Articles from the Labour Standard

Frederick Engels

Content

Introduction

As the 1870s drew to a close, the temporary peace between the English classes grew shakey. The Great Depression of the 1870s swept the western world and was, as always, particularly rough on the proletariat. The capitalist cycle down turn set in motion familiar attacks by the capitalist class against what reformist compromises within the capitalist system existed.

George Shipton, Secretary of the London Trades Council, also served as editor of *The Labour Standard*, the organof British trade unions. He asked Engels to contribute to a discussion of reformism and the labor movement itself.

Engels complied and, between May and August 1881, wrote 11 articles, all appearing as unsigned editorials. He used contemporary issues to elaborate basic economic principles of scientific socialism and the nature of capitalism itself. Engels stressed the inevitability of the conflict between the capitalists and the proletariat–that struggle isn't an aberration, it's a central feature of capitalism. Capitalists will forever be interested in lowering the wages and living conditions of the masses of property-less people because it's simply in their interest.

He held up trade unions asthe daily defenders of the working class in that struggle. In the first article, Engels said the labor movement should lose the meaningless slogan "A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work" – since capitalism's internal nature prevents capitalists from being "fair" to the workers whose wages they must continually seek to depress – with the slogan: "Possesion of the means of work – raw material, factories, machinery – by the working people themselves!"

In the article "A Working Men's Party," Engels notes that unions alone cannot break people free from the endless cycle of capitalist wage-slavery. They must congregate in an independent political party. England's lack of such a party kept the working class tailing after the"Great Liberal Party." And that creates confusion and demoralization.

The MECW notes: "These articles by Engels exerted a definite influence on the young generation in the British socialist movement. James Macdonald, later to beone of the representatives of the Marxist wing of the British socialists, said what really attracted him to socialism were Engels' articles in *The Labour Standard* (*How I Became A Socialist*, London, 1896, pp.61-62.)"

From different Engels letters (to Marx, August 11; to George Shipton, August 10 and August 15; to Johann Philipp Becker, February 101882) we learn he stopped writing for the paper because of the growth of "opportunist elements" in its editorial board.

To the Working Men of Europe in 1877

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I

The past year has been an eventful and a fruitful one for the Working Class of Europe. Great progress has been made in almost all countries with regard to the organization and extension of a Workingmen's Party; unity, threatened at one time by a small but active sect, has been virtually restored; the working-class movement has forced itself more and more into the foreground of every-day politics, and, a sure sign of approaching triumph, political events, no matter what turn they took, always turned out, in some way or other, favorable to the progress of that movement.

At its very outset, the year 1877 was inaugurated by one of the greatest victories ever gained by workingmen. On the 10th of January, the triennial elections, by universal suffrage, for the German Parliament (Reichstag) took place; elections which, ever since 1867, have given the German Workingmen's Party an opportunity of counting their strength and parading before the world their well organized and ever increasing battalions. In 1874, four hundred thousand votes fell to the candidates of labor; in 1877, more than six hundred thousand. Ten workingmen candidates were elected on the 10th, while twenty-four more had to be ballotted for in the supplementary elections which took place a fortnight after. Of these twenty-four, only a few were actually returned, all other parties uniting against them. But the important fact remained, that in all the large towns and industrial centres of the Empire the working-class movement had advanced with giant strides, and that all these electoral districts were certain to fall into their hands at the next ballotting in 1880. Berlin, Dresden, the whole of the Saxon manufacturing districts, and Solingen had been conquered; in Hamburg, Breslau, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Brunswick, in Schleswig-Holstein and the manufacturing districts of Westfalia and the Lower Rhine, a

coalition of all the parties had scarcely sufficed to defeat the working-class candidates by bare majorities. German democratic socialism was a power, and a rapidly growing one, with which henceforth all other powers in the country, governing or otherwise, would have to reckon. The effect of these elections was enormous. The middle class were seized with a perfect panic, all the more so as their press had constantly represented social democracy as dwindling down into insignificance. The working class, elated at their own victory, continued the struggle with renewed vigor and upon every available battlefield; while the workingmen of other countries, as we shall see, not only celebrated the victory of the Germans as a triumph of their own, but were stimulated by it to fresh exertions in order not to be left behind in the race for the emancipation of labor.

The rapid progress of the Workingmen's Party in Germany is not bought without considerable sacrifices on the part of those who take a more active part in it. Government prosecutions and sentences of fine, and oftener of imprisonment, hail down upon them, and they have long since had to make up their minds to passing the greater part of their lives in prison. Although most of these sentences are for short terms, a couple of weeks to three months, long terms are by no means of rare infliction. Thus, in order to protect the important mining and manufacturing district of Saarbrucken from the infection by social democratic poison, two agitators have recently been sentenced to two years and a half each, for having ventured upon this forbidden ground. The elastic laws of the Empire offer plenty of pretexts for such measures, and where they are not sufficient, the judges are mostly quite willing to stretch them to the point required for a conviction.

A great advantage to the German movement is that the Trades' organization works hand in hand with the political organization. The immediate advantages offered by the Trades' organization draw many an otherwise indifferent man into the political movement, while the community of political action holds together, and assures mutual support to, the otherwise isolated Trades Unions.

The success obtained in the elections to the German Parliament has encouraged our German friends to try their chance on other electoral fields. Thus, in two of the State Parliaments, in the smaller States of the Empire,

they have succeeded in electing workingmen, and have also penetrated into a good many Town Councils; in the Saxon manufacturing districts, many a town is governed by a social democratic Council. The suffrage being restricted in these elections, no great result can be hoped for; still, every seat carried, helps to prove to the governments and the middle class that henceforth they will have to reckon with the workingmen.

But the best proof of the rapid advance of conscious workingclass organization is in the growing number of its periodical organs in the press. And here we have to overstep the boundaries of Bismarck's "Empire," for the influence and action of German social democracy is in no ways limited by these. There were publishing in the German language on the 31st of December 1877, in all, not less than seventy-five periodicals in the service of the Workingmen's Party. Of these in the German Empire 62 (amongst which 15 organs of as many Trades Unions), in Switzerland 3, in Austria 3, Hungary 1, America 6; 75 in all, more than the number of workingmen's organs in all other languages put together.

After the battle of Sedan, in September 1870, the Executive Committee of the German Workingmen's Party told their constituents that by the results of the war the centre of gravity of the European working-class movement had been shifted from France to Germany, and that the German workmen had thus become invested with a higher trust and with new responsibilities which required on their part renewed exertions. The year 1877 has proved the truth of this, and has proved, at the same time, the proletariat of Germany to have been in no wise inferior to the task of temporary leadership imposed upon it. Whatever mistakes some of the leaders may have made — and they are both numerous and manifold — the masses themselves have marched onwards resolutely, unhesitatingly and in the right direction. Their conduct, organization and discipline, form a marked contrast to the weakness. irresolution, servility and cowardice so characteristic of all middle-class movements in Germany. But while the German middle class has closed its career by sinking down into a more than Byzantine adulation of "William the Victorious" and by surrendering itself, bound hand and foot to the wayward will of the one Bismarck, the working class is marching from victory to victory, helped onwards and strengthened

even by the very measures which government and middle class contrive in order to suppress it.

II

Great as was the effect of the German elections in the country itself, it was far greater abroad. And in the first instance, it restored that harmony to the European working-class movement which had been disturbed, for the last six years, by the pretensions of a small but extremely busy sect.

Those of our readers who have followed the history of the International Workingmen's Association, will recollect that, immediately after the fall of the Paris Commune, there arose dissensions in the midst of the great labor organization, which led to an open split, at the Hague Congress 1872, and to consequent disintegration. These dissensions were caused by a Russian, Bakounine, and his followers, pretending to supremacy, by fair means or by foul, over a body of which they formed but a small minority. Their chief nostrum was an objection, on principle, to all political action on the part of the working class; so much so, that in their eyes, to vote at an election, was to commit an act of treason against the interests of the proletariat. Nothing, but downright, violent revolution would they admit as means of action. From Switzerland, where these "anarchists," as they called themselves, had first taken root, they spread to Italy and Spain, where, for a time, they actually dominated the working-class movement. They were more or less supported, within the "International," by the Belgians, who, though from different motives, also declared in favor of political abstention. After the split they kept up a show of organization and held congresses, in which a couple of dozen men, always the same, pretending to represent the working class of all Europe, proclaimed their dogmas in its name. But already the German elections of 1874, and the great advantage which the German movement experienced from the presence of nine of its most active members in Parliament, had thrown elements of doubt in the midst of the "anarchists." Political events had repressed the movement in Spain, b which disappeared without leaving scarcely a trace; in Switzerland the party in favor of political action, which worked hand in hand with the Germans, became stronger every day and soon outnumbered the few anarchists at the rate of 300 to I; in Italy,)2 after a childish attempt at "social revolution"

(Bologna, 1874) at which neither the sense nor the pluck of the “anarchists” showed to advantage, the real working-class element began to look out for more rational means of action. In Belgium, the movement, thanks to the abstentionist policy of the leaders, which left the working class without any field for real action, had come to a dead stand. In fact, while the political action of the Germans led them from success to success, the working class of those countries, where abstention was the order of the day, suffered defeat after defeat, and got tired of a movement barren of results; their organizations dropped into oblivion, their press organs disappeared one after the other. The more sensible portion of these workmen could not but be struck by this contrast; rebellion against the “anarchist” and abstentionist doctrine broke out in Italy as well as in Belgium, and people began to ask themselves and each other, why for the sake of a stupid dogmatism they should be deprived of applying the very means of action which had proved itself the most efficacious of all. This was the state of things when the grand electoral victory of the Germans settled all doubts, overcame all hesitation. No resistance was possible against such a stubborn fact. Italy and Belgium declared for political action; the remnants of the Italian abstentionists, driven to despair, attempted another insurrection near Naples; some thirty anarchists proclaimed the “social revolution,” but were speedily taken care of by the police. All they attained was the complete breakdown of their own sectarian movement in Italy. Thus the anarchist organization, which had pretended to rule the working-class movement from one end of Europe to the other, was again reduced to its original nucleus, some two hundred men in the Jura district of Switzerland, where from the isolation of their mountain recesses, they continue to protest against the victorious heresy of the rest of the world, and to uphold the true orthodoxy as laid down by the Emperor Bakounine, now defunct. And when in September last the Universal Socialist Congress met at Ghent, in Belgium — a congress which they themselves had convoked — they found themselves an insignificant minority, face to face with the delegates of the united and unanimous great working-class organizations of Europe. The Congress, while energetically repudiating their ridiculous doctrines and their arrogant pretensions, and establishing the fact that they repudiated merely a small sect, extended to them, in the end, a generous toleration.

Thus, after a four years' intestine struggle, complete harmony was restored to the action of the working class of Europe, and the policy proclaimed by the majority of the last Congress of the International was thoroughly vindicated by events. A basis was now recovered upon which the workingmen of the different European countries could again act firmly together, and give each other that mutual support which constitutes the principal strength of the movement. The International Workingmen's Association had been rendered an impossi-[...] many, which forbade the workmen of these countries to enter into any such international bond. The Governments might have spared themselves all this trouble. The working-class movement had outgrown not only the necessity but even the possibility of any such formal bond; but not only has the work of the great Proletarian organization been fully accomplished, it continues to live itself, more powerful than ever, in the far stronger bond of union and solidarity, in the community of action and policy which now animates the working class of all Europe, and which is emphatically its own and its grandest work. There is plenty of variety of views amongst the workmen of the different countries, and even of those of each country taken by itself; but there are no longer any sects, no more pretensions to dogmatic orthodoxy and supremacy of doctrine, and there is a common plan of action originally traced by the International but now universally adopted because everywhere it has grown consciously or unconsciously out of the struggle of the necessities of the movement; a plan which, while adapting itself freely to the varying conditions of each nation and each locality, is nevertheless the same everywhere in its fundamental traits, and thus secures unity of purpose and general congruence of the means applied to obtain the common end, the emancipation of the working class through the working class itself.

III

In the preceding article, we have already foreshadowed the principal facts of interest connected with the history of the working-class movement in Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Belgium. Still, something remains to be told.

In Spain, the movement had rapidly extended between 1868 and 1872, when the International boasted of more than 30,000 paying members. But all this was more apparent than real, the result more of momentary

excitement, brought on by the unsettled political state of the country than by real intellectual progress. Involved in the Cantonalist (federalist-republican) rising of 1873, the Spanish International was crushed along with it. For a time it continued in the shape of a secret society, of which, no doubt, a nucleus is still in existence. But as it has never given any sign of life save sending three delegates to the Ghent Congress, we are driven to the conclusion that these three delegates represent the Spanish working class much in the same way as whilom the three tailors of Tooley-street represented the People of England .149 And whenever a political revulsion will give the workingmen of Spain the possibility of again playing an active part, we may safely predict that the new departure will not come from these "anarchist" spouters, but from the small body of intelligent and energetic workmen who, in 1872, remained true to the International and who now bide their time instead of playing at secret conspiracy.

In Portugal the movement remained always free from the "anarchist" taint, and proceeded upon the same rational basis as in most other countries. The Portuguese workmen had numerous International sections and Trades' Unions; they held a very successful Congress in January 1877, and had an excellent weekly: "O Protesto" (The Protest). Still, they too were hampered by adverse laws, restrictive of the press and of the right of association and public meeting. They keep struggling on for all that, and are now holding another Congress at Oporto, which will afford them an opportunity of showing to the world that the working class of Portugal takes its proper share in the great and universal struggle for the emancipation of labor.

The workmen of Italy, too, are much obstructed in their action by middle-class legislation. A number of special laws enacted under the pretext of suppressing brigandage and wide-spread secret brigand organizations, laws which give the government immense arbitrary powers, are unscrupulously applied to workmen's associations; their more prominent members equally with brigands are subjected to police supervision and banishment without judge or jury. Still the movement proceeds, and, best sign of life, its centre of gravity has been shifted from the venerable, but half-dead cities of Romagna to the busy industrial and manufacturing towns of the North, a change which secured the predominance of the real working-class element over the host of "anarchist" interlopers of middle-class origin who

previously had taken the lead. The workmen's clubs and Trades' Unions, ever broken up and dissolved by the government, are ever reformed under new names. The Proletarian Press, though many of its organs are but short-lived in consequence of the prosecutions, fines and sentences of imprisonment against the editors, springs up afresh after every defeat, and, in spite of all obstacles, counts several papers of comparatively old standing. Some of these organs, mostly ephemeral ones, still profess "anarchist" doctrines, but that fraction has given up all pretensions to rule the movement and is gradually dying out, along with the Mazzinian or middle-class Republican party, and every inch of ground lost by these two factions is so much ground won by the real and intelligent working-class movement.

In Belgium, too, the centre of gravity of working-class action has been shifted, and this action itself has undergone an important change in consequence. Up to 1875, this centre lay in the French-speaking part of the country, including Brussels, which is half French and half Flemish; the movement was, during this period, strongly influenced by Proudhonist doctrines, which also enjoin abstention from political interference, especially from elections. There remained, then, nothing but strikes, generally repressed by bloody intervention of the military, and meetings in which the old stock phrases were constantly repeated. The work-people got sick of this and the whole movement gradually fell asleep. But since 1875 the manufacturing towns of the Flemish-speaking portion entered into the struggle with a greater and, as was soon to be proved, a new spirit. In Belgium there are no factory laws whatever to limit the hours of labor of women or children; and the first cry of the factory voters of Ghent and neighborhood was for protection for their wives and children, who were made to slave fifteen and more hours a day in the Cotton Mills. The opposition of the Proudhonist doctrinaires who considered such trifles as far beneath the attention of men occupied with transcendent revolutionism, was of no avail, and was gradually overcome. The demand of legal protection for factory-children became one of the points of the Belgian working-class platform, and with it was broken the spell which hitherto had tabooed political action. The example of the Germans did the rest, and now the Belgian workmen, like those of Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Portugal,

Hungary, Austria and part of Italy, are forming themselves into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all other political parties, and aiming at the conquest of their emancipation by whatever political action the situation may require.

