

London, circa 1847

THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

A congress of the League of the Just opened in London on June 2, 1847. Engels was in attendence as delegate for the League's Paris communities. (Marx couldn't attend for financial reasons.)

Engels had a significant impact throughout the congress -- which, as it turned out, was really the "inaugural Congress" of what became known as the Communist League. This organization stands as the first international proletarian organization. With the influence of Marx and Engels anti-utopian socialism, the League's motto changed from "All Men are Brothers" to "Working Men of All Countries, Unite!"

Engels: "In the summer of 1847, the first league congress took place in London, at which W. Wolff represented the Brussels and I the Paris communities. At this congress the reorganisation of the League was carried through first of all. ...the League now consisted of communities, circles, leading circles, a central committee and a congress, and henceforth called itself the 'Communist League'."

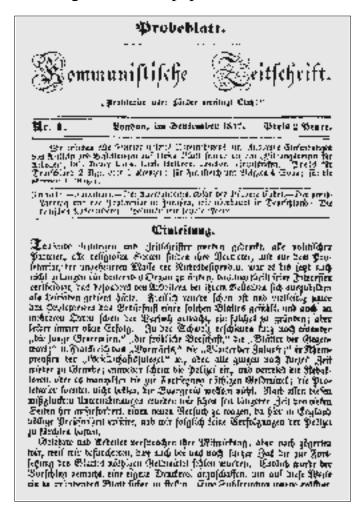
The Rules were drawn up with the participation of Marx and Engels, examined at the First Congress of the Communist League, and approved at the League's Second Congress in December 1847.

Article 1 of the *Rules of the Communist League*: "The aim of the league is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society which rests on the antagonism of classes, and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property."

The first draft of the Communist League Programme was styled as a catechism -- in the form of questions and answers. Essentially, the draft was authored by Engels. The

original manuscript is in Engels's hand.

The League's official paper was to be the *Kommunistische Zeifschrift*, but the only issue



produced was in September 1847 by a resolution of the League's First Congress. It was First Congress prepared by the Central Authority of the Communist League based in London. Karl Schapper was its editor.

The Second Congress of the Communist League was held at the end of November 1847 at London's Red Lion Hotel. Marx attended as delegate of the Brussels Circle. He went to London in the company of Victor Tedesco, member of the Communist League and also a delegate to the Second Congress. Engels again represented the Paris communities. Schapper was elected chairman of the congress, and Engels its secretary.

Friedrich Lessner: "I was working in London then and was a member of the communist Workers' Educational Society at 191 Drury Lane. There, at the end of November and the beginning of

December 1847, members of the Central Committee of the Communist League held a congress. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels came there from Brussels to present their views on modern communism and to speak about the Communists' attitude to the political and workers' movement. The meetings, which, naturally, were held in the evenings, were attended by delegates only... Soon we learned that after long debates, the congress had unanimously backed the principles of Marx and Engels..."

The Rules were officially adopted December 8, 1847.

Engels: "All contradiction and doubt were finally set at rest, the new basic principles were unanimously adopted, and Marx and I were commissioned to draw up the Manifesto." This would, of course, become the Communist Manifesto.



NOTE: *(M)* and *(E)* denote the author -- that is, Marx and/or Engels.

- 1846 March 31: Weitling letter
- **1846** May 5: Letter: Marx asks Proudhon to join (M)
- 1850 *March*: Address to the Communist League (*ME*)
- 1850 *June*: Address to the Communist League (ME)
- 1885 <u>History of the Communist League</u> (E)



The Red Lion Hotel on Great Windmill St, London. Site of the Second Congress of the Communist League (Nov 29 to Dec 8 1847)

Personal letter written by Wilhelm Weitling, to Moses Hess, the day after the meeting of the Communist Correspondence Committee. Present at this meeting were: Weitling, Marx, Engels, Philippe Gigot, Louis Heilberg, Sebastien Seiler, Edgar von Westphalen (Marx's brother-in-law), Joseph Weydemeyer, and Pavel Annenkov.

-- meia

Brussels, March 31, 1846

Dear Hess!

Last evening we met again inpleno. Marx brought with him a man whom he presented to us as a Russian [Annenkov], and who never said a word throughout the whole evening. The question was: What is the best way to carry on propaganda in Germany? Seiler posed the question, but he said he could not go into further detail now, since some delicate matters would have to be touched upon, etc. Marx kept on pressing him, but in vain. Both became excited, Marx violently so. In the end, the latter took up the question. His resume was:

- 1. An examination must be made of the Communist party.
- 2. This can be achieved by criticizing the incompetent and separating them from the sources of money.
- 3. This examination is now the most important thing that can be done in the interest of communism.
- 4. He who has the power to carry authority with the moneyed men also has the means to displace the others and would probably apply it.
- 5. "Handicraft communism" and "philosophical communism" must be opposed, human feeling must be derided, these are merely obfuscations. No oral propaganda, no provision for secret propaganda, in general the word propaganda not to be used in the future.
- 6. The realization of communism in the near future is out of the question; the bourgeoisie must first be at the helm.
- 7. Marx and Engels argued vehemently against me. Weydemeyer spoke quietly. Gigot and Edgar did not say a word. Heilberg opposed Marx from an impartial viewpoint, at the very end Seiler did the same, bitterly but with admirable calm. I became vehement, Marx surpassed me, particularly at the end when everything was in an uproar, he jumping up and down in his office. Marx was especially furious at my resume. I had said: The only thing that came out of our discussion was he who finds the money may write what he pleases....

