself. Whether and how to make it into such a vehicle for the proletariat was a discussion and debate that eventually would take place.

With its headquarters in London, the IWMA could not avoid the electoral arena. Six months after its founding, the GC, with Marx’s support, helped to found the Reform League, the working-class organization that played a key role in pressuring Parliament to enact the 1867 Reform Act, which extended the suffrage to the middle class and parts of the better-off workers. At Marx’s urging, the GC had agreed that it would only support the demand of universal manhood suffrage. A year later, however, he reported that two of the GC’s trade unionists “[W. R.] Cremer and [George] Odger have both *betrayed* us in the Reform League, where they came to a *compromise with the bourgeoisie* against our wishes.”^{xxxi} The two gave in to the liberal bourgeois elements in the League who would only support household and not universal suffrage. Not only was the GC’s perspective compromised by Cremer and Odger, but the fledgling organization’s own agenda suffered as a result of the time and energy that its members devoted to League activities (one of the main reasons why the IWMA did not hold a congress in its first year). At the beginning of 1871, Marx wrote to a former Chartist leader who he still had relations with, “I regret saying, most of the workmen’s representatives use their position in our council only as a means of furthering their own petty personal aims. To get into the House of Commons by hook or crook, is their *ultima Thule* [‘most cherished goal’], and they like nothing better than rubbing elbows with the lords and M.P.’s by whom they are petted and demoralised.”^{xxxii} What Marx witnessed (not for the first time in English politics) was the labor movement—or to be

more precise, its leadership—subordinating the interests of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie. The International would have to institute explicit policies to prevent that from happening again.

A possible alternative to the class-collaborationist tendencies in the labor movement was what was being instituted in Germany. Beginning in 1862 the workers' movement, centered in Berlin and Leipzig, stirred anew after a decade of hibernation. Owing to his activist past in the 1848 events as well as his ties to Marx and Engels, Ferdinand Lassalle was asked by the workers to lead the fledgling body, the General Association of German Workers, founded in May 1863. However, his help came with a price—the insertion of ideas and a mode of functioning that were antithetical to the interests of independent working-class political action. While Marx and Engels waged a relentless campaign against his influence in the German worker's movement after his death in 1864—he was mortally wounded in a duel—they had to be careful in taking him on during his brief tenure as the movement's leader in order not to throw out the baby, the first truly German workers' association, with the bath water of Lassalleanism.

A year earlier, after a visit from Lassalle, Marx had concluded that there was no basis any longer of a “political PARTNERSHIP” with him, “since all we had in common politically were a few remote objectives.”^{xxxiii} Aside from the fact that he “gives himself all the airs of a future working men's dictator,” Marx objected to his panaceas for the social emancipation of the German proletariat, among which was universal suffrage and Prussian state socialism. As Marx sarcastically noted to Engels, the “workers...are to agitate for *general suffrage*, after which they are to send people like himself into the Chamber of Deputies, armed ‘with the naked sword of science.’”^{xxxiv} Again, Marx was sober about universal suffrage. He also objected to Lassalle's proposal that “they organize workers' factories, for which the *state* advances the capital and, BY AND BY, these institutions spread throughout the country.”^{xxxv} Despite its deformed birth, the General Association of German Workers was the best the German working class had to offer, and from afar Marx and Engels sought to shape its development and the larger German workers' movement. A successful breakthrough came in 1869 with the formation of an alternative that they helped to nurture: the Social Democratic Workers Party. It was able to win two seats—held by August Bebel and Karl Liebknecht—in the Reichstag, the best example of independent working-class political action.

In addition to the class collaborationists, there was another tendency in and around the

IWMA that Marx and Engels had to confront—the anarchists. Under the influence of Mikhail Bakunin, they basically disagreed with what was implicit in the central messages of the founding documents of the International that Marx had written—namely, that the working class should employ the political arena as a means for its emancipation. What was implicit, Marx increasingly realized, would have to be made explicit.

After the victory of the Union over the slavocracy in the United States, the most important political event in the history of the International occurred in Paris in the spring of 1871 when the working class rebelled and held power for almost three months—the Commune. Marx’s most enduring contribution to the Communards was his *The Civil War in France*, published within a month of its demise on behalf of the IWMA. As well as a defense of the insurgents, it provides an analysis of what took place and distills the most important lesson of the Commune. After quoting from the manifesto that the Commune’s Central Committee issued to justify its actions on March 18—“The Proletarians of Paris...have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental powers”—Marx declared, “But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purpose.”^{xxxvi} The insurgents quickly realized that in order to carry out fundamental social transformations to advance the interests of Paris’s working masses, a radically new form of democratic governance, the Commune, had to be instituted. The liberal democratic state of the Third Republic was at best inadequate—not unlike the Second Republic that emerged in February 1848. So important was this conclusion that Marx and Engels repeated it in the Preface to the 1872 German edition of the *Manifesto*, the only correction they ever made to the founding document of the modern communist movement. The revolutionary program in the second part, they noted, had “in some details become antiquated. One thing especially was proved by the Commune, *viz, that* ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.’”^{xxxvii} The bourgeois republic, in other words, could not be a vehicle for socialist transformation—a lesson either ignored or unknown by twentieth-century Social Democracy, to its peril.

Planting the Seed for Working-Class Political Parties

The long-simmering debate within the IWMA about working-class political action was finally

put on its agenda at a meeting that convened in London in September 1871. The basic question was whether the abstentionist-anarchist perspective of Bakunin's followers or the class-collaborationist views of the English trade unionists were the only alternatives for workers. In his intervention, Engels distilled the essence of his and Marx's politics:

[F]or us abstention is impossible. The workers' party already exist as a political party in most countries...The experience of real life and the political oppression imposed on them by existing governments...force the workers to concern themselves with politics, whether they wish or not. To preach abstention would be to push them into the arms of bourgeois politics. Especially in the aftermath of the Paris Commune which placed the political action of the proletariat on the agenda, abstention is quite impossible.

We seek the abolition of Classes. What is the means of achieving it? The political domination of the proletariat...revolution is the supreme act of politics; whoever wants it must also want the means, political action, which prepares for it, which gives the workers the education for revolution and without which the workers will always be duped...But the politics which are needed are working class politics; the workers' party must be constituted not as the tail of some bourgeois party, but as an independent party with its own objective, its own politics.

The political freedoms, the right of assembly and association and the freedom of the press, these are our weapons—should we fold our arms and abstain if they seek to take them away from us? It is said that every political act implies recognition of the status quo. But when this status quo gives us the means of protesting against it, then to make use of these means is not to recognize the status quo.^{xxxviii}

Engels's speech was clearly directed at the anarchists. Their abstentionist line, however revolutionary it might sound, "would...push [the workers] into the arms of bourgeois politics" or make them be party, unwittingly perhaps, to the class-collaborationist line of the English trade unionists. Only if the workers had their own "independent party with its own politics" could they avoid the deadly trap of "bourgeois politics." Hence workers not only had an inherent interest in defending basic democratic rights but were obligated to do so since their existence gave them the space to further their own class interests. The alternative, therefore, to both the Bakuninist and class-collaborationist lines was independent working-class political action, the bottom line of both the Inaugural Address and the Preamble—and the heart and soul of the politics of Marx and Engels for at least a quarter of a century. The task now, seven years after both documents had been adopted and after the experience of the Commune, was to make this line a living reality.

In one of his speeches at the London conference under this point, Marx specifically addressed the matter of workers in parliaments, which "must not be thought that it is of minor importance." When governments prevent duly elected workers' representatives from exercising their parliamentary rights, "the effect of this severity and intolerance on the people is profound." He, too, as had Engels in a letter to Spaniard comrades, offered the German example for what

was possible when more political space existed:

Whereas if, like [August] Bebel and [Karl] Liebknecht, they are able to speak from this platform, the entire world can hear them—in one way or the other it means considerable publicity for our principles...When during the [Franco-Prussian War] Bebel and Liebknecht embarked on the struggle against it, and to disclaim responsibility on behalf of the working class with regard to what was happening—the whole of Germany was shaken, and even Munich...was the scene of great demonstrations demanding an end to the war.

The governments are hostile to us. We must answer them by using every possible means at our disposal, getting workers into parliament is so much gaining over them, but we must choose the right men and watch out for the Tolains.^{xxxix}

Worker participation in parliaments, therefore, was a means to an end—“a platform...for our principles.” In another set of minutes, Marx is recorded as having said, “Since the July Revolution [1830] the bourgeoisie has always made every effort to unnoticeably create obstacles, in the workers’ way. Our newspapers are not reaching the masses—the speakers’ platform is the best means of publicity.” Again, the importance of the parliamentary “platform” or rostrum is emphasized as a means to disseminate party ideas especially when other avenues were blocked; no one, as we’ll see, again, took this advice more to heart than Lenin.