The great mass of the Swiss workmen — the German-speaking portion of them — had for some years been formed into a “Workmen’s Confederation” which at the end of 1876 counted above 5,000 paying members. There was, alongside of them another organization, the “Grütli Society,” originally formed by the middle-class radicals for the spread of Radicalism amongst workmen and peasants; but gradually social democratic ideas penetrated into this widely-spread association and finally conquered it. In 1877, both these societies entered into an alliance, almost a fusion, for the purpose of organizing a Swiss political labor party; and with such vigor did they act that they carried, at the national vote, the new Swiss Factory Law, of all existing factory acts the one which is most favorable to the work-people. They are now organizing a vigilant supervision to secure its due execution against the loudly proclaimed ill-will of the mill owners. The “anarchists,” from their superior revolutionary standpoint, as a matter of course violently opposed all this action, denouncing it as a piece of arrant treason against what they call “the Revolution”; but as they number 200 at the outside and here as elsewhere are but a general staff of officers without an army, this made no difference. — The programme of the Swiss workingmen’s Party is almost identical with that of the Germans, only too identical, having adopted even some of its more imperfect and confused passages. But the mere wording of the programme matters little, so long as the spirit which dominates the movement, is of the right sort.

The Danish workingmen entered the lists about 1870 and at first made very rapid progress. By an alliance with the small peasant proprietors’ party, amongst which they succeeded in spreading their views, they attained considerable political influence, so much so that the “United Left,” of which the peasant party formed the nucleus, for a number of years had the majority in parliament. But there was more show than solidity in this rapid growth of the movement. One day it was found out that two of the leaders had disappeared after squandering the money collected for party purposes from the workingmen. The scandal caused by this was extreme, and the

Danish movement has not yet recovered from the discouragement consequent upon it. Anyhow, if the Danish workingmen's party is now proceeding in a more unobtrusive way than before, there is every reason to believe that it is gradually replacing the ephemeral and apparent domination over the masses, which it has now lost, by a more real and more lasting influence.

In Austria and Hungary the working class has the greatest difficulties to contend with. Political liberty, as far as the press, meetings and associations are concerned, is there reduced to the lowest level consistent with a sham constitutional monarchy. A code of laws of unheard-of elasticity enables the Government to obtain convictions against even the mildest expression of the demands and interests of the working class. And yet the movement there, as well as elsewhere, goes on irrepressibly. The principal centres are the manufacturing districts of Bohemia, Vienna, and Pesth. Workingmen's periodicals are published in the German, the Bohemian and the Hungarian languages. From Hungary the movement has spread to Servia, where, before the war, a weekly newspaper was published in the Servian language, but when the war broke out the paper was simply suppressed.

Thus, wherever we look in Europe, the working-class movement is progressing, not only favorably but rapidly, and what is more, everywhere in the same spirit. Complete harmony is restored, and with it constant and regular intercourse, in one way or another, between the workmen of the different countries. The men who founded, in 1864, the International Working Men's Association, who held high its banner during years of strife, first against external, then against internal foes, until political necessities even more than intestine feuds brought on disruption and seeming retirement — these men can now proudly exclaim: "The International has done its work; it has fully attained its grand aim — the union of the Proletariat of the whole world in the struggle against their oppressors."

IV

Our readers will have noticed that in the three preceding articles there has been scarcely any mention made of one of the most important countries of Europe — France, and for this reason: In the countries hitherto treated of, the action of the working class, though essentially a political action, is not

intimately mixed up with general, or so to say official politics. The working class of Germany, Italy, Belgium etc., is not yet a political power in the State; it is a political power only prospectively, and if the official parties in some of these countries, Conservatives, Liberals, or Radicals, have to reckon with it, it is merely because its rapid onward progress makes it evident, that in a very short time the Proletarian party will be strong enough to make its influence felt. But in France it is different. The workmen of Paris, seconded by those of the large provincial towns, have ever since the great Revolution been a power in the State. They have been for nearly ninety years the fighting army of progress; at every great crisis of French history, they descended into the streets, armed themselves as best as they could, threw up barricades and provoked the battle, and it was their victory or defeat which decided the future of France for years to come. From 1789 to 1830, the revolutions of the middle class were fought out by the workmen of Paris; it was they who conquered the Republic in 1848, having mistaken that Republic to mean emancipation of labor, they were cruelly undeceived by the defeat inflicted on them, in June of the same year; they resisted on the barricades Louis Napoleon’s Coup d'État 1851 and were again defeated; they swept away in September 1870 the defunct Empire which the middle-class Radicals were too cowardly to touch. In March 1871 Thiers’ attempt to take away from them the arms with which they had defended Paris against foreign invasion, forced them into the revolution of the Commune and the protracted struggle which ended with its bloody extinction.

A national working class which thus, for nearly a century, not only has taken a decisive part in every crisis of the history of its own country, but at the same time has always been the advanced guard of European Revolution, such a working class cannot live the comparatively secluded life which is still the proper sphere of action of the rest of the continental workmen. Such a working class as that of France is bound to its past history and by its past history. Its history, no less than its acknowledged decisive fighting power, has mixed it up indissolubly with the general political development of the country. And thus, we cannot give a retrospect of the action of the French working class without entering into French politics generally.

Whether the French working class had been fighting its own battle or the battle of the Liberal, Radical, or Republican middle class, every defeat it suffered has hitherto been followed by an oppressive political reaction, as violent as it was enduring. Thus, the defeats of June 1848 and December 1851 were succeeded by the eighteen years of the Bonapartist Empire, during which the press was fettered, the right of meeting and of association suppressed and the working class consequently deprived of every means of inter-communication and organization. The necessary result was that when the revolution of September 1870 came, the workmen had no other men to put into office, but those middle-class radicals who under the Empire had formed the official parliamentary opposition and who as a matter of course betrayed them and their country. After the stamping-out of the Commune, the working class, disabled for years in their fighting power, had but one immediate interest: to avoid the recurrence of such another protracted reign of repression, and with it the necessity of again fighting, not for their own direct emancipation, but for a state of things permitting them to prepare for the final emancipatory struggle. Now, in France there are four great political parties: three monarchist, the Legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists, each with a separate pretender to the crown; and the Republican party. Whichever of the three pretenders were to ascend the throne, he would in every case be supported by a small minority only of the people, he would consequently have to rely upon force only. Thus, the reign of violence, the suppression of all public liberties and personal rights, which the working class must wish to avoid, was the necessary concomitant of every Monarchist restoration. On the other hand the maintenance of the established Republican government left them at least the chance of obtaining such a degree of personal and public liberty as would allow them to establish a working-class press, an agitation by meetings and an organization as an independent political party, and moreover, the conservation of the Republic would save them the necessity of delivering a separate battle for its future re-conquest.

It was thus another proof of the high instinctive political intelligence of the French working class, that as soon as, on the 16th May last, the great conspiracy of the three Monarchist factions declared war against the Republic, the workmen, one and all, proclaimed the maintenance of the

Republic to be their chief immediate object. No doubt in this they acted as the tail of the middle-class Republicans and Radicals, but a working class which has no press, no meetings, no clubs, no political societies, what else can it be but the tail of the Radical middle-class party? What can it do, in order to gain its political independence, but support the only party which is bound to secure to the people generally, and therefore, to the workmen too, such liberties as will admit of independent organization?, Some people say, the workmen at the last election ought to have put up their own candidates, but even in those places where they could have done so successfully, where were the working-class candidates, well known enough amongst their own class to find the necessary support? Why, the government since the Commune have taken good care to arrest, as a participator in that insurrection, every workman who made himself known even by private agitation in his own district of Paris.

The victory of the Republicans at the elections last November was signal. It was followed by still more signal triumphs at the departmental, municipal and supplementary elections which followed it. The Monarchist conspiracy would, perhaps, not have given way for all that; but its hand was lamed by the unmistakable attitude of the army. Not only were there numerous Republican officers especially in the lower grades; but, what was more decisive, the mass of the soldiers refused to march against the Republic. That was the first result of the reorganization of the army, by which bought substitutes had been done away with and the army transformed into a fair representation of the young men of all classes. Thus, the conspiracy broke down without having to be broken up by force. And this, too, was much in the interest of the working class which, too weak yet after the blood-letting of 1871, can have no wish to waste again its greatest, its fighting power, in struggles for the benefit of others or to engage in a series of violent collisions before it has recovered its full strength.

But this Republican victory has yet another significance. It proves that since 1870 the country people have made a great step in advance. Hitherto, every working-class victory gained in Paris, was nullified in a very short time by the reactionist spirit of the small peasantry who form the great mass of the French population. Since the beginning of this century, the French peasantry had been Bonapartist. The second Republic, established by the

Paris workingmen in February 1848, had been cancelled by the six million peasant votes given to Louis Napoleon in December following. But the Prussian invasion of 1870 has shaken the Imperialist faith of the peasantry, and the elections of November last prove that the mass of the country population had become Republican, and this is a change of the highest importance. It does not only mean that henceforth all Monarchist restoration has become hopeless in France. It means also the approaching alliance between the workingmen of the towns and the peasantry of the country. The small peasant proprietors established by the great Revolution are proprietors of the soil, but in name. Their farms are mortgaged to usurers; their crops are spent in the payment of interest and law-expenses; the notary, the attorney, the bailiff, the auctioneer are constantly threatening at their doors. Their position is fully as bad as that of the workingmen, and almost as insecure. And if these peasants now turn from Bonapartism to the Republic, they show by this that they no longer expect an improvement of their condition from those Imperialist miracles which Louis Napoleon ever promised and never performed. Thiers' faith in the mysterious powers of salvation held by an "Emperor of peasants" has been rudely dispelled by the second Empire. The spell is broken. The French peasantry are at last in a state of mind rational enough to look out for the real causes of the chronic distress and for the practical means to do away with it; and once set a thinking they must soon find out that their only remedy lies in an alliance with the only class that has no interest in their present miserable condition, the working class of the town.

Thus, however contemptible the present Republican government of France may be, the final establishment of the Republic has at last given the French workingmen the ground upon which they can organize themselves as an independent political party, and fight their future battles, not for the benefit of others, but for their own; the ground, too, upon which they can unite with the hitherto hostile mass of the peasantry and thus render future victories not, as heretofore, short-lived triumphs of Paris over France, but final triumphs of all the oppressed classes of France, led by the workmen of Paris and the large provincial towns.

V

There is still another important European country to be considered — Russia. Not that there exists in Russia a working-class movement worth speaking of. But the internal and external circumstances in which Russia is placed are most peculiar and big with events of the highest importance with regard to the future, not only of the Russian workingmen, but those of all Europe.

In 1861 the government of Alexander II carried out the emancipation of the serfs, the transformation of the immense majority of the Russian people from bondsmen, attached to the soil and subject to forced labour for their landlord, into free peasant proprietors. This change, the necessity of which had long been evident, was effected in such a way that neither the former landlords nor the former serfs were the gainers by it. The peasant villages received allotments of soil, which henceforth were to be their own, while the landlords were to be paid for the value of the land thus ceded to the villages, and also, to a certain extent, for the claim they hitherto had possessed to the peasant's labor. As the peasants evidently could not find the money to pay the landlords, the State stepped in. One portion of this payment was effected by transferring to the landlord a portion of the land hitherto cultivated by the peasants for their own account; the rest was paid in the shape of government bonds, advanced by the State, and to be repaid to it with interest, in yearly instalments, by the peasants. The majority of the landlords sold these bonds and spent the money; they are thus not only poorer than before, but cannot find laborers to till their estates, the peasants actually declining to work upon them and to leave their own fields uncultivated. As to the peasants, their shares of land had not only been reduced in size from what they had been before, and very often to an extent which, under Russian circumstances, left them insufficient to maintain a family; these shares had, in most instances, been taken from the very worst land on the estate, from bogs or other unclaimed lands, while the good land, hitherto owned by the peasants and improved by their labor, had been transferred to the landlords. Under these circumstances, the peasants, too, were considerably worse off than before; but besides this, they were expected to pay every year to the government the interest and part of the capital advanced by the State for buying them off, and, moreover, the taxes levied upon them increased from year to year. Furthermore, before

emancipation, the peasants had possessed certain common rights on the estate lands of pasture for their cattle, the hewing of timber for building and other purposes, etc. These rights were expressly taken from them by the new settlement; if they wanted to exercise them again, they had to bargain with their former landlord.

Thus, while the majority of the landed proprietors became even more indebted, in consequence of the change, than they had been before, the peasantry were reduced to a position in which they could neither live nor die. The great act of emancipation, so universally extolled and glorified by the Liberal press of Europe, had created nothing but the groundwork and the absolute necessity of a future revolution.

This revolution, the government did all in its power to hasten on — the corruption pervading all official spheres, and leaving whatever power for good they might be supposed to possess — this hereditary corruption remained as bad as ever, and came to light glaringly in every public department at the outbreak of the Turkish war. The finances of the empire, completely disordered at the end of the Crimean war, were allowed to go from bad to worse. Loan after loan was contracted, until there was no other means of paying the interest of the old debts except by contracting new ones. During the first years of Alexander’s reign, the old imperial despotism had been somewhat relaxed; the press had been allowed more freedom, trial by jury established and representative bodies, elected by the nobility, the citizens of the towns, and the peasants respectively, had been permitted to take some share in local and provincial administration. Even with the Poles some political flirtation had been carried on. But the public had misunderstood the benevolent intentions of the government. The press became too outspoken. The juries actually acquitted political prisoners which the government had expected them to convict against evidence. The local and provincial assemblies, one and all, declared that the government, by its act of emancipation, had ruined the country, and that things could not go on in that way any longer. A national assembly was even hinted at as the only means of getting out of troubles fast becoming insupportable. And finally, the Poles refused to be bamboozled with fine words, and broke out into a rebellion which it took all the forces of the empire, and all the brutality of the Russian generals, to quell in torrents of blood. Then the

government turned round again. Stern repression once more became the order of the day. The press was muzzled, the political prisoners were handed over to special courts, consisting of judges packed for the purpose, the local and provincial assemblies were ignored. But it was too late. The government, having once shown signs of fear, had lost its prestige. The belief in its stability, and in its power of absolutely crushing all internal resistance, had gone. The germ of a future public opinion had sprung up. The forces could not be brought back to the former implicit obedience to government dictation. Discussion of public matters, if only in private circles, had become a habit among the educated classes. And finally, the government, with all its desire to return to the unbridled despotism of the reign of Nicholas, still pretended to keep up, before the eyes of Europe, the appearances of the liberalism initiated by Alexander. The consequence was a system of vacillation and hesitation, of concessions made to-day and retracted to-morrow, to be again half-conceded and half-retracted in turns, a policy changing from hour to hour, bringing home to everybody the intrinsic weakness, the want of insight and of will, on the part of a government which was nothing unless it was possessed of a will and of the means to enforce it. What was more natural than that every day should increase the contempt felt for a government which, long since known to be powerless for good and obeyed only through fear, now proved that it doubted of its power of maintaining its own existence, that it had at least as much fear of the people as the people had of it? There was only one way of salvation for the Russian government, the way open to all governments brought face to face with overwhelming popular resistance — foreign war. And foreign war was resolved upon; a war, proclaimed before Europe as undertaken for the deliverance of Christians from protracted Turkish misrule, but proclaimed before the Russian people as carried on for the bringing home of their Slavonic brethren in race from Turkish bondage into the fold of the Holy Russian Empire.