That Marx and Engels will vehemently criticize my principles is now certain. Whether or not I will be able to defend myself as I would like to do, I don't know. Without money Marx cannot criticize and I cannot defend myself; nevertheless, in an emergency it may not matter that I have no money. I believe Marx and Engels will end by criticizing

themselves through their own criticism. In Marx's brain, I see nothing more than a good encyclopaedia, but no genius. His influence is felt through other personalities. Rich men made him editor, voila tout. Indeed, rich men who make sacrifices have a right to see or have investigations made into what they want to support. They have the power to assert this right, but the writer also has the power, no matter how poor he is, not to sacrifice his convictions for money. I am capable of sacrificing my conviction for the sake of unity. I put aside my work on my system when I received protests against it from all directions. But when I heard in brussels that the opponents of my system intended to publish splendid systems in well-financed translations, I completed mine and made an effort to bring it to the man [Marx]. If this is not supported, then it is entirely in order to make an examination. Jackass that I was, I had hitherto believed that it would be better if we used all our own qualities against our _enemies_ and encouraged especially those that bring forth persecutions in the struggle. I had thought it would be better to influence the people and, above all, to organize a portion of them for the propagation of our popular writings. But Marx and Engels do not share this view, and in this they are strengthened by their rich supporters. All right! Very good! Splendid! I see it coming. I have often found myself in similar circumstances, and always things turned out for the best....

Yours, WEITLING

Marx's letter written to Pierre Joseph Proudhon (in Paris), asking him to join the Committees of Correspondence.

Brussels, May 5, 1846

Dear Proudhon:

Since I left Paris I have often thought of writing to you, but circumstances beyond my control have prevented me from doing it. Please believe me that overbusyness and vexations connected with moving to another house are the only reasons for my silence.

And now _in media res_. Together with two of my friends, Frederick Engels and Philippe Gigot (both of them in Brussels), I have organized a continuing Correspondence [Committee] with German communists and socialists not only for a discussion of scientific questions but also for a review of popular writings and socialist propaganda, as a means of using them in Germany. The main aim of our COrrespondence, however, will be to bring German socialists in contact with French and English socialists, to inform foreigners about socialist movements in Germany and Germans in Germany about the progress of socialism in France and England. In this way, differences of opinion can come to light, and one can attain an exchange of ideas and impartial criticism. This is a step the socialist movement has to take in its literary expression in order to get rid of nationalistic limitations. And at the moment of action it is certainly extremely useful for everyone to be informed about affairs abroad as much as about those in his own country.

In addition to the communists in Germany, our Correspondence will also include German socialists in Paris and London. Our contacts with the English are already established; as to France, we all believe that we could find there no better correspondent than yourself. You know that the English and the Germans have hitherto honored you more than your own countrymen.

Thus you see that what is involved here is the creation of a regular Correspondence and to secure for it the means of following the socialist movement in various countries, to attain rich and manifold results which no individual could achieve by his own work alone.

Should you accept our proposition, the postage of the letters you will receive, as well as those which you forward to us, will be paid here, since the money collections in Germany are designed to cover the cost of the Correspondence.

The local address you would use is: M. Philippe Gigot, 8 rue Bodenbrock. This is also the address for letters sent from Brussels.

I need not add that this whole Correspondence must be kept in strictest secret on your part, since we have to be careful not to compromise our friends in Germany.

Please reply soon, and accept the assurance of my sincere friendship.

[Proudhon responded May 17, 1846 -- he passed on the idea of joining the Correspondence Committee since he opposed revolutionary methods and communism.]

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

ADDRESS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

London
March 1850

Brothers,

In the two revolutionary years of 1848-49 the League proved itself in two ways. First, its members everywhere involved themselves energetically in the movement and stood in the front ranks of the only decisively revolutionary class, the proletariat, in the press, on the barricades and on the battlefields. The League further proved itself in that its understanding of the movement, as expressed in the circulars issued by the Congresses and the Central Committee of 1847 and in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, has been shown to be the only correct one, and the expectations expressed in these documents have been completely fulfilled. This previously only propagated by the League in secret, is now on everyone's lips and is preached openly in the market place. At the same time, however, the formerly strong organization of the League has been considerably weakened. A large number of members who were directly involved in the movement thought that the time for secret societies was over and that public action alone was sufficient. The individual districts and communes allowed their connections with the Central Committee to weaken and gradually become dormant. So, while the democratic party, the party of the petty bourgeoisie, has become more and more organized in German, the workers' party has lost its only firm foothold, remaining organized at best in individual localities for local purposes; within the general movement it has consequently come under the complete domination and leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats. This situation cannot be allowed to continue; the independence of the workers must be restored. The Central Committee recognized this necessity and it therefore sent an emissary, Joseph Moll, to Germany in the winter of 1848-9 to reorganize the League. Moll's mission, however, failed to produce any lasting effect, partly because the German workers at that time had not enough experience and partly because it was interrupted by