Marx repeated Engels’s point about the logic of the abstentionists’ “revolutionary” posture: “[B]y adjourning politics until after the violent struggle they are hurling the people into the formalist, bourgeois opposition—which it is our duty to combat, as well as the powers-that-be.” In concluding both his remarks and the debate, he addressed what other speakers had raised: governmental repression of the IWMA in the aftermath of the Commune. “We must tell [these governments]...we know that you are the armed force opposing the proletariat—we shall act against you peacefully wherever possible—and take up arms when that is necessary.”^{xl} Thus if the peaceful road through the employment of basic democratic rights and the parliamentary option was closed to the workers’ movement, then the International was prepared to pursue armed struggle.

Independent working-class political action—this was the essence of Marx and Engels’s intervention. This, precisely, was the core of their *Address of March 1850*, including the need for workers to have their own candidates in elections—the main lesson they drew from the 1848–49 upheavals. They won the overwhelming majority of the conference attendees to this perspective and were authorized to later draw up the resolutions as well as a new set of rules agreed to at the conference. A month later they presented to the GC the now famous resolution “IX. Political

Action of the Working Class,” which incorporated the majority sentiment on this debate.^{xli} A year later at a more representative meeting, The Hague Congress—effectively the last for the International—the resolution was adopted by the delegates against the opposition of the Bakuninists. The resolution’s historic significance is that it constitutes the first explicit call for what would eventually be Europe’s mass working-class political parties. While much would need to be done to make it a reality, it nevertheless gave those who were predisposed to move in that direction the authority,—that is, the prestige of the International—to go forth boldly.

The Fight for Programmatic Integrity

Between 1875, three years after The Hague Congress, and 1894 more than 11 working-class parties in Europe were founded—the largest block at any one time.^{xlii} These were the parties that came together to later form the Socialist or Second International and to constitute European Social Democracy. Hobbled by poor health in his final years, Marx provided what assistance he could to these fledgling organizations, particularly the French party. With his death in 1883 it fell to Engels, who outlived him by 12 years, to continue that work. Even before then the two recognized that their assistance and counsel could not guarantee that these parties actually adhered to and would remain loyal to their program. Thus until his last days Engels waged a concerted campaign to try to ensure fealty to his and his partner’s lifelong project.

German Social Democracy and the “Parliamentary Disease”

The German movement, as noted earlier, had been in the vanguard of independent working-class political action—a source of inspiration for others. Marx and Engels, aware of its problematic birth—Lassalle’s panaceas—were more sober. Thus their optimism when the Social Democratic Workers Party, closer to their views, was founded in 1869 as an alternative to the Lassallean-influenced General Association of German Workers. In 1875, however, the two organizations fused to form the German Socialist Workers Party (SAPD). Within a couple of years Marx detected problems, as he explained to a longtime comrade: “In Germany a corrupt spirit is asserting itself in our party, not so much among the masses as among the leaders (upper class and ‘workers’). The compromise with the Lassalleans has led to further compromise with other

waverers...not to mention a whole swarm of immature undergraduates and over-wise graduates who want to give socialism a ‘higher, idealistic’ orientation, i.e. substitute for the materialist basis...a modern mythology with its goddesses of Justice, Liberty, Equality and *Fraternité*.”^{xliii} What Marx detected in 1877 were the pernicious effects of liberalism on the workers’ movement and what would later morph into “reformism” and “opportunism.” As for one of the transmission belts for these influences, “immature undergraduates and over-wise graduates,” more will be explained about them shortly.

When both the Social Democratic Workers Party and the General Association of German Workers made significant gains in the 1874 Reichstag elections—from two to six seats for the former, and three seats for the first time for the latter—Engels warned, “it can hardly be doubted that measures to restrict the franchise will follow, though not for a year or two.”^{xliv} He was off by two years, because it was not until 1878 that Bismarck, fearful of the SAPD—again, the product of the fusion in 1875—had it banned. Neither Engels nor Marx was under any illusion that Bismarck or any bourgeois government would respect its own legal order when it came to the electoral arena.

While Bismarck’s Anti-Socialist Law banned the SADP and its press in 1878, it provided for an important exemption; it allowed the party to run candidates in elections and hold seats in the provincial and national Reichstags. An immediate issue posed by the law was how, while in exile in Zurich, the editorial committee for the new party organ, the *Sozialdemokrat*, should function in relation to the rest of the party and its elected leadership. The broader political question was whether the party should accommodate itself to Bismarck’s crackdown by adopting a more moderate posture or maintain its revolutionary stance.

The Circular Letter of 1879

The proposed editorial committee in Zurich consisted of what Marx derisively called a “social-philanthropist” (“the first man to buy his way into the party”) and two adherents of Eugen Dühring (the target of Engels’s famous polemic *Anti-Dühring*), one of whom was the then 29-year-old Eduard Bernstein. When this committee published an article that confirmed their worst fears, Marx and Engels reacted with a stinging denunciation. Their letter to Bebel and the rest of the party leadership, which has come to be known as the *Circular Letter*, ranks, as Hal Draper rightly argues, in importance with the *Manifesto*, the *Address of March 1850*, the *Inaugural*

Address, and the *Civil War in France*.^{xlv}

Written by Engels with Marx's collaboration, the document has two key themes. One, it unequivocally affirmed the historic program of the communist party in opposition to Bernstein (one of the "over-wise graduates" Marx had in mind two years earlier) and the other authors of the article that Engels sardonically called the "Manifesto of the Zurich Trio." In their "Manifesto," Bernstein et al. had proposed that the SAPD abandon its proletarian orientation, make an appeal to both the petit bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, and adopt a less threatening posture toward Bismarck's regime. "If," Engels replied, "they [the 'trio'] think as they write, they ought to leave the party or at least resign from office [i.e., the editorial committee]. If they don't, it is tantamount to admitting that they intend to use their official position to combat the party's proletarian character. Hence, the party is betraying itself if it allows them to remain in office."^{xlvi} Engels threw down the gauntlet because the clear implication of their position, as he bitingly and sarcastically put it, was

Therefore elect bourgeois!

In short, the working class is incapable of emancipating itself by its own efforts. In order to do so it must place itself under the direction of 'educated and propertied' bourgeois who alone have 'the time and the opportunity' to become conversant with what is good for the workers. And, secondly, the bourgeois are not to be combatted—not on your life—but *won over* by vigorous propaganda.^{xlvii}

The goal of the "trio," in Engels's skillful dissection of their diluted politics, was "to relieve the bourgeois of the last trace of anxiety" by showing it "clearly and convincingly that the red spectre really is just a spectre and doesn't exist." But to shore up its left flank, the "Manifesto" made clear that the party's "programme is not to be *relinquished*, but merely *postponed*—for some unspecified period." More precisely, "They accept it [the 'programme']—not for themselves in their own lifetime but posthumously, as an heirloom for their children and their children's children. Meanwhile they devote their 'whole strength and energies' to all sorts of trifles, tinkering away at the capitalist social order so that at least something should appear to be done without at the same time alarming the bourgeoisie."^{xlviii} Engels's sarcasm resonates so well because its target is ever so present. Precisely because "we are still only too familiar with all these catch-phrases of 1848," could Engels and Marx be so insightful about the "trio." "These are the same people... whose fear of any kind of action in 1848 and '49 held back the movement at every step and finally brought about its downfall; the same people who never see reaction and

then are dumbfounded to find themselves at last in a blind alley in which neither resistance nor flight is possible.”^{xlix} Engels then showed how the *Communist Manifesto* had foreseen this kind of development in the German movement and suggested what to do about it. Those who truly believe what “their Manifesto”—namely, that of the “trio”—put forward should form their own party, a “Social-Democratic petty-bourgeois party” separate and apart from a “Social-Democratic Workers’ Party” with whom the latter “could negotiate with...and, according to circumstances, form an alliance with.”¹ Under no circumstances should they be permitted to be in the leadership of the SAPD, and they should “remain aware that a break with them is only a matter of time.”

The other major issue in Engels’s *Circular* concerned the SAPD’s Reichstag group or *Fraktion*. Here he addressed a problem that would bedevil many a twentieth-century workers’ party wherever it had a parliamentary group—that is, how to make it accountable to the party as a whole. Engels, again in opposition to the Zurich “trio,” came to the defense of a rank-and-file SAPD member who had publicly and sharply criticized a *Fraktion* member for voting for one of Bismarck’s capitalism-from-above ventures—a whiff of the “stench” left behind by Lassalle’s support to Bismarckian “state socialism.” Engels agreed that the vote had “infringed party discipline” and that the deputy deserved to be handled “roughly” since the SAPD’s program had specifically opposed both indirect taxation (the means by which the venture would be financed) and the “first and fundamental rule of our party tactics: not a farthing for this government” (from the slogan that Liebknecht made famous in 1871, “*diesem system keinen Mann und keinen Groschen!*”—“for this system, not one man and not one penny!”).^{li} In a didactic letter to Bebel two months later, Engels made the point—consistent with his and Marx’s fundamental views—often forgotten by many a “social-democrat” in the subsequent century that warrants highlighting: “Social-Democratic deputies must always uphold the vital principle of consenting to nothing that increases the power of the government vis-à-vis the people.”^{lii}

However despicable the vote of the deputy or the *Fraktion* as a whole for the Bismarckian project, the bigger problem was the uproar, as reflected by the “trio,” of the party leadership to the rank-and-file criticism of the vote. “[H]as German Social-Democracy indeed been infected with the parliamentary disease, believing that, with the popular vote, the Holy Ghost is poured upon those elected, that meetings of the faction [*Fraktion*] are transformed into infallible councils and factional resolutions into sacrosanct dogma?”^{liii} To combat this “disease,”

what Engels labeled in 1850 “parliamentary cretinism,” the party had to uphold the norm that the parliamentary representatives be subordinate to the will of the party as a whole.