This war, after months of inglorious defeat, has now come to an end through the equally inglorious crushing of Turkish resistance, partly by treachery, partly by immensely superior numbers. But the Russian conquest of the greater part of Turkey in Europe is itself only the prelude to a general European war. Either Russia, at the impending European Conference (if that

Conference ever meets), will have to recede so much from the position now gained, that the disproportion between the immense sacrifices and the puny results must bring the popular discontent to a violent revolutionary outburst; or else, Russia will have to maintain her newly conquered position in a European war. More than half exhausted as she is already, her government cannot carry her through such a war — whatever may be its final result — without important popular concessions. Such concessions, in the face of a situation as that described above, mean the commencement of a revolution. From this revolution the Russian government cannot possibly escape, if even it may succeed in delaying its outbreak for a year or two. But a Russian revolution means more than a mere change of government in Russia herself. It means the disappearance of a vast, though unwieldy, military power which, ever since the French Revolution, has formed the backbone of the united despotisms of Europe. It means the emancipation of Germany from Prussia, for Prussia has already been the creature of Russia, and has only existed by leaning upon her. It means the emancipation of Poland. It means the awakening of the smaller Slavonic nationalities of Eastern Europe from the Panslavist dreams fostered among them by the present Russian government. And it means the beginning of an active national life among the Russian people themselves, and along with it the springing up of a real working-class movement in Russia. Altogether, it means such a change in the whole situation of Europe as must be hailed with joy — by the workingmen of every country as a giant step towards their common goal — the universal emancipation of Labor.

A Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work

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This has now been the motto of the English working-class movement for the last fifty years. It did good service in the time of the rising Trades Unions after the repeal of the infamous Combination Laws in 1824[1]; it did still better service in the time of the glorious Chartist movement, when the English workmen marched at the head of the European working class. But times are moving on, and a good many things which were desirable and necessary fifty, and even thirty years ago, are now antiquated and would be completely out of place. Does the old, time-honoured watchword too belong to them?

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work? But what is a fair day's wages, and what is a fair day's work? How are they determined by the laws under which modern society exists and develops itself? For an answer to this we must not apply to the science of morals or of law and equity, nor to any sentimental feeling of humanity, justice, or even charity. What is morally fair, what is even fair in law, may be far from being socially fair. Social fairness or unfairness is decided by one science alone — the science which deals with the material facts of production and exchange, the science of political economy.

Now what does political economy call a fair day's wages and a fair day's work? Simply the rate of wages and the length and intensity of a day's work which are determined by competition of employer and employed in the open market. And what are they, when thus determined?

A fair day's wages, under normal conditions, is the sum required to procure to the labourer the means of existence necessary, according to the standard of life of his station and country' to keep himself in working order and to

propagate his race. The actual rate of wages, with the fluctuations of trade, may be sometimes above, sometimes below this rate; but, under fair conditions, that rate ought to be the average of all oscillations.

A fair day's work is that length of working day and that intensity of actual work which expends one day's full working power of the workman without encroaching upon his capacity for the same amount of work for the next and following days.

The transaction, then, may be thus described — the workman gives to the Capitalist his full day's working power; that is, so much of it as he can give without rendering impossible the continuous repetition of the transaction. In exchange he receives just as much, and no more, of the necessaries of life as is required to keep up the repetition of the same bargain every day. The workman gives as much, the Capitalist gives as little, as the nature of the bargain will admit. This is a very peculiar sort of fairness.

But let us look a little deeper into the matter. As, according to political economists, wages and working days are fixed by competition, fairness seems to require that both sides should have the same fair start on equal terms. But that is not the case. The Capitalist, if he cannot agree with the Labourer, can afford to wait, and live upon his capital. The workman cannot. He has but wages to live upon, and must therefore take work when, where, and at what terms he can get it. The workman has no fair start. He is fearfully handicapped by hunger. Yet, according to the political economy of the Capitalist class, that is the very pink of fairness.

But this is a mere trifle. The application of mechanical power and machinery to new trades, and the extension and improvements of machinery in trades already subjected to it, keep turning out of work more and more "hands"; and they do so at a far quicker rate than that at which these superseded "hands" can be absorbed by, and find employment in, the manufactures of the country. These superseded "hands" form a real industrial army of reserve for the use of Capital. If trade is bad they may starve, beg, steal, or go to the workhouse[2]; if trade is good they are ready at hand to expand production; and until the very last man, woman, or child of this army of reserve shall have found work — which happens in times of frantic over-production alone — until then will its competition keep down

wages, and by its existence alone strengthen the power of Capital in its struggle with Labour. In the race with Capital, Labour is not only handicapped, it has to drag a cannon-ball riveted to its foot. Yet that is fair according to Capitalist political economy.

But let us inquire out of what fund does Capital pay these very fair wages? Out of capital, of course. But capital produces no' value. Labour is, besides the earth, the only source of wealth; capital itself is nothing but the stored-up produce of labour. So that the wages of Labour are paid out of labour, and the working man is paid out of his own produce. According to what we may call common fairness, the wages of the labourer ought to consist in the produce of his labour. But that would not be fair according to political economy. On the contrary, the produce of the workman's labour goes to the Capitalist, and the workman gets out of it no more than the bare necessaries of life. And thus the end of this uncommonly "fair" race of competition is that the produce of the labour of those who do work, gets unavoidably accumulated in the hands of those that do not work, and becomes in their hands the most powerful means to enslave the very men who produced it.

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work! A good deal might be said about the fair day's work too, the fairness of which is perfectly on a par with that of the wages. But that we must leave for another occasion. From what has been stated it is pretty clear that the old watchword has lived its day, and will hardly hold water nowadays. The fairness of political economy, such as it truly lays down the laws which rule actual society, that fairness is all on one side — on that of Capital. Let, then, the old motto be buried for ever and replaced by another:

> Possession of the Means of Work —
> Raw Material, Factories, Machinery —
> By the Working People Themselves.

The Wages System

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In a previous article we examined the time-honoured motto, "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work", and came to the conclusion that the fairest day's wages under present social conditions is necessarily tantamount to the very unfairest division of the workman's produce, the greater portion of that produce going into the capitalist's pocket, and the workman having to put up with just as much as will enable him to keep himself in working order and to propagate his race.

This is a law of political economy, or, in other words, a law of the present economical organisation of society, which is more powerful than all the Common and Statute Law of England put together, the Court of Chancery[3] included. While society is divided into two opposing classes -- on the one hand, the capitalists, monopolisers of the whole of the means of production, land, raw materials, machinery; on the other hand, labourers, working people deprived of all property in the means of production, owners of nothing but their own working power; while this social organisation exists the law of wages will remain all-powerful, and will every day afresh rivet the chains by which the working man is made the slave of his own produce -- monopolised by the capitalist.

The Trades Unions of this country have now for nearly sixty years fought against this law -- with what result? Have they succeeded in freeing the working class from the bondage in which capital -- the produce of its own hands -- holds it? Have they enabled a single section of the working class to rise above the situation of wages-slaves, to become owners of their own means of production, of the raw materials, tools, machinery required in their trade, and thus to become the owners of the produce of their own labour? It is well known that not only they have not done so but that they never tried.

Far be it from us to say that Trades Unions are of no use because they have not done that. On the contrary, Trades Unions in England, as well as in every other manufacturing country, are a necessity for the working classes in their struggle against capital. The average rate of wages is equal to the

sum of necessaries sufficient to keep up the race of workmen in a certain country according to the standard of life habitual in that country. That standard of life may be very different for different classes of workmen. The great merit of Trades Unions, in their struggle to keep up the rate of wages and to reduce working hours, is that they tend to keep up and to raise the standard of life. There are many trades in the East-end of London whose labour is not more skilled and quite as hard as that of bricklayers and bricklayers' labourers, yet they hardly earn half the wages of these. Why? Simply because a powerful organisation enables the one set to maintain a comparatively high standard of life as the rule by which their wages are measured; while the other set, disorganised and powerless, have to submit not only to unavoidable but also to arbitrary encroachments of their employers: their standard of life is gradually reduced, they learn how to live on less and less wages, and their wages naturally fall to that level which they themselves have learnt to accept as sufficient.

The law of wages, then, is not one which draws a hard and fast line. It is not inexorable with certain limits. There is at every time (great depression excepted) for every trade a certain latitude within which the rate of wages may be modified by the results of the struggle between the two contending parties. Wages in every case are fixed by a bargain, and in a bargain he who resists longest and best has the greatest chance of getting more than his due. If the isolated workman tries to drive his bargain with the capitalist he is easily beaten and has to surrender at discretion, but if a whole trade of workmen form a powerful organisation, collect among themselves a fund to enable them to defy their employers if need be, and thus become enabled to treat with these employers as a power, then, and then only, have they a chance to get even that pittance which, according to the economical constitution of present society, may be called a fair day's wages for a fair day's work.

The law of wages is not upset by the struggles of Trades Unions. On the contrary, it is enforced by them. Without the means of resistance of the Trades Unions the labourer does not receive even what is his due according to the rules of the wages system. It is only with the fear of the Trades Union before his eyes that the capitalist can be made to part with the full market value of his labourer's working power. Do you want a proof? Look at the

wages paid to the members of the large Trades Unions, and at the wages paid to the numberless small trades in that pool of stagnant misery, the East-end of London.

Thus the Trades Unions do not attack the wages system. But it is not the highness or lowness of wages which constitutes the economical degradation of the working class: this degradation is comprised in the fact that, instead of receiving for its labour the full produce of this labour, the working class has to be satisfied with a portion of its own produce called wages. The capitalist pockets the whole produce (paying the labourer out of it) because he is the owner of the means of labour. And, therefore, there is no real redemption for the working class until it becomes owner of all the means of work -- land, raw material, machinery, etc. -- and thereby also the owner of THE WHOLE OF THE PRODUCE OF ITS OWN LABOUR.

Trades Unions

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Part I

In our last issue we considered the action of Trades Unions as far as they enforce the economical law of wages against employers. We return to this subject, as it is of the highest importance that the working classes generally should thoroughly understand it.

We suppose no English working man of the present day needs to be taught that it is the interest of the individual capitalist, as well as of the capitalist class generally, to reduce wages as much as possible. The produce of labour, after deducting all expenses, is divided, as David Ricardo has irrefutably proved, into two shares: the one forms the labourer's wages, the other the capitalist's profits. Now, this net produce of labour being, in every individual case, a given quantity, it is clear that the share called profits cannot increase without the share called wages decreasing. To deny that it is the interest of the capitalist to reduce wages, would be tantamount to say that it is not his interest to increase his profits.

We know very well that there are other means of temporarily increasing profits, but they do not alter the general law, and therefore need not trouble us here.

Now, how can the capitalists reduce wages when the rate of wages is governed by a distinct and well-defined law of social economy? The economical law of wages is there, and is irrefutable. But, as we have seen, it is elastic, and it is so in two ways. The rate of wages can be lowered, in a particular trade, either directly, by gradually accustoming the workpeople of that trade to a lower standard of life, or, indirectly, by increasing the number

of working hours per day (or the intensity of work during the same working hours) without increasing the pay.

And the interest of every individual capitalist to increase his profits by reducing the wages of his workpeople receives a fresh stimulus from the competition of capitalists of the same trade amongst each other. Each one of them tries to undersell his competitors, and unless he is to sacrifice his profits he must try and reduce wages. Thus, the pressure upon the rate of wages brought about by the interest of every individual capitalist is increased tenfold by the competition amongst them. What was before a matter of more or less profit, now becomes a matter of necessity.

Against this constant, unceasing pressure unorganised labour has no effective means of resistance. Therefore, in trades without organisation of the workpeople, wages tend constantly to fall and the working hours tend constantly to increase. Slowly, but surely, this process goes on. Times of prosperity may now and then interrupt it, but times of bad trade hasten it on all the more afterwards. The workpeople gradually get accustomed to a lower and lower standard of life. While the length of working day more and more approaches the possible maximum, the wages come nearer and nearer to their absolute minimum -- the sum below which it becomes absolutely impossible for the workman to live and to reproduce his race.

There was a temporary exception to this about the beginning of this century. The rapid extension of steam and machinery was not sufficient for the still faster increasing demand for their produce. Wages in these trades, except those of children sold from the workhouse[4] to the manufacturer, were as a rule high; those of such skilled manual labour as could not be done without were very high; what a dyer, a mechanic, a velvet-cutter, a hand-mule spinner, used to receive now sounds fabulous. At the same time the trades superseded by machinery were slowly starved to death. But newly-invented machinery by-and-by superseded these well-paid workmen; machinery was invented which made machinery, and that at such a rate that the supply of machine-made goods not only equalled, but exceeded, the demand. When the general peace, in 1815,[5] re-established regularity of trade, the decennial fluctuations between prosperity, over-production, and commercial panic began. Whatever advantages the workpeople had preserved from old

prosperous times, and perhaps even increased during the period of frantic over-production, were now taken from them during the period of bad trade and panic; and soon the manufacturing population of England submitted to the general law that the wages of unorganised labour constantly tend towards the absolute minimum.

But in the meantime the Trades Unions, legalised in 1824 had also stepped in, and high time it was. Capitalists are always organised. They need in most cases no formal union, no rules, officers, etc. Their small number, as compared with that of the workmen, the fact of their forming a separate class, their constant social and commercial intercourse stand them in lieu of that; it is only later on, when a branch of manufactures has taken possession of a district, such as the cotton trade has of Lancashire, that a formal capitalists' Trades Union becomes necessary. On the other hand, the workpeople from the very beginning cannot do without a strong organisation, well-defined by rules and delegating its authority to officers and committees. The Act of 1824 rendered these organisations legal. From that day Labour became a power in England. The formerly helpless mass, divided against itself, was no longer so. To the strength given by union and common action soon was added the force of a well-filled exchequer -- "resistance money", as our French brethren expressively call it. The entire position of things now changed. For the capitalist it became a risky thing to indulge in a reduction of wages or an increase of working hours.

Hence the violent outbursts of the capitalist class of those times against Trades Unions. That class had always considered its long-established practice of grinding down the working class as a vested right and lawful privilege. That was now to be put a stop to. No wonder they cried out lustily and held themselves at least as much injured in their rights and property as Irish landlords do nowadays.[6]

Sixty years' experience of struggle have brought them round to some extent. Trades Unions have now become acknowledged institutions, and their action as one of the regulators of wages is recognised quite as much as the action of the Factories and Workshops Acts as regulators of the hours of work. Nay, the cotton masters in Lancashire have lately even taken a leaf

out of the workpeople's book, and now know how to organise a strike, when it suits them, as well or better than any Trades Union.

Thus it is through the action of Trades Unions that the law of wages is enforced as against the employers, and that the workpeople of any well-organised trade are enabled to obtain, at least approximately, the full value of the working power which they hire to their employer; and that, with the help of State laws, the hours of labour are made at least not to exceed too much that maximum length beyond which the working power is prematurely exhausted. This, however, is the utmost Trades Unions, as at present organised, can hope to obtain, and that by constant struggle only, by an immense waste of strength and money; and then the fluctuations of trade, once every ten years at least, break down for the moment what has been conquered, and the fight has to be fought over again. It is a vicious circle from which there is no issue. The working class remains what it was, and what our Chartist forefathers were not afraid to call it, a class of wages slaves. Is this to be the final result of all this labour, self-sacrifice, and suffering? Is this to remain for ever the highest aim of British workmen? Or is the working class of this country at last to attempt breaking through this vicious circle, and to find an issue out of it in a movement for the ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM ALTOGETHER?

Next week we shall examine the part played by Trades Unions as organisers of the working class.

Part II

No. 5, June 4, 1881

So far we have considered the functions of Trades Unions as far only as they contribute to the regulation of the rate of wages and ensure to the labourer, in his struggle against capital, at least some means of resistance. But that aspect does not exhaust our subject.