the insurrection last May. Moll himself took up arms, joined the Baden-Palatinate army and fell on 29 June in the battle of the River Murg. The League lost in him one of the oldest, most active and most reliable members, who had been involved in all the Congresses and Central Committees and had earlier conducted a series of missions with great success. Since the defeat of the German and French revolutionary parties in July 1849, almost all the members of the Central Committee have reassembled in London: they have replenished their numbers with new revolutionary forces and set about reorganizing the League with renewed zeal.

This reorganization can only be achieved by an emissary, and the Central Committee considers it most important to dispatch the emissary at this very moment, when a new revolution is imminent, that is, when the workers' party must go into battle with the maximum degree of organization, unity and independence, so that it is not exploited and taken in tow by the bourgeoisie as in 1848.

We told you already in 1848, brothers, that the German liberal bourgeoisie would soon come to power and would immediately turn its newly won power against the workers. You have seen how this forecast came true. It was indeed the bourgeoisie which took possession of the state authority in the wake of the March movement of 1848 and used this power to drive the workers, its allies in the struggle, back into their former oppressed position. Although the bourgeoisie could accomplish this only by entering into an alliance with the feudal party, which had been defeated in March, and eventually even had to surrender power once more to this feudal absolutist party, it has nevertheless secured favourable conditions for itself. In view of the government's financial difficulties, these conditions would ensure that power would in the long run fall into its hands again and that all its interests would be secured, if it were possible for the revolutionary movement to assume from now on a so-called peaceful course of development. In order to guarantee its power the bourgeoisie would not even need to arouse hatred by taking violent measures against the people, as all of these violent measures have already been carried out by the feudal counter-revolution. But events will not take this peaceful course. On the contrary, the revolution which will accelerate the course of events, is imminent, whether it is initiated by an independent rising of the French proletariat or by an invasion of the revolutionary Babel by the Holy Alliance.

The treacherous role that the German liberal bourgeoisie played against the people in 1848 will be assumed in the coming revolution by the democratic petty bourgeoisie, which now occupies the same position in the opposition as the liberal bourgeoisie did before 1848. This democratic party, which is far more dangerous for the workers than were the liberals earlier, is composed of three elements: 1) The most progressive elements of the big bourgeoisie, who pursue the goal of the immediate and complete overthrow of feudalism and absolutism. Tis fraction is represented by the former Berlin Vereinbarer, the tax resisters; 2) The constitutional-democratic petty bourgeois, whose

main aim during the previous movement was the formation of a more or less democratic federal state; this is what their representative, the Left in the Frankfurt Assembly and later the Stuttgart parliament, worked for, as they themselves did in the Reich Constitution Campaign; 3) The republican petty bourgeois, whose ideal is a German federal republic similar to that in Switzerland and who now call themselves 'red' and 'social-democratic' because they cherish the pious wish to abolish the pressure exerted by big capital on small capital, by the big bourgeoisie on the pretty bourgeoisie. The representatives of this fraction were the members of the democratic congresses and committees, the leaders of the democratic associations and the editors of the democratic newspapers.

After their defeat all these fractions claim to be 'republicans' or 'reds', just as at the present time members of the republican petty bourgeoisie in France call themselves 'socialists'. Where, as in Wurtemberg, Bavaria, etc., they still find a chance to pursue their ends by constitutional means, they seize the opportunity to retain their old phrases and prove by their actions that they have not changed in the least. Furthermore, it goes without saying that the changed name of this party does not alter in the least its relationship to the workers but merely proves that it is now obliged to form a front against the bourgeoisie, which has united with absolutism, and to seek the support of the proletariat.

The petty-bourgeois democratic party in Germany is very powerful. It not only embraces the great majority of the urban middle class, the small industrial merchants and master craftsmen; it also includes among its followers the peasants and rural proletariat in so far as the latter has not yet found support among the independent proletariat of the towns.

The relationship of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty-bourgeois democrats is this: it cooperates with them against the party which they aim to overthrow; it opposes them wherever they wish to secure their own position.

The democratic petty bourgeois, far from wanting to transform the whole society in the interests of the revolutionary proletarians, only aspire to a change in social conditions which will make the existing society as tolerable and comfortable for themselves as possible. They therefore demand above all else a reduction in government spending through a restriction of the bureaucracy and the transference of the major tax burden into the large landowners and bourgeoisie. They further demand the removal of the pressure exerted by big capital on small capital through the establishment of public credit institutions and the passing of laws against usury, whereby it would be possible for themselves and the peasants to receive advances on favourable terms from the state instead of from capitalists; also, the introduction of bourgeois property relationships on land through the complete abolition of feudalism. In order to achieve all this they require

a democratic form of government, either constitutional or republican, which would give them and their peasant allies the majority; they also require a democratic system of local government to give them direct control over municipal property and over a series of political offices at present in the hands of the bureaucrats.