Clearly, it was the issue of the composition of the editorial committee that most concerned Marx and Engels. In concluding the *Circular*, Engels warned that if the “trio” constituted the new committee, “then all we could do—much though we regret it—would be publicly to declare ourselves opposed to it and abandon the solidarity with which we have hitherto represented the German party abroad. But we hope it won’t come to *that*.”^{liv} In terms less diplomatic, Marx explained to a longtime comrade a day later what was at stake: “Engels has written a circular (letter) to Bebel, etc. (just for *private circulation* among the German leaders, of course), in which our point of view is plainly set forth. So the gentlemen are forewarned and, moreover, are well enough acquainted with us to know that this means bend or break! If they wish to compromise themselves, *tant pis!* In no circumstances shall we allow them to compromise *us*...they are already so far infected with parliamentary cretinism as to believe themselves *above criticism* and to denounce criticism as a *crime de lèse majesté!*”^{lv}

In effect, the *Circular* constitutes Marx and Engels’s major programmatic statement against opportunism or what would later be called reformism or revisionism. That one of the targets of their polemic, Bernstein, would some two decades later come to be called the father of revisionism is probably no accident. No other joint document of Marx and Engels so clearly anticipated and critiqued the course of social democracy in the twentieth century. Politically, it stands in direct descent from the *Manifesto* and the *1850 March Address*. That the document only became public in its entirety for the first time in 1931, in a Stalinist publication, when it was then in Moscow’s interest to expose the reformist character of social democracy, is also not fortuitous.

Marx and Engels’s threat of “bend or break” to the leadership of the SAPD forced Bebel, accompanied by Bernstein, to travel to London to resolve their differences with the “old ones”—testimony to their influence and what was at stake. Though the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties, allowing Bernstein to become editor of the *Sozialdemokrat*, the subsequent history of the party and Bernstein himself revealed that the issue of reformism in the German party would continue to be a problem.^{lvi}

Lest it be construed that the “old ones” were unduly harsh with the German leadership, Marx’s comment to the aforementioned longtime comrade a few months later is instructive:

“[W]e have eschewed any kind of *public* intervention. It does not befit those who are peacefully—*comparativement parlant*—ensconced abroad to contribute to the gratification of government and bourgeoisie by doing anything to aggravate the position of those who are operating in the homeland under the most difficult circumstances and at considerable personal sacrifice.”^{lvii} Neither did they view themselves acting authoritatively—in the worst sense of the term, by imposing their views. Two years later Engels described to Bernstein their modus operandi vis-à-vis national parties: “[A]ny attempt to influence people against their will would only do us harm, destroy the old trust that dates from the International.”^{lviii}

The Electoral Road to Socialism—“Peaceful” or “Forcible”?

Once working-class parties were able to participate in the electoral arena, Marx and Engels paid close attention. In the aftermath of the adoption of Resolution IX by The Hague Congress of the IWMA, this was even more the case. Engels’s brief but very rich comments to one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Workers Party about its gains in the 1874 Reichstag elections are exemplary:

Jacoby’s conduct is irresponsible. If he did not wish to take up his seat he should have requested the Party Committee in advance just to put him forward as a mere “name” in completely hopeless constituencies. The workers have neither the money nor the time to squander on empty gestures of this sort. The most strenuous efforts will be needed to get Bracke in, and victory there is doubly important since it is in a *rural* constituency. Jacoby has disqualified himself for good with this. The man is just *too much of a sage*. And his reasons are so trivial and vulgar-democratic! He hurls abuse at *force* as something reprehensible in itself, even though we all know that when it comes down to it, nothing can be achieved without force. If [one of the liberal party candidates] had written such things, that would not be so bad...but a candidate of our party!...And in fact it is all very fine and logical: on the one hand, he rejects *force*, on the other, parliamentary *legal* action—what is left then but pure Bakuninist abstention?^{lix}

Since it’s not possible to do justice here to all that Engels raises, I note only the bare essentials. First, Johann Jacoby had been a left-wing liberal in the ill-fated Frankfurt and Prussian assemblies in the 1848–49 events, one of the “parliamentary cretins” that Engels ridiculed. Disillusioned by his parliamentary ambitions owing to Fredrick IV’s imposition of the Imperial Constitution, he gravitated to more radical politics. He was a Social Democratic Workers Party candidate for the 1874 Reichstag elections and in the second round of voting actually won a seat representing a Leipzig constituency. However, to the party and Engels’s consternation, he

refused to take the seat in order to register his protest against the imposed constitution.

Engels's angry reaction is instructive. Working-class political parties had to take elections seriously—which meant collective decision making—despite how undemocratic they might be. Unlike Jacoby, he was under no illusion that the parliamentary arena was the venue for real change; it offered at best an opportunity to propagandize their ideas—as he and his partner had explained in the *Address of March 1850*. And when a real opportunity for winning presented itself, being serious was even more necessary. Protests about the democratic deficit were of more value from the parliamentary “platform” or rostrum than Jacoby's liberal gesture. What he protested against, that it was “force” that promulgated the constitution, revealed his own political naïveté. “We”—that is, communists and not “vulgar democrats”—“all know that when it comes down to it, nothing can be achieved without force.” Last, if Jacoby was on principle opposed to the use of “force” and was unwilling to use available political space (“*legal* action”), then all that remained for him was an abstentionist posture—what Marx and Engels polemicized against at the London Conference of the IWMA.

Engels's comment about the double importance of winning “in a *rural* constituency” is most significant. It underscores one of the key lessons of the 1848–49 experience and points to the future: the importance of using the electoral arena to build the worker-peasant alliance. No alliance was more necessary in Marx and Engels's strategy for working-class ascendancy. Finally, as the results of the 1874 Reichstag elections were becoming available, Engels, three weeks earlier, applauded what he considered to be the correct conduct for working-class parties in elections that required runoffs: “[F]irst vote for our own man, and then, if it is clear that he won't get in on the second round, vote for the opponent of the government, whoever he happens to be.”^{lx} There is no evidence that Engels ever abandoned this runoff strategy.

Commenting on the Reichstag debate leading up to Bismarck's crackdown in 1878, Marx made a more general observation about force and the parliamentary road to social transformation.

An historical development can remain “peaceful” only for so long as its progress is not forcibly obstructed by those wielding social power at the time. If in England, for instance, or the United States, the working class were to gain a majority in **PARLIAMENT** or **CONGRESS**, they could, by lawful means, rid themselves of such laws and institutions as impeded their development... However, the “peaceful” movement might be transformed into a “forcible” one by resistance on the part of those interested in restoring the former state of affairs; if (as in the American Civil War and the French Revolution) they are put down by *force*, it is as rebels against “lawful” force.^{lxi}

If, even in the United States and England, there was some likelihood that the peaceful road was ruled out—in a speech six years earlier after The Hague Congress Marx appeared to be more certain about such an option in both countries^{lxii}—then clearly it was unlikely in Bismarck’s Germany. Its impending crackdown against the SAPD “is the necessary prelude to forcible revolutions.”^{lxiii} Until the end of his life Engels waged an uphill battle within the German party against the “disease” of parliamentary cretinism to drive home this point.

Bismarck’s ban of the SAPD gave—perhaps intentionally—its parliamentary *Fraktion*, which tended to be to the right of the membership, far more influence in the party than before. While Engels had no objection to the *Fraktion* taking the lead given the constraints of the ban on open party activities, it functioned, he told Kautsky six months after the ban was lifted in 1890, as “a dictatorship that, was of course, essential and excellently managed.”^{lxiv} He held, however, that “they can neither demand nor impose the implicit obedience [of the membership] that could be demanded by the former party leadership, *specifically* elected for the purpose. Least of all under present circumstances, without a press, without mass meetings.”^{lxv} In this, Engels was stating an essential principle later associated with democratic centralist organizing—that is, centralism in action required full democracy in decision making. Because he had more faith in the party’s ranks than its leadership, he was especially concerned that they have sufficient freedom of action—an issue to be returned to shortly.

Engels also reiterated that elections were important, but under capitalism, at least, they not an end in themselves. In his newly published book, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*, which was reprinted as an excerpt in *Sozialdemokrat* in connection with the upcoming 1884 Reichstag elections, one of the key political conclusions he made was that “universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state; but that,” he continued, “is sufficient. On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know where they stand.”^{lxvi}

Cognizant of Bismarck’s censors, Engels could not be as forthright with his metaphor as he was eight years later when he made this very same point to Paul Lafargue, following electoral gains for the party in France, about the value of elections for the revolutionary process.