The struggle of the labourer against capital, we said. That struggle does exist, whatever the apologists of capital may say to the contrary. It will exist so long as a reduction of wages remains the safest and readiest means of raising profits; nay, so long as the wages system itself shall exist. The very existence of Trades Unions is proof sufficient of the fact; if they are not

made to fight against the encroachments of capital what are they made for? There is no use in mincing matters. No milksop words can hide the ugly fact that present society is mainly divided into two great antagonistic classes -- into capitalists, the owners of all the means for the employment of labour, on one side; and working men, the owners of nothing but their own working power, on the other. The produce of the labour of the latter class has to be divided between both classes, and it is this division about which the struggle is constantly going on. Each class tries to get as large a share as possible; and it is the most curious aspect of this struggle that the working class, while fighting to obtain a share only of its own produce, is often enough accused of actually robbing the capitalist!

But a struggle between two great classes of society necessarily becomes a political struggle. So did the long battle between the middle or capitalist class and the landed aristocracy; so also does the fight between the working class and these same capitalists. In every struggle of class against class, the next end fought for is political power; the ruling class defends its political supremacy, that is to say its safe majority in the Legislature; the inferior class fights for, first a share, then the whole of that power, in order to become enabled to change existing laws in conformity with their own interests and requirements. Thus the working class of Great Britain for years fought ardently and even violently for the People's Charter,[7] which was to give it that political power; it was defeated, but the struggle had made such an impression upon the victorious middle class that this class, since then, was only too glad to buy a prolonged armistice at the price of ever-repeated concessions to the working people.

Now, in a political struggle of class against class, organisation is the most important weapon. And in the same measure as the merely political or Chartist Organisation fell to pieces, in the same measure the Trades Unions Organisation grew stronger and stronger, until at present it has reached a degree of strength unequalled by any working-class organisation abroad. A few large Trades Unions, comprising between one and two millions o£ working men, and backed by the smaller or local Unions, represent a power which has to be taken into account by any Government of the ruling class, be it Whig or Tory.

According to the traditions of their origin and development in this country, these powerful organisations have hitherto limited themselves almost strictly to their function of sharing in the regulation of wages and working hours, and of enforcing the repeal of laws openly hostile to the workmen. As stated before. they have done so with quite as much effect as they had a right to expect. But they have attained more than that -- the ruling class, which knows their strength better than they themselves do, has volunteered to them concessions beyond that. Disraeli's Household Suffrage[8] gave the vote to at least the greater portion of the organised working class. Would he have proposed it unless he supposed that these new voters would show a will of their own -- would cease to be led by middle-class Liberal politicians? Would he have been able to carry it if the working people, in the management of their colossal Trade Societies, had not proved themselves fit for administrative and political work?

That very measure opened out a new prospect to the working class. It gave them the majority in London and in all manufacturing towns, and thus enabled them to enter into the struggle against capital with new weapons, by sending men of their own class to Parliament. And here, we are sorry to say, the Trades Unions forgot their duty as the advanced guard of the working class. The new weapon has been in their hands for more than ten years, but they scarcely ever unsheathed it. They ought not to forget that they cannot continue to hold the position they now occupy unless they really march in the van of the working class. It is not in the nature of things that the working class of England should possess the power of sending forty or fifty working men to Parliament and yet be satisfied for ever to be represented by capitalists or their clerks, such as lawyers, editors, etc.

More than this, there are plenty of symptoms that the working class of this country is awakening to the consciousness that it has for some time been moving in the wrong groove [9]; that the present movements for higher wages and shorter hours exclusively, keep it in a vicious circle out of which there is no issue; that it is not the lowness of wages which forms the fundamental evil, but the wages system itself. This knowledge once generally spread amongst the working class, the position of Trades Unions must change considerably. They will no longer enjoy the privilege of being the only organisations of the working class. At the side of, or above, the

Unions of special trades there must spring up a general Union, a political organisation of the working class as a whole.

Thus there are two points which the organised Trades would do well to consider, firstly, that the time is rapidly approaching when the working class of this country will claim, with a voice not to be mistaken, its full share of representation in Parliament. Secondly, that the time also is rapidly approaching when the working class will have understood that the struggle for high wages and short hours, and the whole action of Trades Unions as now carried on, is not an end in itself, but a means, a very necessary and effective means' but only one of several means towards a higher end: the abolition of the wages system altogether.

For the full representation of labour in Parliament, as well as for the preparation of the abolition of the wages system organisations will become necessary, not of separate Trades, but of the working class as a body. And the sooner this is done the better. There is no power in the world which could for a day resist the British working class organised as a body.

The French Commercial Treaty

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On Thursday, June 9, in the House of Commons, Mr. Monk (Gloucester) proposed a resolution to the effect that

> "no commercial treaty with France will be satisfactory which does not tend to the development of the commercial relations of the two countries by a further reduction of duties".

A debate of some length ensued. [10] Sir C. Dilke, on behalf of the Government, offered the mild resistance required by diplomatic etiquette. Mr. A. J. Balfour (Tamworth)[11] would compel foreign nations, by retaliatory duties, to adopt lower tariffs. Mr. Slagg (Manchester) would leave the French to find out the value of our trade to them and of theirs to us, even without any treaty. Mr. Illingworth (Bradford) despaired of reaching free-trade through commercial treaties. Mr. Mac Iver (Birkenhead) declared the present system of free-trade to be only an imposture, inasmuch as it was made up of free imports and restricted exports. The resolution was carried by 77 to 49, a defeat which will hurt neither Mr. Gladstone's feelings nor his position.

This debate is a fair specimen of a long series of ever-recurring complaints about the stubbornness with which the stupid foreigner, and even the quite as stupid colonial subject, refuse to recognise the universal blessings of free-trade and its capability of remedying all economic evils. Never has a prophecy broken down so completely as that of the Manchester School[12] -- free-trade, once established in England, would shower such blessings over the country that all other nations must follow the example and throw their ports open to English manufactures. The coaxing voice of the free-

trade apostles remained the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Not only did the Continent and America, on the whole, increase their protective duties[13]; even the British Colonies, as soon as they had become endowed with self-government,[14] followed suit; and no sooner had India been placed under the Crown than a 5 per cent duty on cotton goods was introduced even there,[15] acting as an incentive to native manufactures.

Why this should be so is an utter mystery to the Manchester; School. Yet it is plain enough.

About the middle of last century England was the principal seat of the cotton manufacture, and therefore the natural place where, with a rapidly rising demand for cotton goods, the machinery was invented which, with the help of the steam engine, revolutionised first the cotton trade, and successively the other textile manufactures. The large and easily accessible coalfields of Great Britain, thanks to steam, became now the basis of the country's prosperity. The extensive deposits of iron ore in close proximity to the coal facilitated the development of the iron trade, which had received a new stimulus by the demand for engines and machinery. Then, in the midst of this revolution of the whole manufacturing system, came the anti-Jacobin and Napoleonic wars[16] which for some twenty-five years drove the ships of almost ail competing nations from the sea, and thus gave to English manufactured goods the practical monopoly of all Transatlantic and some European markets. When in 1815 peace was restored, England stood there with her steam manufactures ready to supply the world, while steam engines were as yet scarcely known in other countries. In manufacturing industry, England was an immense distance in advance of them.

But the restoration of peace soon induced other nations to follow in the track of England. Sheltered by the Chinese Wall of her prohibitive tariff, [17] France introduced production by steam. So also did Germany, although her tariff was at that time far more liberal[18] than any other, that of England not excepted. So did other countries. At the same time the British landed aristocracy, to raise their rents, introduced the Corn Laws,[19] thereby raising the price of bread and with it the money rate of wages. Nevertheless the progress of English manufactures went on at a stupendous rate. By 1830 she had laid herself out to become "the workshop of the

world". To make her the workshop of the world in reality was the task undertaken by the Anti-Corn Law League. [20]

There was no secret made, in those times, of what was aimed at by the repeal of the Corn Laws. To reduce the price of bread, and thereby the money rate of wages, would enable British manufacturers to defy all and every competition with which wicked or ignorant foreigners threatened them. What was more natural than that England, with her great advance in machinery, with her immense merchant navy, her coal and iron, should supply all the world with manufactured articles, and that in return the outer world should supply her with agricultural produce, corn, wine, flax, cotton, coffee, tea, etc.? It was a decree of Providence that it should be so, it was sheer rebellion against God's ordinance to set your face against it. At most France might be allowed to supply England and the rest of the world with such articles of taste and fashion as could not be made by machinery, and were altogether beneath the notice of an enlightened millowner. Then, and then alone, would there be peace on earth and goodwill towards men; then all nations would be bound together by the endearing ties of commerce and mutual profit; then the reign of peace and plenty would be for ever established, and to the working class, to their "hands", they said: "There's a good time coming, boys -- wait a little longer." Of course the "hands" are waiting still.

But while the "hands" waited the wicked and ignorant foreigners did not. They did not see the beauty of a system by which the momentary industrial advantages possessed by England should be turned into means to secure to her the monopoly of manufactures all the world over and for ever, and to reduce all other nations to mere agricultural dependencies of England -- in other words, to the very enviable condition of Ireland. They knew that no nation can keep up with others in civilisation if deprived of manufactures, and thereby brought down to be a mere agglomeration of clodhoppers. And therefore, subordinating private commercial profit to national exigency, they protected their nascent manufactures by high tariffs, which seemed to them the only means to protect themselves from being brought down to the economical condition enjoyed by Ireland.

We do not mean to say that this was the right thing to do in every case. On the contrary, France would reap immense advantages from a considerable approach towards Free Trade. German manufactures, such as they are, have become what they are under Free Trade, and Bismarck's new Protection tariff [21] will do harm to nobody but the German manufacturers them" selves. But there is one country where a short period of Protection is not only justifiable but a matter of absolute necessity -- America.

America is at that point of her development where the introduction of manufactures has become a national necessity, This is best proved by the fact that in the invention of labour-saving machinery it is no longer England which leads, but America. American inventions every day supersede English patents and English machinery. American machines are brought over to England; and this in almost all branches of manufactures Then America possesses a population the most energetic in the world, coalfields against which those of England appear almost as a vanishing quantity, iron and all other metals in plenty. And is it to be supposed that such a country will expose its young and rising manufactures to a long, protracted, competitive struggle with the old-established industry of England, when, by a short term of some twenty years of protection, she can place them at once on a level with any competitor? But, says the Manchester School, America is but robbing herself by her protective system. So is a man robbing himself who pays extra for the express train instead of taking the old Parliamentary train -- fifty miles an hour instead of twelve.

There is no mistake about it, the present generation will see American cotton goods compete with English ones in India and China, and gradually gain ground in those two leading markets; American machinery and hardware compete with the English makes in all parts of the world, England included; and the same implacable necessity which removed Flemish manufactures to Holland, Dutch ones to England, will ere long remove the centre of the world's industry from this country to the United States. And in the restricted field which will then remain to England she will find formidable competitors in several Continental nations.

The fact cannot be longer shirked that England's industrial monopoly is fast on the wane. If the "enlightened" middle class think it their interest to hush

it up, let the working class boldly look it in the face, for it interests them more than even their "betters". These may for a long time yet remain the bankers and money-lenders of the world, as the Venetians and the Dutch in their decay have done before them. But what is to become of the "hands" when England's immense export trade begins to shrink down every year instead of expanding? If the removal of the iron shipbuilding trade from the Thames to the Clyde was sufficient to reduce the whole East-end of London to chronic pauperism, what will the virtual removal of all the staple trades of England across the Atlantic do for England?

It will do one great thing: it will break the last link which still binds the English working class to the English middle class. This link was their common working of a national monopoly. That monopoly once destroyed, the British working class will be compelled to take in hand its own interests, its own salvation, and to make an end of the wages system. Let us hope it will not wait until then.

Two Model Town Councils

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We have promised our readers to keep them informed of the working men's movements abroad as well as at home. We have now and then been enabled to give some news from America, and today we are in a position to communicate some facts from France -- facts of such importance that they well deserve being discussed in our leading columns.

In France they do not know the numerous systems of public voting which are still in use in this country. Instead of having one kind of suffrage and mode of voting for Parliamentary elections, another for municipal, a third for vestry elections and so forth, plain Universal Suffrage and vote by ballot are the rule everywhere. When the Socialist Working Men's Party was formed in France, [22] it was resolved to nominate working men's candidates not only for Parliament, but also for all municipal elections; and, indeed, at the last renewal of Town Councils for France, which took place on January 9 last, the young party was victorious in a great number of manufacturing towns and rural, especially mining, communes. They not only carried individual candidates, they managed in some places to obtain the majority in the councils, and one council, at least, as we shall see, was composed of none but working men. [23]

Shortly before the establishment of the *Labour Standard*, there was a strike of factory operatives in the town of Roubaix, close on the Belgian frontier. The Government at once sent troops to occupy the town, and thereby, under the pretext of maintaining order (which was never menaced), tried to provoke the people on strike to such acts as might serve as a pretext for the interference of the troops. But the people remained quiet, and one of the principal causes which made them resist all provocations was the action of

the Town Council. This was composed, in its majority, of working men. The subject of the strike was brought before it, and amply discussed. The result was that the Council not only declared the men on strike to be in the right, but also actually *voted the sum of 50,000 francs, or £2,000, in support of the strikers* That subsidy could not be paid, as according to French law the prefect of the department has the right to annul any resolutions of Town Councils which he may consider as exceeding their powers. But nevertheless the strong moral support thus given to the strike by the official representation of the township was of the greatest value to the workmen.

On June 8 the Mining Company of Commentry, in the centre of France (Department Allier), discharged 152 men who refused to submit to new and more unfavourable terms. This being part of a system employed for some time for the gradual introduction of worse terms of work, the whole of the miners, about 1,600, struck. The Government at once sent the usual troops to overawe or provoke the strikers. But the Town Council here, too, at once took up the cause of the men. In their meeting of June 12 (a Sunday to boot) they passed resolutions to the following effect: --

> 1. Whereas it is the duty of society to ensure the existence of those who, by their work, permit the existence of all; and whereas if the State refuses to fulfil this duty the communes are bound to fulfil it, this Council resolves to take up a loan of 25,000 francs (£1000) with the consent of the highest rated inhabitants, which sum is to be devoted for the benefit of the miners whom the unjustifiable discharge of 152 of their body has compelled to strike work.

Carried unanimously, against the veto of the Mayor alone.

> 2. Whereas the State, in selling the valuable national property of the mines of Commentry to a joint-stock company, has thereby handed over the workmen there employed to the tender mercies of the said company; and whereas, consequently, the State is bound to see that the oppression exercised by the company upon the miners is not carried to a degree threatening their very existence; whereas however, the State, by placing troops at the disposal of the company during the present strike, has not even preserved its neutrality, but taken sides with the company,

> This Council, in the name of the working-class interests which it is its duty to protect, calls upon the sub-prefect of the district.
>
> 1. To recall at once the troops whose presence, entirely uncalled for, is a mere provocation; and
>
> 2. To intervene with the manager of the company and induce him to revoke the measure which has caused the strike.

Carried unanimously.

In a third resolution, also carried unanimously, the Council, fearing that the poverty of the commune will frustrate the loan voted above, opens a public subscription in aid of the strikers, and appeals to all the other municipal councils of France to send subsidies for the same object.

Here, then, we have a striking proof of the presence of working men, not only in Parliament, but also in municipal and all other local bodies. How differently would many a strike in England terminate if the men had the Town Council of the locality to back them! The English Town Councils and Local Boards, elected to a great extent by working men, consist at present almost exclusively of employers, their direct and indirect agents (lawyers, etc.), and at the best, of shopkeepers. No sooner does a strike or lock-out occur than all the moral and material power of the local authorities is employed in favour of the masters and against the men; even the police, paid out of the pockets of the men, are employed exactly as in France the troops are used, to provoke them into illegal acts and hunt them down. The Poor Law authorities in most cases refuse relief to men who, in their opinion, might work if they liked. And naturally so. In the eyes of this class of men, whom the working people suffer to form the local authorities, a strike is an open rebellion against social order, an outrage against the sacred rights of property. And therefore, in every strike or lock-out all the enormous moral and physical weight of the local authorities is placed in the masters' scale so long as the working class consent to elect masters and masters' representatives to local elective bodies!