The rule of capital and its rapid accumulation is to be further counteracted, partly by a curtailment of the right of inheritance, and partly by the transference of as much employment as possible to the state. As far as the workers are concerned one thing, above all, is definite: they are to remain wage labourers as before. However, the democratic petty bourgeois want better wages and security for the workers, and hope to achieve this by an extension of state employment and by welfare measures; in short, they hope to bribe the workers with a more or less disguised form of alms and to break their revolutionary strength by temporarily rendering their situation tolerable. The demands of petty=bourgeois democracy summarized here are not expressed by all sections of it at once, and in their totality they are the explicit goal of only a very few of its followers. The further particular individuals or fractions of the petty bourgeoisie advance, the more of these demands they will explicitly adopt, and the few who recognize their own programme in what has been mentioned above might well believe they have put forward the maximum that can be demanded from the revolution. But these demands can in no way satisfy the party of the proletariat. While the democratic petty bourgeois want to bring the revolution to an end as quickly as possible, achieving at most the aims already mentioned, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power and until the association of the proletarians has progressed sufficiently far - not only in one country but in all the leading countries of the world - that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and at least the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers. Our concern cannot simply be to modify private property, but to abolish it, not to hush up class antagonisms but to abolish classes, not to improve the existing society but to found a new one. There is no doubt that during the further course of the revolution in Germany, the petty-bourgeois democrats will for the moment acquire a predominant influence. The question is, therefore, what is to be the attitude of the proletariat, and in particular of the League towards them:

- 1) While present conditions continue, in which the petty-bourgeois democrats are also oppressed;
- 2) In the coming revolutionary struggle, which will put them in a dominant position;
- 3) After this struggle, during the period of petty-bourgeois predominance over the classes which have been overthrown and over the proletariat.
- 1. At the moment, while the democratic petty bourgeois are everywhere oppressed,

they preach to the proletariat general unity and reconciliation; they extend the hand of friendship, and seek to found a great opposition party which will embrace all shades of democratic opinion; that is, they seek to ensnare the workers in a party organization in which general social-democratic phrases prevail while their particular interests are kept hidden behind, and in which, for the sake of preserving the peace, the specific demands of the proletariat may not be presented. Such a unity would be to their advantage alone and to the complete disadvantage of the proletariat. The proletariat would lose all its hard-won independent position and be reduced once more to a mere appendage of official bourgeois democracy. This unity must therefore be resisted in the most decisive manner. Instead of lowering themselves to the level of an applauding chorus, the workers, and above all the League, must work for the creation of an independent organization of the workers' party, both secret and open, and alongside the official democrats, and the League must aim to make every one of its communes a center and nucleus of workers' associations in which the position and interests of the proletariat can be discussed free from bourgeois influence. How serious the bourgeois democrats are about an alliance in which the proletariat has equal power and equal rights is demonstrated by the Breslau democrats, who are conducting a furious campaign in their organ, the _Neue Oder Zeitung, against independently organized workers, whom they call 'socialists'. In the event of a struggle against a common enemy a special alliance is un=necessary. As soon as such an enemy has to be fought directly, the interests of both parties will coincide for the moment and an association of momentary expedience will arise spontaneously in the future, as it has in the past. It goes without saying that in the bloody conflicts to come, as in all others, it will be the workers, with their courage, resolution and self-sacrifice, who will be chiefly responsible for achieving victory. As in the past, so in the coming struggle also, the petty bourgeoisie, to a man, will hesitate as long as possible and remain fearful, irresolute and inactive; but when victory is certain it will claim it for itself and will call upon the workers to behave in an orderly fashion, to return to work and to prevent so-called excesses, and it will exclude the proletariat from the fruits of victory. It does not lie within the power of the workers to prevent the petty-bourgeois democrats from doing this; but it does lie within their power to make it as difficult as possible for the petty bourgeoisie to use its power against the armed proletariat, and to dictate such conditions to them that the rule of the bourgeois democrats, from the very first, will carry within it the seeds of its own destruction, and its subsequent displacement by the proletariat will be made considerably easier. Above all, during and immediately after the struggle the workers, as far as it is at all possible, must oppose bourgeois attempts at pacification and force the democrats to carry out their terroristic phrases. They must work to ensure that the immediate revolutionary excitement is not suddenly suppressed after the victory. On the contrary, it must be sustained as long as possible. Far from opposing the so-called excesses - instances of popular vengeance against hated individuals or against public buildings with which hateful memories are associated - the workers' party must not only tolerate these actions but must even give them direction. During and after the struggle the workers must at every opportunity put forward their own demands against those of the