Do you realize now what a splendid weapon you in France have had in your hands for forty years in universal suffrage; if only people knew how to use it! It’s slower and more boring than the call to revolution, but it’s ten times more sure, and what is even better, it indicates with the most

perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to be made; it's even ten to one that universal suffrage, intelligently used by the workers, will drive the rulers to overthrow legality, that is, to put us in the most favorable position to make the revolution.^{lxvii}

Engels, therefore, left no doubt, contrary to later efforts to make him into a reformist, that elections under capitalism were only a means—a “gauge,” the best in his opinion—to determine when to resort to armed struggle.^{lxviii} And this was a gauge to be employed not just in Bismarck's Germany.

This is the framework in which Engels's, as well as Marx's, pronouncements on elections and the use of force for socialist transformation must be understood. In 1880 he and Marx helped to draft the electoral program of what was in Marx's opinion the “*first real workers' movement* in France.”^{lxix} In the preamble, Marx made perhaps his most succinct and popular rationale for the participation of the workers' party in elections. He began with the premise, “That the emancipation of the producing class [‘or proletariat’] is that of all human beings without distinction of sex or race.” Also, only on the basis of “collective ownership” of the means of production would liberation be assured. Such an “appropriation” required the “revolutionary action of the producing class...organized into an independent political party.” To this end, “all of the means at the disposal of the proletariat, including universal suffrage,” should be utilized. Taking part in the elections, he emphasized, was a “*means of organization and struggle*.”^{lxx}

Regarding the successes of the SAPD in the 1884 elections, Engels told Bebel, “I am less concerned just now with the number of seats that will eventually be won...the main thing is the proof that the movement is marching ahead...[and] the way our workers have run the affair, the tenacity, determination and above all, humor with which they have captured position after position and set at naught all the dodges, threats and bullying on the part of the government and bourgeoisie.”^{lxxi} In other words, the self-organization of the working class was the decisive gain. About the successes in the 1887 elections, he said, “But it's not the number of seats that matter, only the statistical demonstration of the party's irresistible growth.”^{lxxii}

Finally, remarking on the 1893 elections, he reiterated, “[T]he number of seats is a very secondary consideration. The principal one is the increase of votes...[especially in the] rural districts...without which we cannot expect to be victorious.”^{lxxiii} Again, the rural vote was crucially important. Although the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* or SPD, the new name the party adopted after the ban was lifted in 1890, didn't do as well in the runoff elections

in terms of seats, Engels said, “I am prouder of the defeats than of the successes... What we won we owe—for the first time—entirely to our own strength... [and not to] the help of the liberals and democrats.”^{lxxiv} All these assessments only make sense when seen from the perspective of elections as a gauge for the best moment when to employ revolutionary force.

Within this framework, Engels was sober about the German vote. As for the gains made in the 1884 elections, “In Germany it is easy to vote for a Social Democrat because we are the only real opposition party and because the Reichstag has no say in things, so that ultimately it doesn’t matter whether one votes at all, or for which of the ‘dogs that we are’ one does vote.”^{lxxv} Thus he recognized the reality of the protest vote in relation to the so-called wasted vote.

Engels like Marx was unequivocal on the necessity of force. To Bebel in 1884, when the prospects for lifting the ban against the SAPD seemed likely in return for its renunciation of violence, he counseled steadfastness on principles: “No party, unless it was lying, has ever denied the right to armed resistance *in certain circumstances*. None has ever been able to renounce that ultimate right.” But “we shall not go into action as long as we have a military power against us. We can bide our time until the military power ceases *to be a power against us*.”^{lxxvi} To a cothinker in Denmark in 1889, he wrote, “That the proletariat cannot seize political power, which alone will open the doors to a new society, without violent revolution is something upon which we are both agreed.”^{lxxvii} In his commentary on the SPD’s new program in 1891, the so-called Erfurt Program, Engels argued that the reality of Germany “proves how totally mistaken is the belief that a... communist society, can be established in a cosy, peaceful way.”^{lxxviii} To an Italian critic in 1892, Engels replied publicly, “I have never said the socialist party [the SPD] will become the majority and then proceed to take power. On the contrary, I have expressly said,” echoing an aforementioned comment, “that the odds are ten to one that our rulers, well before that point arrives, will use violence against us, and this would shift us from the terrain of majority to the terrain of revolution.”^{lxxix}

Finally, there was Engels’s angry reaction to the most famous bowdlerization in the history of the socialist movement: Liebknecht’s cut-and-paste job in the party newspaper *Vorwärts* on his 1895 “Introduction”—which summarized his and his partner’s approach to universal suffrage and electoral politics—to Marx’s *Class Struggles in France*. What Engels objected the most to about Liebknecht’s self-serving editing, as he explained to Kautsky and Lafargue, was that it was done “in such a fashion that I appear as a peaceful worshiper of legality

at any price” in order “to support the tactics of *peace at any price and of opposition to force and violence*.”^{lxxx} Even the version that he approved for publication in the SPD’s theoretical journal, *Die Neue Zeit*, edited by Kautsky, after watering it down because of the leadership’s fears about government reprisals, had a key paragraph removed. The unexpurgated text made clear that “street fighting” was still on the revolutionary agenda in most places, if not everywhere, but that it would “have to be undertaken with greater forces.”^{lxxxi} This was his last word on the matter, since he died five months later. Had Engels known beforehand that it would be the expurgated version, which made him appear as an opponent of “street fighting,” that subsequent generations of social democrats would be reared on, he no doubt would have resisted the entreaties to tone it down.

The Electoral Arena in Marx and Engels’s Politics

Underlying Engels’s position was a very fundamental principle that informed him and Marx even before they became conscious communists—that is, the need for the working class to take time to make adequate preparations to take power under the best circumstances. Elections were the best means to do so because they revealed what the party’s strengths were and its level of support and organization. This was the point he was getting at in an article in *Sozialdemokrat* shortly after the government’s ban on the party had expired in September 1890, though in language more couched and less provocative. “The attempt must be made to get along with legal methods of struggle for the time being”—the qualifier at the end being crucial. Should the party, he asked, “build barricades” if the regime banned it again? “It will certainly not do its opponents this favor. It will be saved from this by the knowledge of its own position of strength, given it by every general election to the Reichstag. Twenty per cent of the votes cast is a very respectable figure, but this also means that the opponents together still have eighty per cent of the vote.” But given the rate of the gains that the party was making in each election, “it would be mad to attempt a putsch.”^{lxxxii}

While reformists have tried to use this statement to justify their politics, it’s at best a very tortured reading of Engels that flies in the face of his overall strategy as argued here. His other public and private pronouncements at the time make clear that his call for revolutionary restraint in the *Sozialdemokrat* was exactly that. Precisely because of the gains the party had just made, doubling its vote to 1.5 million from the 1887 election, he expected that Bismarck would take

preemptive action. “No doubt they will be the first ones to fire. One fine day the German bourgeois and their government, tired of standing with their arms folded, witnessing the ever increasing advances of socialism, will resort to illegality and violence.”^{lxxxiii} However, the regime should remember, he warned in the party press that “at least one-half of the German socialists have passed through the army” and there are “amongst them too many who have learned to stand at order arms in a hail of bullets till the moment is ripe for attack.”^{lxxxiv}

In letters to Paul and Laura Lafargue, Engels revealed the strategy behind his warning—playing for time. In spite of Bismarck’s expected actions,

it is our duty not to let ourselves be prematurely crushed. As yet only one soldier out of four or five is ours—on a war footing, maybe one in three. We are making headway in rural areas...In three or four years’ time we shall have won over the farm laborers and hired hands, in other words the staunchest supporters of the status quo...That is why we must, for the time being, advocate lawful action, and not respond to the provocations they will lavish upon us.^{lxxxv}

Elections, therefore, were the means by which the party could garner the effective forces to successfully wage the violent struggle. And until the most propitious moment, there would be revolutionary restraint. Of course, Engels recognized, consistent with his and Marx’s earlier views, that while it would be a “great misfortune” if—because of, for example, a war with Russia—the party was brought “to power prematurely, we have to be prepared for that eventuality.”^{lxxxvi} Being “armed” meant above all having a leadership in place that understood what had to be done in such a scenario.

If there is any doubt about how Engels viewed elections, read his comment to Bebel on the eve of the 1890 Reichstag elections in which the SPD was expected to make (and did make) significant gains: “[M]y only fear is that we shall obtain *too many* seats. Every other party in the Reichstag can have as many jackasses and allow them to perpetrate as many blunders as it can afford to pay for, and nobody gives a damn, whereas we, if we are not to be held cheap, must have nothing but heroes and men of genius.”^{lxxxvii} Quality and not quantity was the goal—not the demand of a bourgeois politician.