We hope that the action of the two French Town Councils will open the eyes of many. Shall it be for ever said, and of the English working men too, that "they manage these things better in France"? The English working

class, with its old and powerful organisation, its immemorial political liberties, its long experience of political action, has immense advantages over those of any continental country. Yet the Germans could carry twelve working class representatives for Parliament,[24] and they as well as the French have the majority in numerous Town Councils. True, the suffrage in England is restricted; but even now the working class has a majority in all large towns and manufacturing districts. They have only to will it, and that potential majority becomes at once an effective one, a power in the State, a power in all localities where working people are concentrated. And if you once have working men in Parliament, in the Town Councils and Local Boards of Guardians,[25] etc., how long will it be ere you will have also working men magistrates, capable of putting a spoke in the wheel of those Dogberries who now so often ride roughshod over the people?

American Food and the Land Question

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Since autumn 1837 we have been quite accustomed to see money panics and commercial crises imported from New York into England. At least one out of every two of the decennial revulsions of industry broke out in America. But that America should also upset the time-honoured relations of British agriculture, revolutionise the immemorial feudal relations between landlord and tenant at will, smash up English rents, and lay waste English farms, was a sight reserved for the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

And yet so it is. The virgin soil of the Western prairie – which is now coming into cultivation, not by piecemeal but in thousands of square miles – is now beginning to rule the price of wheat, and, consequently, the rent of wheat land. And no old soil can compete with it. It is a wonderful land, level, or slightly undulating, undisturbed by violent upheavals, in exactly the same condition in which it was slowly deposited at the bottom of a Tertiary ocean; free from stones, rocks, trees; fit for immediate cultivation without any preparatory labour. No clearing or draining is required; you pass the plough over it and it is fit to receive the seed, and will bear twenty to thirty crops of wheat in succession and without manuring. It is a soil fit for agriculture on the grandest scale, and on the grandest scale it is worked. The British agriculturist used to pride himself of his large farms as opposed to the small farms of Continental peasant proprietors; but what are the largest farms in the United Kingdom compared to the farms of the American prairie, farms of 40,000 acres and more, worked by regular armies of men, horses, and implements, drilled, commanded, and organised like soldiers?

This American revolution in farming, together with the revolutionised means of transport as invented by the Americans, sends over to Europe wheat at such low prices that no European farmer can compete with it – at least not while he is expected to pay rent. Look at the year 1879, when this was first felt. The crop was bad in all Western Europe; it was a failure in England. Yet, thanks to American corn, prices remained almost stationary. For the first time the British farmer had a bad crop and low prices of wheat at the same time. Then the farmers began to stir, the landlords felt alarmed. Next year, with a better crop, prices went lower still. The price of corn is now determined by the cost of production in America, plus the cost of transport. And this will be the case more and more every year, in proportion as new prairie-land is put under the plough. The agricultural armies required for that operation – we find them ourselves in Europe by sending over emigrants.

Now, formerly there was this consolation for the farmer and the landlord, that if corn did not pay meat would. The plough-land was turned into grass-land, and everything was pleasant again. But now that resource is cut off too. American meat and American cattle are sent over in ever-increasing quantities. And not only that. There are at least two great cattle-producing countries which are on the alert for methods permitting them to send over to Europe, and especially to England, their immense excess of meat, now wasted. With the present state of science and the rapid progress made in its application, we may be sure that in a very few, years – at the very latest – Australian and South American beet and mutton will be brought over in a perfect state of preservation and in enormous quantities. What is then to become of the prosperity of the British farmer, of the long rent-roll of the British landlord? It is all very well to grow gooseberries, strawberries, and so forth – that market is well enough supplied as it is. No doubt the British workman could consume a deal more of these delicacies – but then first raise his wages.

It is scarcely needful to say that the effect of this new American agricultural competition is felt on the Continent too. The small peasant proprietor mostly mortgaged over head and ears and paying interest and law expenses where the English and Irish farmer pays rent, he feels it quite as much. It is a peculiar effect of this American competition that it renders not only large

landed property, but also small landed property useless, by rendering both unprofitable.

It may be said that this system of land exhaustion, as now practiced in the Far West, cannot go on for ever, and things must come right again. Of course, it cannot last for ever; but there is plenty of unexhausted land yet to carry on the process for another century. Moreover, there are other countries offering similar advantages. There is the whole South Russian steppe, where, indeed, commercial men have bought land and done the same thing. There are the vast pampas of the Argentine Republic, there are others still; all lands equally fit for this modern system of giant farming and cheap production. So that before this thing is exhausted it will have lived long enough to kill all the landlords of Europe, great and small, at least twice over.

Well, and the upshot of all this? The upshot will and must be that it will force upon us the nationalisation of the land and its cultivation by co-operative societies under national control. Then, and then alone, it will again pay both the cultivators and the nation to work it, whatever the price of American or any other corn and meat may be. And if the landlords in the meantime, as they seem to be half inclined to do, actually do go to America, we wish them a pleasant journey.

The Wages Theory of the Anti-Corn Law League

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In another column we publish a letter from Mr. J. Noble finding fault with some of our remarks in a leading article of the' *Labour Standard* of June 18. Although we cannot, of course, make our leading columns the vehicle of polemics on the subject *of* historical facts or economic theories, we will yet, for once, reply to a man who, though in an official party position, is evidently sincere.

To our assertion that what was aimed at by the repeal of the Corn Laws was to "reduce the price of bread and thereby the money rate of wages", Mr. Noble replies that this was a "Protectionist fallacy" persistently combated by the League, and gives some quotations from Richard Cobden's speeches and an address of the Council of the League to prove it. [26]

The writer of the article in question was living at the time in Manchester -- a manufacturer amongst manufacturers.[27] He is, of course, perfectly well aware of what the official doctrine of the League was. To reduce it to its shortest and most generally recognised expression (for there are many varieties) it ran thus: -- The repeal of the duty on corn will increase our trade with foreign countries, will directly increase our imports, in exchange for which foreign customers will buy our manufactures, thus increasing the demand for our manufactured goods; thus the demand for the labour of our industrial working population will increase, and therefore wages must rise. And by dint of repeating this theory day after day and year after year the official representatives of the League, shallow economists as they were, could at last come out with the astounding assertion that wages rose and fell in inverse ratio, not with profits, but with the price of food; that dear bread

meant low wages and cheap bread high wages. Thus, the decennial revulsions of trade which have existed before and after the repeal of the Corn duties were, by the mouthpieces of the League, declared to be the simple effects of the Corn Laws, bound to disappear as soon as those hateful laws were removed; that the Corn Laws were the only great obstacle standing between the British manufacturer and the poor foreigners longing for that manufacturer's produce, unclad and shivering for want of British cloth. And thus Cobden could actually advance, in the passage quoted by Mr. Noble, that the depression of trade and the fall in wages from 1839 to 1842 was the consequence of the very high price of corn during these years, when it was nothing else but one of the regular phases of depression of trade, recurring with the greatest regularity, up to now, every ten years; a phase certainly prolonged and aggravated by bad crops and the stupid interference of greedy landlord legislation.

Well, this was the official theory of Cobden, who with all his cleverness as an agitator was a poor business man and a shallow economist; he no doubt believed it as faithfully as Mr. Noble believes it to this day. But the bulk of the League was formed of practical men of business, more attentive to business and generally more successful in it than Cobden. And with these matters were quite different. Of course, before strangers and in public meetings, especially before their "hands", the official theory was generally considered "the thing". But business men, when intent upon business, do not generally speak their mind to their customers, and if Mr. Noble should be of a different opinion, he had better keep off the Manchester Exchange. A very little pressing as to what was meant by the way in which wages must rise in consequence of free trade in corn, was sufficient to bring it out that this rise was supposed to affect wages as expressed in commodities, and that it might be quite possible that the money rate of wages would not rise -- but was not that substantially a rise of wages? And when you pressed the subject further it usually came out that the money rate of wages might even fall while the comforts supplied for this reduced sum of money to the working man would still be superior to what he enjoyed at the time. And if you asked a few more close questions as to the way, how the expected immense extension of trade was to be brought about, you would very soon hear that it was this last contingency upon which they mainly relied: a

reduction in the money rate of wages combined with a fall in the price of bread, etc., more than compensating for this fall. Moreover, there were plenty to be met who did not even try to disguise their opinion that cheap bread was wanted simply to bring down the money rate of wages, and thus knock foreign competition on the head. And that this, in reality, was the end and aim of the bulk of the manufacturers and merchants forming the great body of the League, it was not so very difficult to make out for any one in the habit of dealing with commercial men, and therefore in the habit of not always taking their word for gospel. This is what we said and we repeat it. Of the official doctrine of the League we did not say a word. It was economically a "fallacy", and practically a mere cloak for interested purposes, though some of the leaders may have repeated it often enough to believe it finally themselves.

Very amusing is Mr. Noble's quotation of Cobden's words about the working classes "rubbing their hands with satisfaction" at the prospect of corn at 25s. a quarter. The working classes at that time did not disdain cheap bread; but they were so full of "satisfaction" at the proceedings of Cobden and Co. that for several years past they had made it impossible for the League in the whole of the North to hold a single really public meeting. The writer had the "satisfaction" of being present, in 1843, at the last attempt of the League to hold such a meeting in Salford Town Hall, and of seeing it very nearly broken up by the mere putting of an amendment in favour of the People's Charter.[28] Since then the rule at all League meetings was "admission by ticket", which was far from being accessible to everyone. From that moment "Chartist obstruction" ceased. The working masses had attained their end -- to prove that the League did not, as it pretended, represent them.

In conclusion, a few words about the wages theory of the League. The average price of a commodity is equal to its cost of production; the action of supply and demand consists in bringing it back to that standard around which it oscillates. If this be true of all commodities, it is true also of the commodity Labour (or more strictly speaking, Labour-force). Then the rate of wages is determined by the price of those commodities which enter into the habitual and necessary consumption of the labourer. In other words, all other things remaining unchanged, wages rise and fall with the price of the

necessaries of life. This is a law of political economy against which all the Perronet Thompsons, Cobdens, and Brights will ever be impotent. But all other things do not always remain unchanged, and therefore the action of this law in practice becomes modified by the concurrent action of other economical laws; it appears darkened, and sometimes to such a degree that you must take some trouble to trace it. This served as a pretext to the vulgarising and vulgar economists dating from the Anti-Corn Law League to pretend, first, that Labour, and then all other commodities, had no real determinable value, but only a fluctuating price, regulated by supply and demand more or less without regard to cost of production, and that to raise prices, and therefore wages, you had nothing to do but increase the demand. And thus you got rid of the unpleasant connection of the rate of wages with the price of food, and could boldly proclaim that in this crude, ridiculous doctrine that dear bread meant low wages and cheap bread high wages.

Perhaps Mr. Noble will ask whether wages are not generally as high, or even higher, with to-day's cheap bread than with the dear taxed bread before 1847? That would take a long inquiry to answer. But so much is certain: where a branch of industry has prospered and at the same time the workmen have been strongly organised for defence, their wages have generally not fallen, and sometimes perhaps risen. This merely proves that the people were underpaid before. Where a branch of industry has decayed, or where the workpeople have not been strongly organised in Trades Unions, these wages have invariably fallen, and often to starvation level. Go to the East-end of London and see for yourselves!

A Working Men's Party

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How often have we not been warned by friends and sympathisers, "Keep aloof from party politics!" And they were perfectly right, as far as present English party politics are concerned. A labour organ must be neither Whig nor Tory, neither Conservative nor Liberal, or even Radical, in the actual party sense of that word. Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals, all of them represent but the interests of the ruling classes, and various shades of opinion predominating amongst landlords, capitalists, and retail tradesmen. If they do represent the working class, they most decidedly misrepresent it. The working class has interests of its own, political as well as social. How it has stood up for what it considers its social interests, the history of the Trades Unions and the Short Time movement shows. But its political interests it leaves almost entirely in the hands of Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, men of the upper class, and for nearly a quarter of a century the working class of England has contented itself with forming, as it were, the tail of the "Great Liberal Party".

This is a political position unworthy of the best organised working class of Europe. In other countries the working men have been far more active. Germany has had for more than ten years a Working Men's party (the Social-Democrats), which owns ten seats in Parliament, and whose growth has frightened Bismarck into those infamous measures of repression of which we give an account in another column. Yet in spite of Bismarck, the Working Men's party progresses steadily; only last week it carried sixteen elections for the Mannheim Town Council and one for the Saxon Parliament. In Belgium, Holland, and Italy the example of the Germans has been imitated; in every one of these countries a Working Men's party exists, [29] though the voter's qualification there is too high to give them a chance

of sending members to the Legislature at present. In France the Working Men's party is just now in full process of organisation; it has obtained the majority in several Municipal Councils at the last elections, and will undoubtedly carry several seats at the general election for the Chamber next October. Even in America where the passage of the working class to that of farmer, trader, or capitalist, is still comparatively easy, the working men find it necessary to organise themselves as an independent party.[30] Everywhere the labourer struggles for political power, for direct representation of his class in the Legislature -- everywhere but in Great Britain.

And yet there never was a more widespread feeling in England than now, that the old parties are doomed, that the old shibboleths have become meaningless, that the old watchwords are exploded, that the old panaceas will not act any longer. Thinking men of all classes begin to see that a new line must be struck out, and that this line can only be in the direction of democracy. But in England, where the industrial and agricultural working class forms the immense majority of the people, democracy means the dominion of the working class, neither more nor less. Let, then, that working class prepare itself for the task in store for it, -- the ruling of this great empire; let them understand the responsibilities which inevitably will fall to their share. And the best way to do this is to use the power already in their hands, the actual majority they possess in every large town in the kingdom, to send to Parliament men of their own order. With the present household suffrage,[31] forty or fifty working men might easily be sent to St. Stephen's,[32] where such an infusion of entirely new blood is very much wanted indeed. With only that number of working men in Parliament, it would be impossible to let the Irish Land Bill[33] become, as is the case at present, more and more an Irish Land Bull, namely, an Irish Landlords' Compensation Act; it would be impossible to resist the demand for a redistribution of seats, for making bribery really punishable, for throwing election expenses, as is the case everywhere but in England, on the public purse, etc.

Moreover, in England a real democratic party is impossible unless it be a working men's party. Enlightened men of other classes (where they are not so plentiful as people would make us believe) might join that party and

even represent it in Parliament after having given pledges of their sincerity. Such is the case everywhere. In Germany, for instance, the working-men representatives are not in every case actual working men. But no democratic party in England, as well as elsewhere, will be effectively successful unless it has a distinct working-class character. Abandon that, and you have nothing but sects and shams.

And this is even truer in England than abroad. Of Radical shams there has been unfortunately enough since the break-up of the first working men's party which the world ever produced -- the Chartist party. Yes, but the Chartists were broken up and attained nothing. Did they, indeed? Of the six points of the People's Charter,[34] two, vote by ballot and no property qualification, are now the law of the land. A third, universal suffrage, is at least approximately carried in the shape of household suffrage; a fourth, equal electoral districts, is distinctly in sight, a promised reform of the present Government. So that the break-down of the Chartist movement has resulted in the realisation of fully one-half of the Chartist programme. And if the mere recollection of a past political organisation of the working class could effect these political reforms, and a series of social reforms besides, what will the actual presence of a working men's political party do, backed by forty or fifty representatives in Parliament? We live in a world where everybody is bound to take care of himself. Yet the English working class allows the landlord, capitalist, and retail trading classes, with their tail of lawyers, newspaper writers, etc., to take care of its interests. No wonder reforms in the interest of the workman come so slow and in such miserable dribbles. The workpeople of England have but to will, and they are the masters to carry every reform, social and political, which their situation requires. Then why not make that effort?