bourgeois democrats. They must demand guarantees for the workers as soon as the democratic bourgeoisie sets about taking over the government. They must achieve these guarantees by force if necessary, and generally make sure that the new rulers commit themselves to all possible concessions and promises - the surest means of compromising them. They must check in every way and as far as is possible the victory euphoria and enthusiasm for the new situation which follow every successful street battle, with a cool and cold-blooded analysis of the situation and with undisguised mistrust of the new government. Alongside the new official governments they must simultaneously establish their own revolutionary workers' governments, either in the form of local executive committees and councils or through workers' clubs or committees, so that the bourgeois-democratic governments not only immediately lost the support of the workers but find themselves from the very beginning supervised and threatened by authorities behind which stand the whole mass of the workers. In a word, from the very moment of victory the workers' suspicion must be directed no longer against the defeated reactionary party but against their former ally, against the party which intends to exploit the common victory for itself.

- 2. To be able forcefully and threateningly to oppose this party, whose betraval of the workers will begin with the very first hour of victory, the workers must be armed and organized. The whole proletariat must be armed at once with muskets, rifles, cannon and ammunition, and the revival of the old-style citizens' militia, directed against the workers, must be opposed. Where the formation of this militia cannot be prevented, the workers must try to organize themselves independently as a proletarian guard, with elected leaders and with their own elected general staff; they must try to place themselves not under the orders of the state authority but of the revolutionary local councils set up by the workers. Where the workers are employed by the state, they must arm and organize themselves into special corps with elected leaders, or as a part of the proletarian guard. Under no pretext should arms and ammunition be surrendered; any attempt to disarm the workers must be frustrated, by force if necessary. The destruction of the bourgeois democrats' influence over the workers, and the enforcement of conditions which will compromise the rule of bourgeois democracy, which is for the moment inevitable, and make it as difficult as possible - these are the main points which the proletariat and therefore the League must keep in mind during and after the approaching uprising.
- 3. As soon as the new governments have established themselves, their struggle against the workers will begin. If the workers are to be able to forcibly oppose the democratic petty bourgeois it is essential above all for them to be independently organized and centralized in clubs. At the soonest possible moment after the overthrow of the present governments, the Central Committee will come to Germany and will immediately convene a Congress, submitting to it the necessary proposals for the centralization of the workers' clubs under a directorate established at the movement's center of operations. The speedy organization of at least provincial connections between

the workers' clubs is one of the prime requirements for the strengthening and development of the workers' party; the immediate result of the overthrow of the existing governments will be the election of a national representative body. Here the proletariat must take care: 1) that by sharp practices local authorities and government commissioners do not, under any pretext whatsoever, exclude any section of workers; 3) that workers' candidates are nominated everywhere in opposition to bourgeois-democratic candidates. As far as possible they should be League members and their election should be pursued by all possible means. Even where there is no prospect of achieving their election the workers must put up their own candidates to preserve their independence, to gauge their own strength and to bring their revolutionary position and party standpoint to public attention. They must not be led astray by the empty phrases of the democrats, who will maintain that the workers' candidates will split the democratic party and offer the forces of reaction the chance of victory. All such talk means, in the final analysis, that the proletariat is to be swindled. The progress which the proletarian party will make by operating independently in this way is infinitely more important than the disadvantages resulting from the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body. if the forces of democracy take decisive, terroristic action against the reaction from the very beginning, the reactionary influence in the election will already have been destroyed.

The first point over which the bourgeois democrats will come into conflict with the workers will be the abolition of feudalism as in the first French revolution, the petty bourgeoisie will want to give the feudal lands to the peasants as free property; that is, they will try to perpetrate the existence of the rural proletariat, and to form a petty-bourgeois peasant class which will be subject to the same cycle of impoverishment and debt which still afflicts the French peasant. The workers must oppose this plan both in the interest of the rural proletariat and in their own interest. They must demand that the confiscated feudal property remain state property and be used for workers' colonies, cultivated collectively by the rural proletariat with all the advantages of large-scale farming and where the principle of common property will immediately achieve a sound basis in the midst of the shaky system of bourgeois property relations. Just as the democrats ally themselves with the peasants, the workers must ally themselves with the rural proletariat.

The democrats will either work directly towards a federated republic, or at least, if they cannot avoid the one and indivisible republic they will attempt to paralyze the central government by granting the municipalities and provinces the greatest possible autonomy and independence. In opposition to this plan the workers must not only strive for one and indivisible German republic, but also, within this republic, for the most decisive centralization of power in the hands of the state authority. They should not let themselves be led astray by empty democratic talk about the freedom of the municipalities, self-government, etc. In a country like Germany, where so many remnants of the Middle Ages are still to be abolished, where so much local and provincial

obstinacy has to be broken down, it cannot under any circumstances be tolerated that each village, each town and each province may put up new obstacles in the way of revolutionary activity, which can only be developed with full efficiency from a central point. A renewal of the present situation, in which the Germans have to wage a separate struggle in each town and province for the same degree of progress, can also not be tolerated. Least of all can a so-called free system of local government be allowed to perpetuate a form of property which is more backward than modern private property and which is everywhere and inevitably being transformed into private property; namely communal property, with its consequent disputes between poor and rich communities. Nor can this so-called free system of local government be allowed to perpetuate, side by side with the state civil law, the existence of communal civil law with its sharp practices directed against the workers. As in France in 1793, it is the task of the genuinely revolutionary party in Germany to carry through the strictest centralization.