It should be noted that nowhere does Engels say anything about winning a majority of the electorate through elections. The reason, as already suggested, is that he didn’t expect the ruling class to allow the electoral process to go that far. Thus what was crucial for success was winning not just a simple majority in elections but rather effective supporters—that is, those who were willing to vote with their feet to resist the regime and especially those who knew how to use

arms. Participating in the electoral process made it possible to determine when the requisite number of such forces had been accumulated. This is why the conduct of the party's proletarian ranks in the process was more important for him than just the number of votes obtained or seats won. Engels was also aware that the electoral process itself was flawed. Given the constraints on universal suffrage (e.g., neither women nor anyone under 25 could vote), or the gross inequities in the apportionment of electoral districts, the elections were far from an accurate measure of majority sentiment. Last, by taking preemptive action—that is, overthrowing the electoral process—the regime would forfeit its claims to legality and thus strengthen the workers' party politically in its use of force. The government then, to employ the previously cited point that Marx made, would be acting as “rebels against ‘lawful’ force”—that is, the majority.

One of the features of the “parliamentary disease,” as Engels explained in his aforementioned critique of the so-called Erfurt Program of the SPD in 1891, was the tendency of “striving for the success of the moment” at the expense of the “future of the movement”—namely, “opportunism.” In the electoral arena this translated into the disease of “vote-catching.” It was exactly this secondary affliction, specifically the “striving” by reformist forces in both the German and French parties to win the peasant vote at the expense of communist principles, that convinced Engels to write in 1894, seven months before his death, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*. This text came to constitute his and Marx's most comprehensive programmatic views on the peasant question. At the heart of it is the strategy not just for winning the peasant vote on a principled basis but for ensuring the worker-peasant alliance needed for working-class ascendancy.

Commenting on that wing of the SPD, led by Georg Vollmar, that wanted to “catch the peasant vote” at the expense of programmatic integrity, Engels told Paul Lafargue, “You will have seen in *Vorwärts* [the official organ of the SPD] Bebel's speech in the 2nd electoral constituency of Berlin. He complains with reason that the party is going bourgeois. That is the misfortune of all extreme parties when the time approaches for them to become ‘possible.’”^{lxxxviii} Not surprisingly it was Bebel who complained about the reformist direction of the party, an assessment with which Engels agreed. Of all the SPD leaders, including Kautsky, as well as party leaders anywhere in the world, it was Bebel for whom Engels had the highest regard. To an old comrade he wrote in 1884, “There is no more lucid mind in the whole of the German party, besides which he is utterly dependable and firm of purpose.”^{lxxxix}

The reformist trend that Bebel called attention to was one that both Marx and Engels had earlier diagnosed—what Engels later called “opportunism.” Engels’s hope was that principled political differences would provoke the right wing into a split after the ban was lifted in 1890, hence the necessity of programmatic integrity. As for Bebel’s prognosis about the SPD, Engels responded that “our Party cannot go beyond a certain limit in this respect without betraying itself.”^{xc} Only would hindsight reveal that, contrary to what Engels thought, the “bourgeois” trend had indeed gone “beyond a certain limit.” The parliamentary disease had metastasized into a cancer within the SPD. The campaign for catching the peasant vote signaled the beginning of revisionism in the German party. Vollmar was its political leader, and Bernstein, not long afterwards, became its theoretician. The consequences would be devastating results for all humanity.

Bernstein and Kautsky

This is the appropriate place, near the end of Engels’s life, to say a few words about what he and Marx thought about two of the individuals in the German movement with whom they collaborated, specifically Bernstein and Kautsky (especially because they will reappear when attention turns to Lenin). As already discussed, Marx and Engels first encountered the young Bernstein in and about 1879 and severely chastised him and others—in the *Circular Letter of 1879*—who wanted to take the German party in a reformist direction. They thought (erroneously, as history later revealed) that they had won him over to revolutionary politics after the resolution of the kerfuffle. While Engels was more tolerant and patiently tried to bring him along politically—including efforts to “counteract his enthusiasm for Fabianism”^{xcii}—it is worth noting that Marx continued to have doubts. Three months before his death in 1883, Engels told him, “You are right when you say that Bernstein doesn’t always allow himself adequate time for reflection.”^{xciii} No doubt Marx’s suspicions about the “educative elements,” the “immature undergraduates and over-wise graduates,” continued to influence his opinion of Bernstein.

That attitude about the “educative elements” was certainly on display in Marx’s first encounter with Kautsky in 1881. To his daughter Jenny, he wrote, “He’s a mediocrity, narrow in outlook, over-wise (only 26 years old), a know-all, hard-working after a fashion, much concerned with statistics out of which, however, he makes little sense, by nature a member of the philistine tribe...I unload him onto *amigo* Engels as much as I can.”^{xciii} Nothing in the two

remaining years of Marx's life indicates that he changed his mind. Engels's comment on a series of articles Kautsky wrote in 1889 on the French Revolution is typical of his opinion of his writings. Engels, ever the dialectician, admonished him, "Altogether you generalize far too much and this often makes you absolute where the utmost relativity is called for...I would say a great deal less about the modern mode of production. In every case a yawning gap divides it from the *facts* you adduce and *thus* out of context, it appears as a *pure abstraction which* far from throwing light on the subject, renders it still more obscure."^{xci}

And then there was a comment Engels made about his political sense or lack thereof when it came to publishing. He accused Kautsky of having "lost touch with the living party movement. A few months ago he showed an inconceivable want of tact in proposing to sling a purely academic discussion of the general strike *in abstracto*, and of its pros and cons generally, into the midst of a movement engaged in a life and death struggle against slogans advocating such a strike."^{xcv} Engels was criticizing him for having invited Bernstein to write an article on the general strike in *Die Neue Zeit* just as the Austrian party was engaged in a major fight with opponents about its use in the campaign for universal suffrage. Kautsky's penchant for abstraction at the expense of grounded context was in Marx and Engels's opinion characteristic of the "over-wise graduates" of Germany's universities.

Both criticisms are significant because Kautsky would come to exercise enormous influence through his writings. One in particular, *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Program)*, a popular presentation of the SPD's 1891 program, came to be widely seen after its publication in 1892 as the best one-volume introduction to the political program of Marx and Engels and, later, as the founding "text" of "orthodox" or "classical Marxism." It was intended, Kautsky said, to serve as a "catechism of Social Democracy."^{xcvi} His sobriquet, "the Pope of Marxism," was apropos given the popularity and influence of the book. As for what Engels thought about it, he told Kautsky, "I have only been able to read the first 16 pages. If I were you I should omit the better part of the introduction...[and] plunge straight into it...So overwhelmed am I by work."^{xcvii} His priority, as he explained, was the completion of Volume Three of *Capital*—a task only fulfilled about eight months before his death. While his suggestion about the introduction was taken, it's not clear if Engels ever read the published book. His relationship with Kautsky was clearly strained at the end due to three issues: Kautsky's foot dragging on completing Volume IV of *Capital (Theories of Surplus Value)*; his shabby treatment of his estranged wife, Louise; and,

last, his failure to inform Engels that he was writing and editing a multivolume history of socialism.

Speculation is all that is possible about what Engels thought of *The Class Struggle* in the absence of concrete evidence, but speculation can be informed. In one of the sections most relevant for this book, “9. The Political Struggle,” Kautsky writes,

Great capitalists can influence rulers and legislators directly, but the workers can do so *only* through parliamentary activity...By electing representatives to parliament, therefore, the working-class can exercise an influence over the governmental powers. The struggle of all classes which depend upon legislative action for political influence is directed, in the modern state, on the one hand toward an increase in the power of the parliament (or congress), and on the other toward an increase in their own influence within the parliament...[P]roletariat...parliamentary activity...is *the most powerful lever* that can be utilized to raise the proletariat out of its economic, social and moral degradation.^{xcviii}

If ever there was an example of “parliamentary cretinism,” then this could surely be nominated for Exhibit A. Not only the tone but the language on display here is precisely what Marx and Engels polemicized against. Nothing in the Marx-Engels arsenal would support the claim that “only through parliamentary activity” can the working class influence the ruling class. Just the opposite! They argued that it was *outside* the parliamentary arena where the working class was more efficacious. Furthermore, to say that “parliamentary activity...is the most powerful lever” at the disposal of the working class for its advancement is to challenge the only addendum that Marx and Engels ever made to their *Manifesto*. I suspect that if Engels read what Kautsky alleged in 1892, he would not have been surprised. In 1894, as quoted before, he wrote that Bebel “complains with reason that the party is going bourgeois.”