Bismarck and the German Working Men's Party

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Written: mid-July 1881;
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The English middle-class Press has lately been very silent about the atrocities committed by Bismarck and his understrappers against the members of the Social-Democratic Working Men's Party in Germany. The only exception, to some extent, has been the *Daily News.* Formerly, when despotic Governments abroad indulged in such vagaries at the expense of their subjects, the outcry was great indeed in the English dailies and weeklies. But here the oppressed parties are working men, and proud of the name, and the Press representatives of "Society," of the "Upper Ten," suppress the facts and almost seem, by the obstinacy of their silence, to approve of them. What business, indeed, have working men with politics? Leave that to their "betters!" And then there is this other reason for the silence of the English Press: It is very hard to attack Bismarck's Coercion Act[35] and the way he carries it out, and in the same breath to defend Mr. Forster's coercion proceedings in Ireland.[36] This is a very sore point, and must not be touched. The middle-class Press can scarcely be expected to point out itself how much the moral position of England in Europe and America has been lowered by the present Government's action in Ireland.

At every general election the German Working Men's party turned up with rapidly-increasing numbers; at the last but one above 500,000; at the last one more than 600,000 votes fell to their candidates.[37] Berlin elected two, Elberfeld-Barmen, one Breslau, Dresden, one each; ten seats were conquered in the face of the coalition of the Government with the whole of the Liberal, Conservative, and Catholic parties, in the face of the outcry created by the two attempts at shooting the Emperor,[38] which all other

parties agreed to make the Working Men’s party responsible for. Then Bismarck succeeded in passing an Act by which Social-Democracy was outlawed. The Working Men’s newspapers more than fifty, were suppressed, their societies and clubs broken up, their funds seized, their meetings dissolved by the police, and, to crown all, it was enacted that whole towns and districts might be “proclaimed", just as in Ireland. But what even English Coercion Bills[39] have never ventured upon in Ireland Bismarck did in Germany. In every “proclaimed” district the police received the right to expel any man whom it might “reasonably suspect" of Socialistic propaganda. Berlin was, of course, at once proclaimed, and hundreds (with their families, thousands) of people were expelled. For the Prussian police always expel men with families; the young unmarried men are generally let alone; to them expulsion would be no great punishment, but to the heads of families it means, in most cases, a long career of misery if not absolute ruin. Then Hamburg elected a working man member of Parliament,[40] and was immediately proclaimed. The first batch of men expelled from Hamburg was about a hundred, with families amounting, besides, to more than three hundred. The Working Men’s party, within two days, found the means to provide for their travelling expenses and other immediate wants. Now Leipzig has also been proclaimed,[41] and without any other pretext but that otherwise the Government cannot break up the organisation of the party. The expulsions of the very first day number thirty-three, mostly married men with families. Three members of the German Parliament head the list; perhaps Mr. Dillon will send them a letter of congratulation, considering that they are not yet quite so badly off as himself.[42]

But this is not all. The Working Men’s party once being outlawed in due form, and deprived of all those political rights which other Germans are supposed to enjoy, the police can do with the individual members of that party just as they like. Under the pretext of searching for forbidden publications, their wives and daughters are subjected to the most indecent and brutal treatment. They themselves are arrested whenever it pleases the police, are remanded from week to week, and discharged only after having passed some months in prison. New offences, unknown to the criminal code, are invented by the police, and that code stretched beyond all

possibility. And often enough the police finds magistrates and judges corrupt or fanatical enough to aid and abet them; promotion is at this price! What this all comes to the following astounding figures will show. In the year from October, 1879, to October, 1880, there were in Prussia alone imprisoned for high treason, treason felony, insulting the Emperor, etc., not less than 1,108 persons; and for political libels, insulting Bismarck, or defiling the Government, etc., not less than 10,094 persons. Eleven thousand two hundred and two political prisoners, that beats even Mr. Forster's Irish exploits!

And what has Bismarck attained with all his coercion? Just as much as Mr. Forster in Ireland. The Social-Democratic party is in as blooming a condition, and possesses as firm an organisation, as the Irish Land League. [43] A few days ago there were elections for the Town Council of Mannheim. The working-class party nominated sixteen candidates, and carried them all by a majority of nearly three to one. Again, Bebel, member of the German Parliament for Dresden, stood for the representation of the Leipzig district in the Saxon Parliament. Bebel is himself a working man (a turner), and one of the best, if not the best speaker in Germany. To frustrate his being elected, the Government expelled all his committee. What was the result? That even with a limited suffrage, Bebel was carried by a strong majority. Thus, Bismarck's coercion avails him nothing; on the contrary, it exasperates the people. Those to whom all legal means of asserting themselves are cut off, will one fine morning take to illegal ones, and no one can blame them. How often have Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster proclaimed that doctrine? And how do they act now in Ireland?

Cotton and Iron

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Cotton and iron are the two most important raw materials of our time. Whichever nation is the leading one in the manufacture of cotton and iron articles, that nation heads the list of manufacturing nations generally. And because and as long as this is the case with England, therefore and so long will England be the first manufacturing nation of the world.

It might, then, be expected that the workers in cotton and iron should be remarkably well off in England; that, as England commands in the market, trade in these articles should be always good, and that at least in these two branches of industry the millennium of plenty, promised at the time of the Free Trade agitation,[44] should be realised. Alas! we all know that this is far from being the case, and that here, as in other trades, if the condition of the workpeople has not become worse, and in some instances even better, it is due exclusively to their own efforts -- to strong organisation and hard-fought strikes. We know that after a few short years of prosperity about and after 1874 there was a complete collapse of the cotton and iron trades[45]; factories were closed, furnaces blown out, and where production was continued short time was the rule. Such periods of collapse had been known before; they recur, on an average, once in every ten years; they last their time, to be relieved by a new period of prosperity, and so on.

But what distinguishes the present period of depression especially in cotton and iron is this, that it has now for some years outlasted its usual duration. There have been several attempts at a revival, several spurts; but in vain. If the epoch of actual collapse has been overcome, trade remains in a languid state, and the markets continue incapable to absorb the whole production.

The cause of this is that with our present system of using machinery to produce not only manufactured goods, but machines themselves, production can be increased with incredible rapidity. There would be no difficulty, if manufacturers were so minded, during the single period of prosperity to increase the plant for spinning and weaving, bleaching and printing cotton, so as to be able to produce fifty per cent more goods, and to double the whole production of pig-iron and iron articles of every description. The actual increase has not come up to that. But still it has been out of all proportion to what it was in former periods of expansion, and the consequence is -- chronic over-production, chronic depression of trade. The masters can afford to look on, at least for a considerable time, but the workpeople have to suffer, for to them it means chronic misery and a constant prospect of the workhouse.[46]

This, then, is the outcome of the glorious system of unlimited competition, this the realisation of the millennium promised by the Cobdens, Brights, and Co.! This is what the workpeople have to go through if, as they have done for the last twenty-five years, they leave the management of the economical policy of the empire to their "natural leaders", to those "captains of industry" who, according to Thomas Carlyle, were called upon to command the industrial army of the country. Captains of industry indeed! Louis Napoleon's generals in 1870 were geniuses compared to them. Everyone of these pretended captains of industry fights against every other, acts entirely on his own account, increases his plant irrespective of what his neighbours do, and then at the end they all find, to their great surprise, that overtrading has been the result. They cannot unite to regulate production; they can unite for one purpose only: *to keep down the wages of their workpeople.* And it thus, by recklessly expanding the productive power of the country far beyond the power of absorption of the markets, they rob their workpeople of the comparative ease which a period of moderate prosperity would give them, and which they are entitled to after the long period of collapse, in order to bring up their incomes to the average standard. Will it not yet be understood that the manufacturers, as a class, have become incapable any longer to direct the great economical interests of the country, nay, even the process of production itself? And is it not an

absurdity -- though a fact -- that the greatest enemy to the working people of England is the ever-increasing productivity of their own hands?

But there is another fact to be taken into consideration. It is not the English manufacturers alone who increase their productive powers. The same takes place in other countries. Statistics will not allow us to compare separately the cotton and iron industries of the various leading countries. But, taking the whole of the textile, mining, and metal-working industries, we can draw up a comparative table with the materials furnished by the chief of the Prussian Statistical Bureau, Dr. Engel, in his book, "Des Zeitalter des Dampfs" (The Age of Steam, Berlin, 1881). According to his computation, there are employed in the above industries in the countries stated below steam-engines of the following total horse-power (one horse-power equal to a force lifting 75 kilogrammes to the height of one metre in one second), viz:

	Textile Industries	Mining and Metal Works
England, 1871	515,800	1,077,000 h.p.
Germany, 1875	128,125	456,436 h.p.
France	about 100,000	185,000 h.p.
United States	about 93,000	370,000 h.p

Thus we see that the total steam power employed by the three nations who are England's chief competitors amounts to three-fifths of the English steam power in the textile manufactures, and nearly equals it in mines and metal works. And as their manufactures progress at a far more rapid rate than those of this country, there can be scarcely a doubt that the combined produce of the former will soon surpass that of the latter.

Look, again, at this table, giving the steam horse-power employed in production, exclusive of locomotives and ships' engines: --

	Horsepower
Great Britain	About 2,000,000
United States	About 1,987,000
Germany	About 1,321,000
France	About 492,000

This still more clearly shows how little there is left of the monopoly of England in steam manufactures, and how little Free Trade has succeeded in securing England's industrial superiority. And let it not be said that this progress of foreign industry is artificial, is due to protection. The whole of the immense expansion of the German manufactures has been accomplished under a most liberal Free Trade *régime*, and if America, owing to an absurd system of internal excise[47] more than anything else, is compelled to have recourse to a protection more apparent than real, the repeal of these excise laws would be sufficient to allow her to compete in the open market.

This, then, is the position in which twenty-five years of an almost absolute reign of Manchester School [48] doctrines have left the country. We think these results are such as to call for a speedy abdication of the Manchester and Birmingham gentlemen, so as to give the working classes a turn for the next twenty-five years. Surely they could not manage worse.

Social Classes — Necessary and Superfluous

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The question has often been asked, in what degree are the different classes of society useful or even necessary? And the answer was naturally a different one for every different epoch of history considered. There was undoubtedly a time when a territorial aristocracy was an unavoidable and necessary element of society. That, however, is very, very long ago. Then there was a time when a capitalist middle class, a *bourgeoisie* as the French call it, arose with equally unavoidable necessity, struggled against the territorial aristocracy, broke its political power, and in its turn became economically and politically predominant. But, since classes arose, there never was a time when society could do without a working class. The name, the social status of that class has changed; the serf took the place of the slave, to be in his turn relieved by the free working man -- free from servitude but also free from any earthly possessions save his own labour force. But it is plain: whatever changes took place in the upper, non-producing ranks of society, society could not live without a class of producers. This class, then, is necessary under all circumstances -- though the time must come, when it will no longer be a class, when it will comprise all society.

Now, what necessity is there at present for the existence of each of these three classes?

The landed aristocracy is, to say the least, economically useless in England, while in Ireland and Scotland it has become a positive nuisance by its depopulating tendencies. To send the people across the ocean or into starvation, and to replace them by sheep or deer -- that is all the merit that the Irish and Scotch landlords can lay claim to. Let the competition of

American vegetable and animal food develop a little further, and the English landed aristocracy will do the same, at least those that can afford it having large town estates to fall back upon. Of the rest, American food competition will soon free us. And good riddance -- for their political action, both in the Lords and Commons, is a perfect national nuisance.

But how about the capitalist middle class, that enlightened and liberal class which founded the British colonial empire and which established British liberty? The class that reformed Parliament in 1831, [49] repealed the Corn Laws, [50] and reduced tax after tax? The class that created and still directs the giant manufactures, and the immense merchant navy, the ever spreading railway system of England? Surely that class must be at least as necessary as the working class which it directs and leads on from progress to progress.

Now the economical function of the capitalist middle class has been, indeed, to create the modern system of steam manufactures and steam communications, and to crush every economical and political obstacle which delayed or hindered the development of that system. No doubt, as long as the capitalist middle class performed this function it was, under the circumstances, a necessary class. But is it still so? Does it continue to fulfil its essential function as the manager and expander of social production for the benefit of society at large? Let us see.

To begin with the means of communication, we find the telegraphs in the hands of the Government. The railways and a large part of the sea-going steamships are owned, not by individual capitalists who manage their own business, but by joint-stock companies whose business is managed for them by *paid employees*, by servants whose position is to all intents and purposes that of superior, better paid workpeople. As to the directors and shareholders, they both know that the less the former interfere with the management, and the latter with the supervision, the better for the concern. A lax and mostly perfunctory supervision is, indeed, the only function left to the owners of the business. Thus we see that in reality the capitalist owners of these immense establishments have no other action left with regard to them, but to cash the half-yearly dividend warrants. The social function of the capitalist here has been transferred to servants paid by

wages; but he continues to pocket, in his dividends, the pay for those functions though he has ceased to perform them.

But another function is still left to the capitalist, whom the extent of the large undertakings in question has compelled to "retire" from their management. And this function is to speculate with his shares on the Stock Exchange. For want of something better to do, our "retired" or in reality superseded capitalists, gamble to their hearts' content in this temple of mammon. They go there with the deliberate intention to pocket money which they were pretending to earn; though they say, the origin of all property is labour and saving -- the origin perhaps, but certainly not the end. What hypocrisy to forcibly close petty gambling houses, when our capitalist society cannot do without an immense gambling house, where millions after millions are lost and won, for its very centre! Here, indeed, the existence of the "retired" shareholding capitalist becomes not only superfluous, but a perfect nuisance.

What is true for railways and steam shipping is becoming more and more true every day for all large manufacturing and trading establishments. "Floating" -- transforming large private concerns into limited companies -- has been the order of the day for the last ten years and more. From the large Manchester warehouses of the City to the ironworks and coalpits of Wales and the North and the factories of Lancashire, everything has been, or is being, floated. In all Oldham there is scarcely a cotton mill left in private hands; nay, even the retail tradesman is more and more superseded by "co-operative stores", the great majority of which are co-operative in name only -- but of that another time. Thus we see that by the very development of the system of capitalists' production the capitalist is superseded quite as much as the handloom-weaver. With this difference, though, that the handloom-weaver is doomed to slow starvation, and the superseded capitalist to slow death from overfeeding. In this they generally are both alike, that neither knows what to do with himself.

This, then, is the result: the economical development of our actual society tends more and more to concentrate, to socialise production into immense establishments which cannot any longer be managed by single capitalists. All the trash of "the eye of the master", and the wonders it does, turns into

sheer nonsense as soon as an undertaking reaches a certain size. Imagine "the eye of the master" of the London and North Western Railway! But what the master cannot do the workman, the wages-paid servants of the Company, *can* do, and do it successfully.

Thus the capitalist can no longer lay claim to his profits as "wages of supervision", as he supervises nothing. Let us remember that when the defenders of capital drum that hollow phrase into our ears.

But we have attempted to show, in our last week's issue, that the capitalist class had also become unable to manage the immense productive system of this country; that they on the one hand expanded production so as to periodically flood all the markets with produce, and on the other became more and more incapable of holding their own against foreign competition. Thus we find that, not only can we manage very well without the interference of the capitalist class in the great industries of the country, but that their interference is becoming more and more a nuisance.

Again we say to them, "Stand back! Give the working class the chance of a turn."

Engels to Marx
In Argenteuil

First Published: *Der Briefwechsel zwischen F. Engels and K. Marx*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart, 1913;
Translated: Peter and Betty Ross;
Transcribed: Ken Campbell;
HTML Markup: S. Ryan.

Bridlington Quay, Yorkshire
11 August 1881
1 Sea View

Dear Moor,

Your registered letter arrived yesterday evening but it, too, was open, this time *completely*. I enclose the envelope for you to see; it just wasn't stuck down.