We have seen how the next upsurge will bring the democrats to power and how they will be forced to propose more or less socialistic measures. it will be asked what measures the workers are to propose in reply. At the beginning, of course, the workers cannot propose any directly communist measures. But the following courses of action are possible:

- 1. They can force the democrats to make inroads into as many areas of the existing social order as possible, so as to disturb its regular functioning and so that the petty-bourgeois democrats compromise themselves; furthermore, the workers can force the concentration of as many productive forces as possible means of transport, factories, railways, etc. in the hands of the state.
- 2. They must drive the proposals of the democrats to their logical extreme (the democrats will in any case act in a reformist and not a revolutionary manner) and transform these proposals into direct attacks on private property. If, for instance, the petty bourgeoisie propose the purchase of the railways and factories, the workers must demand that these railways and factories simply be confiscated by the state without compensation as the property of reactionaries. if the democrats propose a proportional tax, then the workers must demand a progressive tax; if the democrats themselves propose a moderate progressive tax, then the workers must insist on a tax whose rates rise so steeply that big capital is ruined by it; if the democrats demand the regulation of the state debt, then the workers must demand national bankruptcy. The demands of the workers will thus have to be adjusted according to the measures and concessions of the democrats.

Although the German workers cannot come to power and achieve the realization of their class interests without passing through a protracted revolutionary development, this time they can at least be certain that the first act of the approaching revolutionary drama will coincide with the direct victory of their own class in France and will thereby be

accelerated. But they themselves must contribute most to their final victory, by informing themselves of their own class interests, by taking up their independent political position as soon as possible, by not allowing themselves to be misled by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeoisie into doubting for one minute the necessity of an independently organized party of the proletariat. Their battle-cry must be: *The Permanent Revolution*.

transcribed by gearhart@ccsn.edu



Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

ADDRESS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

June 1850

Brothers!

In our last circular, delivered to you by the League's emissary, we discussed the position of the workers' party and, in particular, of the League, both at the present moment and in the event of revolution.

The main purpose of this letter is to present a report on the state of the League.

For a while, following the defeats sustained by the revolutionary party last summer, the League's organization almost completely disintegrated. The most active League members involved in the various movements were dispersed, contacts were broken off and addresses could no longer be used; because of this and because of the danger of letters being opened, correspondence became temporarily impossible. The Central Committee was thus condemned to complete inactivity until around the end of last year.

As the immediate after-effects of our defeats gradually passed, it became clear that the revolutionary party needed a strong secret organization throughout Germany. The need for this organization, which led the Central Committee to decide to send an emissary to Germany and Switzerland, also led to an attempt by the Cologne commune to organize the League in Germany itself.

Around the beginning of the year several more or less well-known refugees from the various movements formed an organization in Switzerland which intended to overthrow the governments at the right moment and to keep men at the ready to take over the leadership of the movement and even the government itself. This association did not possess any particular party character; the motley elements which it comprised made this impossible. The members consisted of people from all groups within the movement, from resolute Communists and even former League members to the most faint-hearted petty-bourgeois democrats and former members of the Palatinate government.

In the eyes of the Baden-Palatinate careerists and lesser ambitious figures who were so numerous in Switzerland at this time, this association presented an ideal opportunity for them to advance themselves.

The instructions which this association sent to its agents - and which the Central Committee has in its possession - give just as little cause for confidence. The lack of a definite party standpoint and the attempt to bring all available opposition elements together in a sham association is only badly disguised by a mass of detailed questions

concerning the industrial, agricultural, political and military situations in each locality. Numerically, too, the association was extremely weak; according to the complete list of members which we possess, the whole society in Switzerland consisted, at the height of its strength, of barely thirty members. It is significant that workers are hardly represented at all among the membership. From its very beginning, it was an army of officers and N.C.O.'s without any soldiers. Its members include A. Fries and Greiner from the Palatinate, Korner from Elberfeld, Sigel, etc.

They sent two agents to Germany. The first agent, Bruhn, a member of the League, managed by false pretences to persuade certain League members and communes to join the new association for the time being, as they believed it to be the resurrected League. While reporting on the Leaque to the Swiss Central Committee in Zurich, he simultaneously sent us reports on the Swiss association. He cannot have been content with his role as an informer, for while he was still corresponding with us, he wrote outright slanders to the people in Frankfurt, who had been won over to the Swiss association, and he ordered them not to enter into any contacts whatsoever with London. For this he was immediately expelled from the League. Matters in Frankfurt were settled by an emissary from the League. It may be added that Bruhn's activities on behalf of the Swiss Central Committee remained fruitless. The second agent, the student Schurz from Bonn, achieved nothing because, as he wrote to Zurich, he found that all the people of any use were already in the hands of the League. He then suddenly left Germany and is now hanging around Brussels and Paris, where he is being watched by the League. Central Committee does not see this new association as a danger, particularly as a completely reliable member of the League is on the committee, with instructions to observe and report on the actions and plans of these people, in so far as they operate against the League. Furthermore, we have sent an emissary to Switzerland in order to recruit the people who will be of value to the League, with the help of the aforementioned League member, and in order to organize the League in Switzerland in general. This information is based on fully authentic documents.