* * *

There is a respected body of literature that argues that twentieth-century social democracy traces its programmatic roots to Kautsky’s “catechism.”^{xcix} It’s beyond the scope of this book to interrogate that claim in any kind of detail. What can be argued with confidence is that the previously quoted sentences from the book—the reader can verify that they are not taken out of context—are diametrically opposed to the historic program of Marx and Engels based on the evidence presented here. To return to the question that opened this section and to conclude, Engels’s approach to the electoral arena—with its roots in his and his partner’s balance sheet on the “European Spring” of 1848–49, the *Address of March 1850*—was to view it as only as a means—the best in his opinion—to determine when to use revolutionary force. Electoral

victories, specifically, were also a means to an end: access to the parliamentary “platform” or “rostrum,” a most advantageous venue for propagating revolutionary ideas. These claims I make are most credible when coupled with the main lesson that Engels and Marx drew from the experience of the Paris Commune—that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”

The question now is whether there was any continuity with Marx and Engels’s program. Had they successfully recruited a committed cadre to their project? If Kautsky’s “heresy” suggests that they were not to be found in the leadership of the German party—other than Bebel—were there forces anywhere prepared to pick up their mantle?

“And Once the Fun Begins in Russia, Then Hurrah!”

When Marx and Engels determined in 1860 that a new revolutionary era had begun, they pointed to the peasant movement then under way in Polish Russia—evidence that in the new era “the lava will flow from East to West.” However, it took Marx specifically about seven years to make direct contact with Russia’s nascent revolutionary movement. In the meantime, and symptomatic of developments there, revolutionaries in Moscow took the initiative to have *Capital* published in Russian, its first translation into a language other than German.

While conducting his political economy research, Marx gained a better appreciation of Russia’s importance, which spurred him in early 1870 to learn Russian. As his wife Jenny described it, “he has begun studying Russian as if it were a matter of life and death.”^c Marx wrote Engels that “the most important book published since your work on the *Condition of the Working Class*’ was by the Russian Narodnik socialist N. Flerovsky, titled *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*.^{ci} After reading Flerovsky, Marx felt “deeply convinced that a most terrible social revolution... is irrepressible in Russia and near at hand. This is good news. Russia and England are the two great pillars of the present European system. All the rest is of secondary importance, even *la belle France et la savante Allemagne*.”^{cii} Five years later Engels accurately foresaw—clearly, it took longer than he expected—that the social revolution in Russia would “have inevitable repercussions on Germany.”^{ciii} From this point to the very end of their lives both Marx and Engels prioritized developments in Russia over any other country—a fact that virtually every Marxological account ignores.

Marx Takes the Lead

Owing in part to the enormous impact that *Capital* had in Russia—the Russian edition sold better than any other—as well as his renown in connection with the IWMA, a group of Russian émigrés in Geneva asked Marx in March 1870 to represent them on the GC in the IWMA. This was the beginning of his formal links with the generation of Russian revolutionaries from whose ranks would emerge the leadership of the Russian Revolution. Given his and Engels’s long-standing and well-known antipathy for Russia—the bulwark of European reaction—Marx found it ironic that he would “be functioning as the representative of *jeune Russie!* A man never knows what he may achieve, or what STRANGE FELLOWSHIP he may have to suffer.”^{civ} One of these young émigrés, Elisaveta Tomanovskaya, worked closely with Marx and Engels during the Commune. That these Russian youth adamantly opposed Bakunin no doubt helped to deconstruct the essentialist views—largely negative—that Marx and Engels had long harbored about the “Russian race.” Very soon Engels would say of these youth, “As far as talent and character are concerned, some of these are absolutely among the very best in our party.” And in anticipation of a Lenin, “They have a stoicism, a strength of character and at the same time a grasp of theory which are truly admirable.”^{cv}

It’s instructive to note that the Geneva exiles wanted Marx to represent them because “the practical character of the movement was so similar in Germany and Russia, [and] the writings of Marx were so generally known and appreciated by the Russian youth.”^{cvi} Although the standard Marxological charge is that Marx and Engels’s perspective did not speak to peasant societies such as Russia, young Russian radicals in the 1870s begged to differ. They sought his views on the prospects and course of socialist revolution in their homeland. Specifically, they wondered if Russia would have to undergo a prolonged stage of capitalist development or if it could proceed directly to socialist transformation on the basis of communal property relations that prevailed in much of the countryside at that time.

Exactly because of the socioeconomic changes then underway in Russia, Marx was reluctant to make any categorical judgments. In a letter never mailed to the editorial board of the publication of a group of Russian populist Narodniks in 1877, he warned against turning his “historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe” in *Capital* “into a historical-philosophical theory of general development, imposed by fate on all peoples, whatever the historical circumstances in which they are placed.”^{cvii} What he was willing to say about Russia,

based on intense study, was that if it “continues along the path it has followed since 1861, it will miss the finest chance that history has ever offered to a nation, only to undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist system.”^{cvi}

When a related question was posed to him in 1881 by one of the founders of the Marxist party in Russia, Vera Zasulich, specifically about whether the Russian peasant commune could survive in the face of the ever-expanding capitalist mode of production, Marx was again cautious. In order for it to be saved and be the basis for socialist property relations, “it would first be necessary to eliminate the deleterious influences which are assailing it from all sides.”^{cix} In other words, as one of the drafts of his letter put it, “To save the Russian commune, a Russian revolution is needed.”^{cx} The drafts on which this reply was based went into far greater detail on the peasant question and revealed how extensively Marx had been following developments in Russia.

While Marx was cautious about the question, Engels seemed to be more certain that the commune would not survive capital’s penetration into the countryside—at least in the context of a polemic with a Russian who, in Engels’s opinion, romanticized the peasant. As it turned out, it fell on Engels’s shoulders to bring more clarity to this question, because in outliving Marx by 12 years, he witnessed developments in Russia’s countryside that Marx could only anticipate.

As for the politics and strategy of socialist revolution in Russia, Engels in the aforementioned polemic first predicted what would be involved. Rejecting the view that the Russian peasant was “instinctively revolutionary,” he warned against “a premature attempt at insurrection,” since “Russia undoubtedly is on the eve of a revolution.” He provided a quite accurate sketch of what would occur, though not when he expected but three decades later: “[A] growing recognition among the enlightened strata of the nation concentrated in the capital that...a revolution is impending, and the illusion that it will be possible to guide this revolution among a smooth constitutional channel. Here all the conditions of a revolution are combined, of a revolution that, started by the upper classes of the capital, perhaps even by the government itself, must be rapidly carried further, beyond the first constitutional phase, by the peasants, of a revolution that will be of the greatest importance for the whole of Europe.”^{cx} Marx saw a similar scenario, and when the Russo-Turkish War broke out in 1877, they both thought it would precipitate Russia’s social revolution. They got the algebra if not the mathematics right, because it was indeed a war, the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, that helped catalyze the process

culminating in 1917.

In the aforementioned polemic, Engels made clear that given Russia's reality a revolution that began with a conspiracy was certainly justifiable. Never "at any time in my political career [have I] declared that conspiracies were to be universally condemned in all circumstances."^{cxii} Later, both he and Marx praised Russian revolutionaries—one of whom, Vera Zasulich, they would establish close ties with—who either carried out or attempted individual acts of terror against Russian rulers. "Against such wild animals one must defend oneself as one can, with powder and lead. Political assassination in Russia is the only means which men of intelligence, dignity and character possess to defend themselves against the agents of an unprecedented despotism."^{cxiii}

Both also held that the opening of the social revolution in Russia would spread westward, leading to "*radical change throughout Europe*."^{cxiv} In fact, the "overthrow of Tsarist Russia...is...one of the first conditions of the German proletariat's ultimate triumph."^{cxv} In 1882 Engels counseled that the formation of the next international should only be done when conditions were ripe: "[S]uch events are already taking shape in Russia where the avant-garde of the revolution will be going into battle. You should—or so we think—wait for this and its inevitable repercussions on Germany, and then the moment will also have come for a big manifesto and the establishment of an *official*, formal International, which can, however, no longer be a propaganda association but simply an association for action."^{cxvi} This was most prophetic, since it was indeed the Russian Revolution in 1917 that led to the formation in 1919 of the Third or Communist International, which proudly proclaimed its adherence to the Marx program.

Finally, in the Preface to the second Russian edition of the *Manifesto* in 1882, they wrote that "Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe." As for the future of the peasant commune in Russia, they provided their clearest answer yet: "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that the two complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for communist development."^{cxvii} To the end of his life, which was only 15 months away, Marx continued to devote his attention to the peasant question in Russia. Not coincidentally, this is the question that Lenin would begin his revolutionary studies with.

Engels in Charge

With Marx gone, it fell to Engels to render assistance to the many national movements that sought his counsel. But none held his attention as did the Russian movement. He continued to believe, as Marx had, that it was in Russia where Europe's revolutionary "vanguard" existed. "And once the fun begins in Russia," he told his main contact in the United States in 1887, "then hurrah!"^{cxviii} The Russian "lava," in other words, "will flow... West."