I've this moment sent Tussy a cheque for £50, *registered*. If you want all or part of the remaining £20 (over and above the £30 you spoke about) sent to Paris, Tussy can arrange things more quickly than if payment was made by a cheque on London posted straight to you over there. She can easily get hold of a money order in Paris.

As regards the French elections I am entirely of your opinion. This Chamber won't continue sitting much longer anyway; once the *scrutin de liste* has come through, it will soon be dissolved again.

Yesterday morning I informed Mr Shipton that he wouldn't be getting any more leading articles from me. Kautsky had sent me an insipid thing on international factory legislation in a poor translation which I corrected and sent to Shipton.[51] Yesterday the proof and a letter arrived from Shipton who thought 2 of the passages ‘too strong’, having, what's more, misconstrued one of them; he asked me whether I would be prepared to tone them down. I did so and replied as follows:

What did he mean by submitting me the request for amendments on Tuesday – i.e. Wednesday up here – when my reply couldn't have reached London until Thursday, *after* the paper had come out.

If he thought *this* too strong, how much more so my own far stronger articles? Accordingly it would be better for us both if I gave up.

My time no longer permitted me to write a leading article regularly each week and I had already planned to inform him of this *after* the trade union congress (September).[52] Under the circumstances, however, it would no doubt improve his position vis-a-vis that congress were I to give up then and there.

He damned well ought to have shown me the Max Hirsch article *before* it was printed[53] I couldn't remain on the staff of a paper which lends itself to writing up these German Trade Unions, comparable only to those very worst English ones which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by the middle class. Apart from that I wished him the best of luck, etc. He will get my letter this morning.

I didn't tell him the most vital reason of all, namely, the total ineffectiveness of my articles so far as the rest of the paper and its readers are concerned. Any effect there may be takes the form of an invisible response on the part of unavowed apostles of free trade. The paper remains the same old omnium-gatherum of probable and improbable crotchets; in matters of politics it is [more or less], but if anything more Gladstonian. The response, which once showed signs of awakening in one or 2 nos., has died away again. The British working man just doesn't want to advance; he has got to be galvanised by events, the loss of industrial monopoly. *En attendant, habeat sibi*. ["In the meantime let him do as he likes."]

We have been here for a fortnight now, weather changeable, mostly cold and often threatening, but not very often actually wet. We shall stay at least another week, perhaps a fortnight, but certainly no longer.

Since I've been here I have been taking *The Daily News* instead of the *Standard*. It is even more stupid, if that's possible. Preaches antivivisectionism! Also as deficient in news as the *Standard*.

Hirsch may suffer for his pleasure jaunt. But he can't help being what he is.

Best wishes to everyone.

Your
F. E.

Engels to the Editor of The (Augsburg) *Allgemeine Zeitung*

First Published: the *Allgemeine Zeitung*;
Translated: from German by Jack Cohen;
Transcribed: zodiac@interlog.com;
HTML Markup: S. Ryan.

[Draft]
Bridlington Quay, 10 August 1881

Dear Mr Shipton,

I return the proof-sheet[54] altered as you wish. The first passage you seem to me to have misunderstood and the second alteration is merely formal. Anyhow, I do not see what good such alterations can do if asked for on Tuesday, received here on Wednesday, to arrive again in London on Thursday after the publication of the paper.

But there is another thing. If such very mild and innocent things as these begin to appear to you too strong, it must occur to me that this must be the case, in a far higher degree, with my own articles, which are generally far stronger. I must therefore take your remarks as a symptom, and conclude that it will be better for both of us if I discontinue sending you leading articles. It will be far better than going on until, upon some inevitable point, we come to an open rupture. Moreover my time will certainly not allow me to go on writing leaders regularly,[55] and on this ground alone I had come to some similar resolution to be executed, as I then thought, after the Trades Union Congress.[56] But the sooner I stop the better will be perhaps your position before that Congress.

There is another point: I consider you ought to have sent me before publication the copy or proof of the article on the Max Hirsch Trades Unions in Germany, as to the only man on your staff who knew anything of the matter and could make the necessary notes to it. Anyhow it will be impossible for me to remain on the staff of a paper which, without

consulting me, lends itself to writing up these Trades Unions, comparable only to those worst English ones which allow themselves to be led by men openly sold to, or at least paid by the middle class.

I need not add that otherwise I wish every success to *The Labour Standard* and if desired shall now and then contribute occasional information from the continent.

Yours truly

F. E.

Engels to George Shipton
In London

First Published: Marx and Engels, *Works*, First Russian Edition, Vol. XXVII, Moscow, 1935;
Transcribed: zodiac@interlog.com;
HTML Markup: S. Ryan.

[Draft]
Bridlington Quay, 15 August 1881

Dear Mr. Shipton,

I cannot make it out, how you could so strangely misunderstand Mr Kautsky's article.[57] To the first passage you objected because State interference went against the grain of 'many prominent men in the Unions'. Of course it does, because they are at heart Manchester School[58] men and so long as their opinions of such are taken into account, no working-class paper is possible. But my addition to the passage in question must have convinced you, that the State interference here alluded to, was such, and such only, as has been in England the Law of the Land for years: factories and workshops' acts,[59] and nothing further: things not objected to by even your 'prominent men'.

As to the second passage, Mr Kautsky says: an international regulation of the *war of competition is* as necessary as that of *open warfare;* we demand a *Geneva Convention* [60] for the workpeople of the world. The 'Geneva Convention' is an *agreement* entered into by the various *Governments* for the protection of wounded and ambulances in battle. What therefore Mr Kautsky demands, is a similar agreement between the various *Governments* for the protection of the workpeople not of one state only, but of all, against overwork especially of women and children. How out of that you can make an appeal to the *workpeople* of the world to *meet in a Convention of delegates at Geneva*, I am utterly at a loss to understand.[61]

You will own that the occurrence of such misunderstanding on your part cannot at all encourage me to alter my resolution.

As to the Hirsch article,[62] I do know Mr. Eccarius and only too well for a traitor to the cause and it will be utterly impossible for me to write for a paper which opens its columns to him.

Moreover, I do not see any progress. *The Labour Standard* remains the same vehicle of the most various and mutually contradictory views on all political and social questions which it was, perhaps unavoidably, on the first day of its existence, but which it ought no longer to be by this time, if there was an undercurrent among the British working class tending towards emancipation from the liberal Capitalists. Such undercurrent not being shown itself up to now, I must conclude it does not exist. If there were unmistakable signs of its existence, I might make an extra effort to assist it. But I do not think that one column a week drowned as I might say amongst the remaining multifarious opinions represented in *The Labour Standard* could do anything towards producing it.

And as I told you, I had resolved to stop writing after the Trade Unions Congress,[63] because of want of time; so whether I write a few articles more till then, would make no difference.

So waiting and hoping for better times, I remain
Faithfully yours,

F. E.

Engels to Johann Philipp Becker In Geneva

Written: February 10 1882
First Published: F. Engels, *Vergessene Briefe*, (*Briefe Friedrich Engels' and Johann Philipp Becker*), Berlin, 1920;
Translated: Peter and Betty Ross;
Transcribed: zodiac@interlog.com;
HTML Markup: Sally Ryan.

London, February 10 1882

Dear Old Man,

We had absolutely no idea that you were so seriously ill; all we knew was that you had been suffering from erysipelas and that's something that can be cleared up pretty easily. Had I had an inkling of how matters stood, I should have raised some money for you straight away, even though I myself was very short at the time and calls were being made on me from all sides. However, it's still not too late and I've therefore taken out a money order for you for four pounds = 100 frs 80 cts. of which you will doubtless have already been advised; because of an irregularity that cropped up here I wasn't able to write until today.

Between ourselves, one might almost count it a blessing that Marx should have been so preoccupied with his own illness during his wife's last days as to prevent him being unduly preoccupied with his loss, both when it was impending and when it actually happened. Even though we had known for 6 months or more how matters stood, the event itself still came as a terribly hard blow. Marx left yesterday for the South of France[64]; where he will go from there won't be definitely decided until he gets to Paris. Under no circumstances will he make for Italy first; at the start of his convalescence even the *possibility* of harassment by the police must be avoided.

We have thought about your proposal[65] and take the view that the time has not yet come, though it soon will, to put it into effect. Firstly, a new,

formally reorganised International in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy and Spain would only give rise to fresh persecution and ultimately leave one with the choice either of giving the thing up, or of carrying on in *secret*. The latter option would be a calamity on account of the inevitable passion for coups and conspiracies and the no less inevitable admittance of *mouchards* ["informers"]. Even in France the renewed application of the law banning the International,[66] a law which has not been repealed – far from it – is by no means impossible. – Secondly, in view of the current wrangles between the *Egalite* and the *Proletaire*, there's absolutely no counting on the French; we would have to declare ourselves for one party or the other and that, too, has its disadvantages. As individuals we are on the side of the *Egalite*, but shall take good care not to support them publicly *just now* after the succession of tactical blunders they have made, despite our express warnings. – Thirdly, the English are proving more intractable than ever at present. For 5 whole months I tried, through *The Labour Standard*, for which I wrote leading articles,[67] to pick up the threads of the old Chartist movement and disseminate our ideas so as to see whether this might evoke some response. Absolutely nothing, and since the editor, a well-meaning but feeble milksop, ended up by taking fright even at the Continental heresies I introduced into the paper, I called it a day.

Thus, we should have been left with an International confined, apart from Belgium, *exclusively to refugees*, for with the possible exception of Geneva and its environs we couldn't even count on the *Swiss – vide* the *Arbeiterstimme* and Buerkli. It would, however, hardly be worth the trouble to set up a mere refugee association. For the Dutch, Portuguese and Danes wouldn't really improve matters either and the less one has to do with Serbs and Romanians the better.

On the other hand the International does indeed still *exist*. In so far as it can be effective, there is liaison between the revolutionary workers of all countries. Every socialist journal is an international centre; from Geneva, Zurich, London, Paris, Brussels and Milan the threads run criss-cross in all directions and I honestly don't see how at this juncture the grouping of these small centres round a large main centre could give added strength to the movement – it would probably only lead to greater friction. But once the moment comes for us to concentrate our forces, it will, for that very reason,

be the work of a moment, nor will any lengthy preparation be called for. The names of the pioneers in one country are known in all the others and a manifesto signed and supported by them all would make a tremendous impact – something altogether different from the largely unknown names of the old General Council. But that is precisely why such a manifesto should be saved up for the moment when it can really strike home, i.e. when events in Europe provoke it. Otherwise you will detract from its future effect and will simply have put yourselves out for nothing. But such 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. For that reason we are firmly of the opinion that so splendid a weapon ought not to be dulled and blunted during the comparatively peaceful days on the very eve of the revolution.

I believe that if you think the matter over again you will come round to our view. Meanwhile we both wish you a good and speedy recovery and hope to hear before long that you are quite all right again.

Ever your old friend,

F. E.

Notes from MECW

1. On June 21, 1824, under mass pressure, Parliament repealed the ban on the trade unions by adopting "An Act to repeal the Laws relative to the Combination of Workmen, and for other Purposes therein mentioned" (the reference is to the repeal of "An Act to prevent unlawful Combinations of Workmen 12th July 1799"). However, in 1825 it passed a Bill on workers' combinations ("An Act to repeal the Laws relating to the Combination of Workmen, and to make other Provisions in lieu thereof 6th July 1825") which, while confirming the repeal of the ban on the trade unions, at the same time greatly restricted their activity. In particular, mere agitation for workers to join unions and take part in strikes was regarded as "compulsion" and "violence" and punished as a crime. p. 376
2. The Poor Law adopted in England in 1834 provided for only one form of relief for the able-bodied poor workhouses with a prison-like regime in which the workers were engaged in unproductive, monotonous and exhausting labour. The people called the workhouses "Bastilles for the poor".
3. The Court of Chancer, or Court of Equity -- One of the high courts of England which after the judicial reform of 1873 became a division of the High Court of Justice. The jurisdiction of the court, presided over by the Lord Chancellor, covered matters concerning inheritance, contractual obligations, joint-stock companies, etc. In a number of cases, the powers of this court overlapped those of other high courts. In counterbalance to the English common law accepted in other courts. The level proceedings at the Court of Chancery were conducted on the basis of the so-called law of equity.
4. The Poor Law adopted in England in 1834 provided for only one form of relief for the able-bodied poor workhouses with a prison-like regime in which the workers were engaged in unproductive, monotonous and exhausting labour. The people called the workhouses "Bastilles for the poor".
5. The reference is to the Vienna Congress of European monarchs and their ministers (September 1814 to June 9, 1815), which set up a system of all-European treaties after the wars of the European powers against Napoleonic France.
6. Engels is referring to the landlords' discontent with the Land Bill passed by the Gladstone government on August 22, 1881 for the purpose of distracting the Irish peasants from the revolutionary struggle. The Bill restricted the landlords' right to evict tenants from their plots if they paid the rent in time; the rent was fixed for 15 years in advance. Despite the fact that the 1881 Law gave the landlords a chance to sell their lands to the state at a profit, and that the fixed rent remained very high indeed, the English landowners still opposed the Law trying to preserve their unlimited rule in Ireland. Despite the Law, illegal evictions from the land continued, which provoked the resistance of the Irish tenants.

7. The People's Charter, which contained the demands of the Chartists, was published in the form of a Parliamentary Bill on May 8, 1838. It contained six points: universal suffrage (for men of 21 and over), annual Parliaments, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, abolition of the property qualification for MPs and payment of MPs. Petitions urging the adoption of the People's Charter were turned down by Parliament in 1839, 1842 and 1848.

8. The reference is to the second Reform Bill approved by Parliament on August 15, 1867 under pressure from the mass working-class movement and direct participation in it of the General Council of the First International. Under the new law, the property qualification for the voters was lowered, and their number doubled, suffrage was granted also to part of skilled workers. The bulk of the working population, however, was still deprived of the right to vote.

9. Starting from the late 1870s, the British working-class movement gradually freed itself from the influence of the Liberal Party.
The more advanced section of the workers took part in the activities of radical organisations and clubs, and campaigned for Irish self-determination. In 1879 the Midland Social-Democratic Association was set up in Birmingham, and in 1881 the Labour Emancipation League in London. Of great importance was the Democratic Federation founded in London in June 1881 and in 1884 transformed into the Social-Democratic Federation, which openly recognised Marxist principles.

10. The main question discussed in the House of Commons during the debate on concluding a commercial treaty with France was the new common customs tariff adopted by the French government on May 8, 1881, which provided for some restrictions on imports in the interest of French industry. Despite the fact that the talks about the new treaty were repeatedly resumed throughout the year, the parties concerned failed to find an acceptable solution.

11. A. J. Balfour was elected to Parliament from Hertford, in Southeast England.

12. The Manchester School -- a trend in economic thinking which reflected the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie. Its supporters, known as Free Traders, advocated removal of protective tariffs and non-intervention by the government in economic life. The centre of the Free Traders' agitation was Manchester, where the movement was headed by two textile manufacturers, Richard Cobden and John Bright. In the 1840s and 1850s, the Free Traders were a separate political group, which later formed the Left wing of the Liberal Party.

13. This refers to the protective tariff tabled in Congress by the Republican Justin Smith Morrill and passed by the Senate on March 2, 1861. It raised customs duties considerably. Later, during the American Civil War and in 1867 and 1869, the tariff was repeatedly revised, and by 1869 it had raised the average size of import duties to 47 per cent. In 1870 and 1872, these duties were lowered to 10 per cent, but this was cancelled in 1875.