Another attempt of a similar nature had already been made earlier by Struve, Sigel and others, at the time that they joined forces in Geneva. These people had no compunction about claiming quite flatly that the association they were attempting to found was the League, nor about using the names of League members for precisely this end. Of course, they deceived nobody with this lie. Their attempt was so fruitless in every respect that the few members of this abortive association who stayed in Switzerland eventually had to join the organization previously mentioned. But the more impotent this coterie became, the more it showed off with pretentious titles like the 'Central Committee of European Democracy' etc. Struve, together with a few other disappointed great men, has continued these attempts here in London. Manifestoes and appeals to join the 'Central Bureau of German Refugees' and the 'Central Committee of European Democracy' have been sent to all parts of Germany, but this time, too, without the least success.

The contacts which this coterie claims to have made with French and other non-German revolutionaries do not exist. Their whole activity is limited to a few petty intrigues among the German refugees here in London, which do not affect the League directly and which are harmless

and easy to keep under surveillance. All these attempts have either the same purpose as the League, namely the revolutionary organization of the workers' party, in which case they are undermining the centralization and strength of the party by fragmenting it and are therefore of a decidedly harmful, separatist character, or else they can only serve to misuse the workers' party for purposes which are foreign or straightforwardly hostile to it. Under certain circumstances the workers' party can profitably use other parties and groups for its own purposes, but it must not subordinate itself to any other party. Those people who were in government during the last movement, and used their position only to betray the movement and to crush the workers' party were it tried to operate independently, must be kept at a distance at all costs.

The following is a report on the state of the League:

i. Belgium

The League's organization among the Belgian workers, as it existed in 1846 and 1847, has naturally come to an end, since the leading members were arrested in 1848 and condemned to death, having their sentences commuted to life imprisonment with hard labour. In general, the League in Belgium has lost strength since the February revolution and since most of the members of the German Workers Association were driven out of Brussels. The police measures which have been introduced have prevented its reorganization. Nevertheless one commune in Brussels has carried on throughout; it is still in existence today and is functioning to the best of its ability.

ii. Germany

In this circular the Central Committee intended to submit a special report on the state of the League in Germany. However, this report can not be made at the present time, as the Prussian police are even now investigating an extensive network of contacts in the revolutionary party. This circular, which will reach Germany safely but which, of course, may here and there fall into the hands of the police while being distributed within Germany, must therefore be written so that its contents do not provide them with weapons which could be used against the League. The Central Committee will therefore confine itself, for the time being, to the following remarks:

In Germany the league has its main centres in Cologne, Frankfurt am Main, Hanau, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Hamburg, Schwerin, Berlin, Breslau, Liegnitz, Glogau, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Munich, Bamberg, Wurzburg, Stuttgart and Baden.

The following towns have been chosen as central districts: Hamburg for Schleswig-Holstein; Schwerin for Mecklenburg; Breslau for Silesia; Leipzig for Saxony and Berlin; Nuremberg for Bavaria, Cologne for the Rhineland and Westphalia.

The communes in Gottingen, Stuttgart and Brussels will remain in direct contact with the Central Committee for the time being, until they have succeeded in widening their influence to the extent necessary to

form new central districts.

A decision will not be made on the position of the League in Baden until the report has been received from the emissary sent there and to Switzerland.

Wherever peasant and agricultural workers' association exist, as in Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg, members of the League have succeeded in exercising a direct influence upon them and, in some cases, in gaining complete control. For the most part, the workers and agricultural workers' associations in Saxony, Franconia, Hesse and Nassau are also under the leadership of the League. The most influential members of the Workers Brotherhood also belong to the League. The Central Committee wishes to point out to all communes and League members that it is of the utmost importance to win influence in the workers', sports, peasants' and agricultural workers' associations, etc. everywhere. It requests the central districts and the communes corresponding directly with the Central Committee to give a special report in their subsequent letters on what has been achieved in this connection.

The emissary to Germany, who as received a vote of commendation from the Central Committee for his activities, has everywhere recruited only the most reliable people into the League and left the expansion of the League to their greater local knowledge. It will depend upon the local situation whether convinced revolutionaries can be enlisted. Where this is not possible a second class of League members must be created for those people who are reliable and make useful revolutionaries but who do not yet understand the full communist implications of the present movement. This second class, to whom the association must be represented as a merely local or regional affair, must remain under the continuous leadership of actual League members and committees. With the help of these further contacts the League's influence on the peasants' and sports associations in particular can be very firmly organized. Detailed arrangements are left to the central districts; the Central Committee hopes to receive their reports on these matters, too, as soon as possible.