The spate of political assassinations that began in 1877 had impressed him and Marx with Russia's volatility. Just as was true for Vera Zasulich's assassination attempt, they praised the assassins—members of *Narodnaya Volya* [*People's Will*]^{cxix}—of Czar Alexander II in 1881. To his daughter Jenny, Marx wrote that they were "sterling chaps through and through, without melodramatic posturing, simple, matter-of-fact, heroic... [T]hey... are at pains to teach Europe that their *modus operandi* is a specifically Russian and historically inevitable mode of action which no more lends itself to moralizing—for or against—than does the [recent] earthquake in Chios [Greece]."^{cxix} For Engels, they were "our people," whose actions had helped to create a "revolutionary situation" in Russia.^{cxx}

As Marx's comment to Jenny indicates, neither he nor Engels praised terrorism as a tactic suitable for all places at all times. Thus in the same article in which he condemned a terrorist bombing in London in January 1885—"Irish hands may have laid the dynamite, but it is more than probable that a Russian brain and Russian money were behind it"—he publicly defended *Narodnaya Volya*: "The means of struggle employed by the Russian revolutionaries are dictated to them by necessity, by the actions of their opponents themselves. They must answer to their people and to history for the means they employ. But the gentlemen who are needlessly parodying this struggle in Western Europe in schoolboy fashion... who do not even direct their weapons against real enemies but against the public in general, these gentlemen are in no way successors or allies of the Russian revolutionaries, but rather their worst enemies."^{cxxi} In the specific conditions of Russia, terror was justifiable, but it was not in Western Europe, at least at that moment.

Because Engels closely followed the debate within the Russian movement on the use of terror—"these Russian quarrels are not uninteresting," he told Laura Lafargue^{cxxii}—he could respond to Zasulich's request to comment on Georgi Plekhanov's polemic, *Our Differences*, against *Narodnaya Volya*'s overall perspective and tactics. The Russian situation was so

unstable, he pointed out, that it “is one of those special cases where it is possible for a handful of men to *effect* a revolution... Well, if ever Blanquism, the fantasy of subverting the whole of a society through action by a small group of conspirators, had any rational foundation, it would assuredly be in St. Petersburg.” However—a most important qualifier—“Once the match has been applied to the powder, the men who have sprung the mine will be swept off their feet by an explosion a thousand times more powerful than they themselves.”^{cxxiii}

For Engels, then, the important thing was “that revolution should break out,” and it was “of little concern to me” whether it be conspirators or not since the pent-up energy in Russia was such that “1789, once launched, will before long be followed by 1793”—that is, the “revolution in permanence.” “Men who have boasted of having *effected* a revolution have always found on the morrow that they didn’t know what they were doing; that once *effected*, the revolution bears no resemblance at all to what they had intended.”^{cxxiv} From its beginnings, the Marx-Engels project, based on the “real movement of history,” lacked guarantees—a revolutionary project without guarantees.

At this time Engels began a regular correspondence and contact with Zasulich, Plekhanov, and other leaders of the recently formed Emancipation of Labor group, the first explicitly Russian Marxist organization.^{cxxv} As he and Marx had earlier commented, the seriousness with which the Russians took the study of their writings was singular among all their party contacts. They sought his views on the key theoretical issue that Marx had been asked to address—whether Russia could bypass capitalist development and proceed directly to socialism based on the common ownership of property of the traditional peasant commune. There were of course enormous political implications in the answer to this most vital question.

After almost a decade and a half had lapsed since his and Marx’s last detailed comments, in 1894 Engels made his final and definitive judgment on Russia’s trajectory. Its recent development, as he and Marx had suspected, was decidedly capitalist, and the “proletarianisation of a large proportion of the peasantry and the decay of the old communistic commune proceeds at an ever quickening pace.” Whether enough of the traditional communes remained for a “point of departure for communistic development,” Engels could not say.

But this much is certain: if a remnant of this commune is to be preserved, the first condition is the fall of tsarist despotism—revolution in Russia. This will not only tear the great mass of the nation, the peasants away from the isolation of their villages...and lead them out onto the great stage...it will also give the labour movement of the West fresh impetus and create new, better

conditions in which to carry on the struggle, thus hastening the victory of the modern industrial proletariat, without which present-day Russia can never achieve a socialist transformation, whether proceeding from the commune or from capitalism.^{cxxvi}

In no uncertain terms, then, and contrary to all the future Stalinist distortions of Marx and Engels's views, Russia could “never achieve a socialist transformation” *without* the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in Western Europe by its own proletariat. Not only would Russia be the “impetus” for the socialist revolution in the West, as Marx and Engels had been saying for two decades, but its own revolution was inextricably linked to that outcome. This forecast would be profoundly and tragically confirmed by subsequent history.

Engels also noted in his final pronouncement that the Russian bourgeoisie, like its German counterpart, was content to allow a despot—the Czar—to rule in its place because the autocracy “offers it more guarantees than would changes even of a bourgeois-liberal nature.” This was advantageous to the socialist revolution because the bourgeoisie's cowardly stance meant that Russia's small but growing proletariat, just as was true for Germany, would be forced to combine the fight for economic and social advancement with the struggle for political democracy; this would ensure, in other words, that the revolution would go beyond the boundaries of its bourgeois-democratic tasks to become “permanent.” In Western Europe, it was the German proletariat that was expected to be the immediate recipient of Russia's “impetus.” It was exactly this point, the vanguard role of the proletariat in Russia's as well as Germany's coming revolution, that Engels made to Zasulich at his last New Year's Eve celebration—a forecast she quickly relayed to her comrades in the Emancipation of Labour Group.^{cxxvii} History would again confirm Engels's prescience.

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If the prospects for a revolutionary leadership in Germany at the end of Engels's life looked dim, it didn't discourage him. He and his partner died with their eyes on Russia—a fact ignored in virtually every standard account of their lives. Part and parcel of Engels's fight for the political soul of the German party, to prevent it from “going bourgeois,” was also an antiwar cause—to try to prevent what would be the First World War.^{cxxviii} Russia was very much part of that strategy. In 1888 he wrote that “revolution in Russia at this moment would save Europe from the horrors of a general war and would usher in universal social revolution.”^{cxxix} Three years later he was uncannily prophetic. While a general European war was not inevitable, “one thing is

certain”: “This war, in which fifteen to twenty million armed men would slaughter one another and devastate Europe as it has never been devastated before... would either lead to the immediate triumph of socialism, or it would lead to such an upheaval in the old order of things, it would leave behind it everywhere such a heap of ruins, that... the socialist revolution, set back by ten or fifteen years, would only be all the more radical and more rapidly implemented.”^{cxxx} And a year later in 1892, he wrote, “If war breaks out, *those who are defeated* will have the opportunity and duty to bring about a revolution—and that’s that.”^{cxxxi} Without a crystal ball, all that Engels—and Marx—could foresee was that a European conflagration was intimately linked with revolutionary prospects for Russia and the rest of Europe. The task now is to see if his and Marx’s expectations were justified.

Chapter 1

¹28, pp. 241-42.

ii For another discussion of the topic, see my “Marx and Engels’s Electoral Strategy: The Alleged versus the Real,” *New Political Science* 32, no. 3 (September 2010): 367–87.

iii “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law,” in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1975–2004), pp. 28–29. Hereafter, citations from the *MECW* are designated as follows: *MECW*3, pp. 28–29. For details on Marx and Engels’s political evolution, see my *Marx and Engels: Their Contribution to the Democratic Breakthrough* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000), ch. 1, and my *Marx, Tocqueville, and Race in America: The “Absolute Democracy” or “Defiled Republic”* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), ch. 1.

iv Chapter 1 in my *Marx, Tocqueville* distills Marx’s path to communist conclusions based on his reading of the US case.

v *MECW*6, p. 333.

vi *MECW*27, p. 271.

vii *MECW*7, p. 3.

viii Engels reproduced a somewhat abridged version of the *Demands* in his article “On the History of the Communist League” in 1885, *MECW*26, pp. 312–30, which did not include, for reasons not clear, the sixth demand and the accompanying clarification quoted here; it’s possible that forty years later he didn’t have a clean copy of the original. This might explain why Lenin, as far as I can tell, did not employ the *Demands* to

support his arguments about the peasantry, specifically the alliance between workers and the small peasantry. Had he known what Marx and Engels had advocated I have no doubt that Lenin would have drawn on their authority to support his case.