14. The first British colony which was granted the status of a dominion (in 1867) was Canada.

15. After the abolition of the East India Company in August 1858 India was placed under direct administration of the British Crown. Seeking to protect the national textile industry, the authorities introduced a 5-per cent duq on the English cotton goods imported by India. However, as early as 1879 the Lancashire manufacturers managed to get these duties cancelled, and in 1882 the duties on other goods were also abolished. The British East India Company, was founded in 1600. It enjoyed a monopoly of trade with the East Indies and played a decisive part in the establishment of the British colonial empire.

16. The reference is to the coalition wars of European states against the French Republic (1792-1802) and against Napoleon (1805-15).

17. In 1814 and 1822 the French authorities introduced high import tariffs on iron, in 1819, on grain, cattle and wool, and in 1826, doubled the tariffs on pig iron and steel.

18. The economic development of Germany was most adversely affected by her political fragmentation, the absence of universal commercial laws, internal customs barriers, and the multiplicity of currencies and of the weight and measure systems. On May 26, 1818 Prussia alone passed a law on the abolition of internal duties and the introduction of a universal customs tariff.

19. The Corn Laws, the first of which were passed as early as the 15th century, imposed high import duties on agricultural products in order to maintain high prices for these products on the domestic market. The Corn Laws served the interests of the big landowners.

20. The Anti-Corn Law League was founded in 1838 by the Manchester manufacturers and Free Trade leaders Richard Cobden and John Bright. By demanding complete freedom of trade, the League fought for the abolition of the Corn Laws. In this way, it sought to weaken the economic and political position of the landed aristocracy and lower the cost of living, thus making possible a lowering of the workers' wages. After the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846), the League ceased to exist.

21. The campaign for the introduction of protectionist laws unfolded in Germany at the outset of the 1873 crisis. On February 15 1876, a number of protectionist unions formed a single organization, Centralverband Deutscher Industrieller zur Beförderung und Wahrung nationaler Arbeit. In 1876, during the agrarian crisis, big landowners, Prussian Junkers above all, joined the campaign. In October 1877, the industrial and agrarian advocates of the reform concluded an agreement. In March 1878, a non-partisan Freie wirtschaftliche Vereinigung was formed, which 204 deputies joined at the very first session of the Reichstag in September-October 1878. In December of that year, Bismarck submitted his preliminary draft of the customs reform to a specially appointed commission. On July 12 1879, the final draft was approved by the Reichstag, and came into force on July 15. The new customs tariff provided for a substantial increase in import taxes on iron, machinery and textiles, as well as on grain, cattle, lard, flax, timber, etc.

22. After the socialist congress held in Marseilles in October 1879 set up the French Workers' Party, a group of French socialists headed by Jules Guesde addressed Marx

and Engels, through Paul Lafargue, requesting them to help to draft an electoral programme for the French Workers' Party. Its preamble was formulated by Marx who dictated it to Guesde. Engels wrote to Eduard Bernstein about it on October 25 1881: "A masterpiece of cogent reasoning, calculated to explain things to the masses in a few words.". Marx and Engels also took part in drawing up the practical section of the programme.
The programme was first published in Le Précurseur, No. 25, June 19 1880; however, Malon adulterated some of its tenets and "introduced sundry changes for the worse", Engels wrote to Bernstein on October 20 1882. In 1880, the electoral programme was adopted as "the minimum programme" of the French Workers' Party at the Havre Congress. Its first separate edition appeared in Paris in 1883.

23. At the municipal elections of January 9, 1881, the French Workers' Party obtained 40,000 votes and won all seats in the Town Council of Commentry.

24. From September 9, 1879 to June 15, 1881, the deputies to the Reichstag from the Social-Democratic faction were: August Bebel, Wilhelm Bracke, Friedrich Wilhelm Fritzsche, Wilhelm Hasselmann, Max Kayser, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Klaus Peter Reinders, Julius Vahlteich and Philipp Wiemer. After the death of Bracke and Reinders, their seats were filled by Ignaz Auer and Wilhelm Hasenclever.
At the Wyden Congress held on August 22, 1880, Hasselmann was expelled from the party and, correspondingly, from the Parliamentary group. At the supplementary elections the deputy mandate from Hamburg was received by Georg Wilhelm Hartmann.

25. The Boards of Guardians -- local government bodies in England elected to administer the Poor Laws in parishes or districts.

26. In his letter John Noble quotes Richard Cobden's speeches in the House of Commons made on February 24, 1842 (see Hansard's Parliamentary Debates. Third series, Vol. 60, London, 1842, p. 1045) and February 27, 1846 (ibid., Vol. 84, London, 1846, pp. 285-86), as well as the address of the Anti-Corn Law League adopted by it at the Manchester meeting on August 20, 1842 and printed by The Times, No. 18069, August 23, 1842.

27. Engels was living in Manchester from December 1842 to late August 1844, where he studied commerce at the cotton mill belonging to the Ermen & Engels firm.

28. Engels describes his participation in the meeting of the Anti-Corn Law League in Salford in 1843 in his "Letters from London (1)".
The People's Charter, which contained the demands of the Chartists, was published in the form of a Parliamentary Bill on May 8, 1838. It contained six points: universal suffrage (for men of 21 and over), annual Parliaments, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, abolition of the property qualification for MPs and payment of MPs. Petitions urging the adoption of the People's Charter were turned down by Parliament in 1839, 1842 and 1848.

29. In 1879, as a result of the merger of the Flemish and the Brabant socialist parties, the Belgian Socialist Party (Parti socialiste belge) was formed.

In 1881, the Social-Democratic groups in the Netherlands formed the Social-Democratic Union (Sociaal-Demokraatische Bond).
In the same year, the politically advanced and class-conscious workers and revolutionary intellectuals formed the Revolutionary-Socialist Party of Romagna (Partito Rivoluzionario di Romagna), which was the first step in the work to found an Italian workers' party.

30. By mid-1878, Social-Democratic parties existed in Germany (from 1869), Switzerland (from June 1878), Denmark (from 1876), Portugal (from 1875), and Belgium (from 1877). In the USA, the unity congress of socialist organizations held in Philadelphia founded the Labor party of the USA, which in December 1877 was named the Socialist Labor Party of the USA.

31. The reference is to the second electoral reform in England introduced in 1867. Under the new law, the property qualification in the counties was reduced to £12 of annual rent for tenant farmers; in the cities and towns suffrage was granted to all householders and lessees of houses, as well as to tenants residing in the locality for at least a year, and paying no less than £10 in rent.

32. St. Stephen's -- the chapel where the House of Commons held its sessions from 1547 and until the fire of 1834.

33. The Irish Land Bill was passed on August 22, 1881 for the purpose of distracting the Irish peasants from the revolutionary struggle. The Bill restricted the landlords' right to evict tenants from their plots if they paid the rent in time; the rent was fixed for 15 years in advance. Despite the fact that the 1881 Law gave the landlords a chance to sell their lands to the state at a profit, and that the fixed rent remained very high indeed, the English landowners still opposed the Law trying to preserve their unlimited rule in Ireland. Despite the Law, illegal evictions from the land continued, which provoked the resistance of the Irish tenants.

34. The People's Charter, which contained the demands of the Chartists, was published in the form of a Parliamentary Bill on May 8, 1838. It contained six points: universal suffrage (for men of 21 and over), annual Parliaments, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, abolition of the property qualification for MPs and payment of MPs. Petitions urging the adoption of the People's Charter were turned down by Parliament in 1839, 1842 and 1848.

35. The Exceptional Law against the Socialists (Gezetz gegen die gemeinefährlichen Bestrebungen der Sozialdemokratie – The Law against the Harmful and Dangerous Aspirations of Social-Democracy) was introduced by the Bismarck government, supported by the majority in the Reichstag, on October 21 1878 to counter the socialist and workers’ movement. This law, better known as the Anti-Socialist Law, made the Social-Democratic Party of Germany illegal, banned all party and mass workers’ organizations, and the socialist and workers’ press; on the basis of this law, socialist literature was confiscated and Social-Democrats subjected to reprisals. However, during its operation, the Social-Democratic Party, assisted by Marx and Engels, uprooted both opportunist and “ultra-Left” elements and managed to substantially strengthen and

widen its influence among the people by skilfully combining illegal and legal methods of work. Under pressure from the mass workers' movement, the Anti-Socialist Law was abrogated on October 1 1890.

36. The introduction of the Land Bill met with resistance on the part of the Irish tenants. Using the Coercion Act passed in March 1881, Chief Secretary for Ireland Forster applied extraordinary measures by sending troops to Ireland to evict the tenants who refused to pay the rent.

37. The reference is to the elections to the Reichstag of January 10, 1877 and July 30, 1878.

38. The reference is to the assassination attempt on William I made on May 11 1878 by tinner Emil Hödel, who had been earlier expelled from the Leipzig Social-Democratic Association, and to that of June 2 made by the German anarchist Karl Eduard Nobiling, who had never been a member of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party. These events gave rise to a vicious campaign against the socialists and were an excuse for the promulgation of the Anti-Socialist Law in October 1878.

39. Coercion Bills were passed by the British Parliament several times throughout the 19th century with a view to suppressing the revolutionary and national liberation movement in Ireland. Under them a state of siege was declared on Irish territory, and the English authorities were granted extraordinary powers.

40. On April 27, 1880 Georg Wilhelm Hartmann won the mandate at the supplementary elections to the Reichstag in the second district of Hamburg. From September 9, 1879 to June 15, 1881, the deputies to the Reichstag from the Social-Democratic faction were: August Bebel, Wilhelm Bracke, Friedrich Wilhelm Fritzsche, Wilhelm Hasselmann, Max Kayser, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Klaus Peter Reinders, Julius Vahlteich and Philipp Wiemer. After the death of Bracke and Reinders, their seats were filled by Ignaz Auer and Wilhelm Hasenclever.

41. A minor state of siege was declared in Leipzig on June 27, 1881. Earlier, it had been introduced in Berlin and on October 28, 1880, in Hamburg-Altona and the environs.

42. Using the Coercion Act, in May-October 1881 the English authorities arrested prominent Irish deputies, members of the Irish National Land League headed by Charles Parnell, who opposed the introduction of the Land Bill of 1881. Among the prisoners was John Dillon, an Irish political leader, member of the British Parliament, one of the League's leaders.

43. The Irish National Land League – a mass organisation founded in 1879 by the petty-bourgeois democrat Michael Davitt. The League united large sections of the Irish peasantry and the urban poor, and was supported by the progressive section of the Irish bourgeoisie. Its agrarian demands mirrored the spontaneous protest of the Irish masses against the landlords' and national oppression. However, some of the League's leaders adopted an inconsistent stand, and this was used by bourgeois nationalists (Parnell and others), who sought to reduce the activity of the League to the campaign for Home Rule, i.e. for the granting to Ireland of limited self-government within the framework of the British Empire. They did not advocate the abolition of English landlordism, a

demand advanced by the revolutionary democrats. In 1881 the Land League was banned, but in actual fact it continued its activity until the late 1880s.

44. This refers to the activities of the Anti-Corn Law League.

45. In 1873-78, England entered the period of "great depression", a profound industrial crisis aggravated by the agrarian crisis, which lasted until the mid-1890s. The year 1874 witnessed a drop in the production of coal and iron ore. In 1875, the output of the cotton industry also decreased.

46. The Poor Law adopted in England in 1834 provided for only one form of relief for the able-bodied poor workhouses with a prison-like regime in which the workers were engaged in unproductive, monotonous and exhausting labour. The people called the workhouses "Bastilles for the poor".

47. The system of internal excise -- one of the main types of indirect taxes, mostly on everyday essentials (salt, sugar, coffee, matches, etc.), as well as municipal, transport and other widely used services. It is included in the price of goods or service tariff, and is thus shifted onto the consumer. Excise duty is an important source of revenue for the state budget in the capitalist countries.
In the USA each state has its own excise system, covering cigarettes, alcohol and petrol. The first excise on whisky was introduced in the USA on March 3, 1791.

48. The Manchester School -- a trend in economic thinking which reflected the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie. Its supporters, known as Free Traders, advocated removal of protective tariffs and non-intervention by the government in economic life. The centre of the Free Traders' agitation was Manchester, where the movement was headed by two textile manufacturers, Richard Cobden and John Bright. In the 1840s and 1850s, the Free Traders were a separate political group, which later formed the Left wing of the Liberal Party.

49. This refers to the movement for Parliamentary reform in England in 1830-31. The 1832 Reform Act in England granted the franchise to property owners and leaseholders with no less than £10 annual income. The workers and the petty bourgeoisie, who were the main force in the campaign for the reform, remained unenfranchised.

50. The laws passed by the British Parliament on June 26, 1846 -- "An Act to amend the laws relating to the importation of corn" and "An Act to alter certain duties of customs" -- abolished all restrictions on the import of grain into Great Britain, which was a major victory for the industrial bourgeoisie over the landed aristocracy.

51. The reference is to Karl Kautsky's article "International Labour Laws" published anonymously in The Labour Standard, No. 15, 13 August 1881.

52. The fourteenth annual British trades union congress took place in London on 12-17 September 1881.

53. The Labour Standard, No. 14, 6 August 1881, anonymously printed the article by Johann Georg Eccarius "A German Opinion of English Trade Unionism." Eccarius regarded highly the German trade unions founded in 1868 by Max Hirsch and Franz Duncker (the so-called Hirsch-Duncker trade unions).

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55. In May-August 1881, Engels contributed to the printed organ of the British labour unions The Labour Standard, which appeared in London and was edited by George Shipton. Engels' contributions were printed anonymously nearly every week as leaders.

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58. Factories and Workshops Act – Laws regulating labour conditions in British industry. The emergence and advancement of factory legislation was a consequence of the workers' economic and political struggle against capitalist exploitation. The first laws adopted regulated the children's adolescents', and women's labour conditions in the textile industry (early 19th century). Step by step, the operation of the Factories and Workshops Acts was extended to the other industries.

59. The Geneva Convention of the Red Cross of 1864 – An international document signed at the conference of 16 European states in Geneva. The Geneva Convention established principles for belligerents' treatment of the wounded and the sick, and granted the right of neutrality to the medical personnel taking care of the wounded men.

60. The Labour Standard, No. 14, 6 August 1881, anonymously printed the article by Johann Georg Eccarius "A German Opinion of English Trade Unionism." Eccarius regarded highly the German trade unions founded in 1868 by Max Hirsch and Franz Duncker (the so-called Hirsch-Duncker trade unions).

61. In Engels' draft manuscript the following passage is crossed out here: 'If you had understood the drift of the article, you must have at once seen that here was a measure of an immediately practical nature, so easy of execution that one of the existing governments of Europe (the Swiss Government) had been induced to take it in hand, that the proposal to equalize the hours of labour in all manufacturing countries by making factory and workshop's legislation a matter of international state agreement, was one of the greatest immediate interest to the working people. Especially to those of England who, besides the Swiss, are the best protected of all against overworking and therefore are exposed to an unfair competition on the part of Belgian, French and German workpeople whose hours of work are much longer.

62. The Labour Standard, No. 14, 6 August 1881, anonymously printed the article by Johann Georg Eccarius "A German Opinion of English Trade Unionism." Eccarius regarded highly the German trade unions founded in 1868 by Max Hirsch and Franz Duncker (the so-called Hirsch-Duncker trade unions).

63. The fourteenth annual British trades union congress took place in London on 12-17 September 1881.

64. In early February 1882, following medical advice, Marx took a trip to Algiers, where he stayed from 20 February to 2 May. On the way there, he stopped over in Argenteuil

(a Paris suburb) to visit his daughter Jenny.

65. In his letter to Engels of 1 February 1882, Becker proposed setting up a new international workers' organization along the lines of the International Working Men's Association.

66. Under the law proposed by the Minister of Justice Dufaure, and passed by the French National Assembly on 14 March 1872, membership of the International was punished by imprisonment.

67. In May-August 1881, Engels contributed to the printed organ of the British labour unions The Labour Standard, which appeared in London and was edited by George Shipton. Engels' contributions were printed anonymously nearly every week as leaders.