- ix For details, see my *Marx and Engels*, specifically the Index entries “democratic centralism,” “party: internal democracy,” “norms and obligations,” “rules.”
- x *MECW*48, p. 425. See also Engels’s more detailed comment on internal party democracy in *MECW*49, p. 11.
- xi In Cologne, at least, the League, owing to Gottschalk’s opposition, boycotted the elections. Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life* (New York: Liveright, 2013), p. 221.
- xii *MECW*8, p. 227–28. On the discussion within the worker’s movement on this question, see Oscar Hammen, *The Red ’48ers: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), pp. 360–61. Contrary to Hammen, the context for this quote makes clear that the “party” is indeed the “people’s alliance” of the *Demands* and not the communist party of the *Manifesto*.
- xiii *MECW*8, p. 514.
- xiv *Ibid.*, pp. 288–89.
- xv *Ibid.*, p. 390.
- xvi *Ibid.*, p. 391.
- xvii David Riazanov, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: An Introduction to Their Lives and Works* (New York: Monthly Review, 1973), p. 100.
- xviii Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), p. 37. Hereafter, the designation will be as follows: 13, p. 37.
- xix *MECW*10, p. 284, my italics.
- xx *Ibid.*
- xxi In my “Marx and Engels’s Electoral Strategy,” I criticize Adam Przeworski for flagrantly misrepresenting Marx and Engels’s view on this and subsequent points.
- xxii For a comparison of Marx and Engels’s assessment of the 1848 revolution in France and that of Tocqueville, see Chapter 5 in my *Marx and Engels*.
- xxiii *MECW*10, p. 137.
- xxiv *MECW*11, p. 79. It might be noted that this is not a translation, because the original series was in English—published in the *New York Daily-Tribune* under Marx’s name.
- xxv *MECW*41, p. 453. Uppercase indicates that the original is in English.
- xxvi *MECW*8, p. 215.
- xxvii *MECW*20, p. 12, my italics.
- xxviii *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- xxix *MECW*42, pp. 54–55.
- xxx *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93. Marx, in a letter to Engels in May 1865, voiced similar suspicions about the one-time Chartist leader Ernest Jones: “[B]etween ourselves, *he* is *only* trying to use our Association for electoral agitation” (*Ibid.*, p. 155). When Jones asked Marx in November 1868 to assist his parliamentary bid, he politely declined.

The GC, he said, “does not get mixed up ELECTIONEERING” (*MECW*43, p. 166). If the reader is wondering how Marx dealt with the fact of his own class origins in his role in the IWMA, see my *Marx and Engels*, pp. 185–88.

xxx*i* *MECW*42, p. 314.

xxx*ii* *MECW*44, pp. 100–101.

xxx*iii* *MECW*41, p. 400.

xxx*iv* *Ibid.*, p. 467. Unbeknownst to Marx at the time, the summer of 1863, Lassalle met secretly with Bismarck to effect such a quid pro quo. In his letter to the chancellor, which included the statues of the GGWA, Lassalle gloated over “the constitution of *my* empire, which perhaps you’d have to envy me! But this miniature picture will plainly convince you how true it is that the working class feels instinctively inclined to dictatorship if it can first be rightfully convinced that such will be exercised in its interests.” He then proposed to Bismarck that the Crown become, in partnership with him lording over the German working class, a “social dictatorship.” Hal Draper, *Karl Marx’s Theory of Revolution*, vol. 4 (New York: Monthly Review, 1990), p. 55. How perceptive Marx had been in suspecting Lassalle of aspiring to be “a future working men’s dictator”!

xxx*v* *MECW*41, p. 467.

xxx*vi* *MECW*22, p. 328.

xxx*vii* *MECW*23, p. 175. Almost 25 years later Engels reiterated this point; see *MECW*50, p. 276.

xxx*viii* *MECW*22, pp. 417–18.

xxx*ix* *MECW*22, p. 617. Henri Tolain, a French member of the IWMA who had been elected to the National Assembly “as a representative of the Working classes” prior to the outbreak of the Commune, sided with Versailles against the insurgents. Because of his actions, the IWMA expelled him as a traitor; see *ibid.*, p. 297.

x*i* *Ibid.*, p. 618.

x*li* *Ibid.*, p. 427.

x*lii* Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New Press, 1996), p. 10. Though not on Sassoon’s list, I’m including the French party of Jules Guesde that Marx collaborated with.

x*lii* *MECW*45, p. 283.

x*liv* *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

x*lv* Draper, *Karl Marx’s Theory of Revolution*, vol. 2, pp. 516 and 600.

x*lvi* *MECW*45, p. 403.

x*lvii* *Ibid.*

x*lviii* *Ibid.*, p. 405.

x*lix* *Ibid.*, pp. 406–7.

l *Ibid.*, p. 408.

li *Ibid.*, p. 399.

lii *Ibid.*, pp. 423–24. As the reader probably realizes, *Social Democracy* had a different meaning in the Marxist movement at this stage from what it would acquire subsequently.

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- liii Ibid., p. 400.
- liv Ibid., p. 408.
- lv Ibid., pp. 413–14.
- lvi Contrary to what David McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 438, suggests, Marx did have an opinion of Bernstein and company, at least in September 1879, which was not very flattering: “They are poor *counter-revolutionary* windbags” (Ibid., p. 413).
- lvii *MECW*46, p. 42.
- lviii Ibid, p. 150.
- lix *MECW*45, p. 9. Note #9 in this volume provides useful details about the elections . Regarding Jacoby’s biography, see Hal Draper, *The Marx-Engels Glossary* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), p. 103.
- lx *MECW*45, p. 7.
- lxi *MECW*24, p. 248.
- lxii *MECW*23, p. 255.
- lxiii *MECW*24, p. 249.
- lxiv *MECW*49, p. 135.
- lxv *MECW*46, p. 8.
- lxvi *MECW*26, p. 272.
- lxvii *MECW*50, p. 29. For Engels’s first usage of the military analogy regarding elections, see *MECW*48, pp. 39–40.
- lxviii See “A Critical Review of the Literature: Chapter 1” for examples of literature that subscribe to the defanged Engels allegation.
- lxix *MECW*46, p. 44.
- lxx *MECW*24, p. 340.
- lxxi *MECW*47, p. 210
- lxxii *MECW*48, p. 30.
- lxxiii *MECW*50, p. 155.
- lxxiv Ibid., pp. 159–60.
- lxxv *MECW*47, p. 342.
- lxxvi Ibid., p. 223.
- lxxvii *MECW*48, p. 423.
- lxxviii *MECW*27, p. 227.
- lxxix Ibid., p. 271.
- lxxx *MECW*50, pp. 486 and 489.
- lxxxi *MECW*27, p. 519.
- lxxxii Ibid., pp. 78–79.
- lxxxiii Ibid., p. 241.

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- lxxxiv Ibid., pp. 6 and 10.
- lxxxv *MECW*48, p. 456.
- lxxxvi *MECW*49, p. 267.
- lxxxvii *MECW*48, p. 452.
- lxxxviii *MECW*50, p. 369.
- lxxxix *MECW*47, pp. 201–2
- xc *MECW*50, p. 369.
- xcI *MECW*49, p. 502. As for Engels’s opinion of the Fabians, “its chief object is to convert your *bourgeois* to socialism and so introduce the thing *peacefully* and *constitutionally*” (*MECW*48, p. 449).
- xcii *MECW*46, p. 413.
- xciii Ibid., p. 82.
- xciv *MECW*48, pp. 267–68.
- xcv *MECW*50, p. 261.
- xcvi Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Program)* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), p. 2.
- xcvii *MECW*49, pp. 367–68.
- xcviii Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, pp. 186–88, my italics. Note that the version I employ is a “somewhat condensed English translation” of the original (p. 2).
- xcix Przeworski’s *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, the second chapter, is the most persuasive. See also Sheri Berman, “Social Democracy’s Past and Potential Future,” in *What’s Left of the Left: Democrats and Social Democrats in Challenging Times*, ed. James Cronin, George Ross, and James Shoch (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
- c Maximilien Rubel and Margaret Manale, *Marx without Myth: A Chronological Study of His Life and Work* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 251. This rendering compares favorably to that of *MECW*43, p. 551.
- ci *MECW*43, p. 424.
- cii Ibid., p. 450.
- ciii *MECW*45, p. 103. “Longer than he expected” refers to the revolutionary upheavals in Germany that came in the wake of the Russian Revolution in October 1917.
- civ *MECW*43, p. 462.
- cv *MECW*44, p. 396.
- cvI Institute of Marxism–Leninism, *The General Council of the First International, 1868–1870: Minutes* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 220.
- cvii *MECW*24, p. 200.
- cviii Ibid., p. 199.
- cix Ibid., p. 359.
- cx Ibid., p. 371.
- cxI Ibid., p. 50.
- cxii Ibid., p. 37.

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- cxiii Ibid., p. 252. For Marx's praise of Russian terrorists like Zasulich, see [MECW46](#), pp. 45 and 83.
- cxiv [MECW45](#), p. 296.
- cxv [MECW24](#), p. 103.
- cxvi [MECW46](#), p. 198.
- cxvii [MECW24](#), p. 426.
- cxviii [MECW48](#), p. 46.
- cxix [MECW46](#), p. 83.
- cxx Ibid., p. 208.
- cxxi [MECW26](#), p. 294.
- cxxii [MECW47](#), p. 264.
- cxxiii Ibid., p. 280.
- cxxiv Ibid., p. 281.
- cxxv On some details about Zasulich's close relationship with Engels, especially after she moved from Geneva to London in 1894, see Jay Bergman, [Vera Zasulich: A Biography](#) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), ch. 4.
- cxxvi [MECW27](#), p. 433.
- cxxvii Draper, [Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution](#), vol. 2, p. 272.
- cxxviii For details, see Draper and E. Haberkern, [Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol. V: War & Revolution](#) (New York: Monthly Review, 2005), especially ch. 8.
- cxxix [MECW48](#), p. 135.
- cxiii [MECW27](#), p. 245.
- cxiii [MECW50](#), p. 20.