One commune has proposed to the Central Committee that a Congress of the League be convened, indeed in German itself. The communes and districts will certainly appreciate that under the present circumstances even regional congresses of the central districts are not everywhere advisable, and that a general Congress of the League at this moment is a sheer impossibility. However, the Central Committee will convene a Congress of the Communist League in a suitable place just as soon as circumstances allow. Prussian Rhineland and Westphalia recently received a visit from an emissary of the Cologne central district. The report on the result of this trip has not yet reached Cologne. We request all central districts to send similar emissaries round their regions and to report on their success as soon as possible. Finally we should like to report that in Schleswig-Holstein, contacts have been established with the army: we are still awaiting the more detailed report on the influence which the League can hope to gain here.

The report of the emissary is still being awaited. it will therefore not be possible to provide more exact information until the next circular.

iv. France

Contacts with the German workers in Besancon and other places in the Jura will be re-established from Switzerland. In Paris Ewerbeck, the League member who has been up till now at the head of the commune there, has announced his resignation from the League, as he consdiers his literary activities to be more important. Contact has therefore been interrupted for the present and must be resumed with particular caution, as the Parisians have enlisted a large number of people who are absolutely unfitted for the League and who were formerly even directly opposed to it.

v. England

The London district is the strongest in the whole League. It has earned particular credit by covering single-handedly the League's expenses for several years - in particular those for the journeys of the League's emissaries. It has been strengthened recently by the recruitment of new elements and it continues to lead the German Workers Educational Association here, as well as the more resolute section of the German refugees in England.

The Central Committee is in touch with the decisively revolutionary parties of the French, English and Hungarians by way of members delegated for this purpose.

Of all the parties involved in the French revolution it is in particular the genuine proletarian party headed by Blanqui which has joined us. The delegates of the blanquist secret society are in regular and official contact with the delegates of the League, to whom they have entrusted important preparatory work for the next revolution.

The leaders of the revolutionary wing of the Chartists are also in regular and close contact with the delegates of the Central Committee. Their journals are being made available to us. The break between this revolutionary, independent workers' party and the faction headed by O'Connor, which tends more towards a policy of reconciliation, has been considerably accelerated by the delegates of the League.

The Central Committee is similarly in contact with the most progressive section of the Hungarian refugees. This party is important because it includes many excellent military experts, who would be at the League's disposal in the event of revolution.

The Central Committee requests the central districts to distribute this letter among their members as soon as possible and to submit their own reports soon. It urges all League members to the most intense activity, especially now that the situation has become so critical that it cannot be long before another revolution breaks out.

transcribed by gearhart@ccsn.edu

Frederick Engels

ON THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

London October 8, 1885

With the sentence of the Cologne Communists in 1852, the curtain falls on the first period of the independent German workers' movement. Today this period is almost forgotten. Yet it lasted from 1836 to 1852 and, with the spread of German workers abroad, the movement developed in almost all civilized countries. Nor is that all. The present-day international workers' movement is in substance a direct continuation of the German workers' movement of that time, which was the _first international workers' movement_ of all time, and which brought forth many of those who took the leading role in he International Working Men's Association. And the theoretical principles that the Communist League had inscribed on its banner in the _Communist Manifesto_ of 1847 constitute today the strongest international bond of the entire proletarian movement of both Europe and America.

Up to now there has been only one source for a coherent history of that movement. This is the so-called Black Book, _The Communist Conspiracies of the Nineteenth Century_, by Wermuth and Stieber, Erline, two parts, 1853 and 1854. This crude compilation, which bristles with deliberate falsifications, fabricated by two of the most contemptible police scoundrels of our century, today still serves as the final source for all non-communist writings about that period.

What I am able to give here is only a sketch, and even this only in so far as the League itself is concerned; only what is absolutely necessary to understand the _Revelations_. I hope that some day I shall have the opportunity to work up the rich material collected by Marx and myself on the history of that glorious period of the youth of the international workers' movement.

*

In 1836 the most extreme, chiefly proletarian elements of the secret democratic-republican Outlaws' League, which was founded by German refugees in Paris in 1834, split off and formed the new secret League of the Just. The parent League, in which only sleepy-headed elements a la Jakobus Venedey were left, soon fell asleep altogether; when in 1840 the police scented out a few sections in Germany, it was hardly even a shadow of its former self. The new League, on the contrary, developed comparatively rapidly. Originally it was a German outlier of the French worker-Communism, reminiscent of Babouvism and taking shape in Paris at about this time; community of goods was demanded as the necessary consequence of "equality". The aims were those of the Parisian secret societies of the time: half propaganda association, half conspiracy, Paris, however, being always regarded as the central point of revolutionary action, although the preparation of occassional _putsches_ in Germany was by no means excluded. But as Paris remained the decisive battleground, the League was at that time actually not much more than the German branch of the French secret

societies, especially the Societe des saisons led by Blanqui and Barbes, with which a close connections was maintained. The French went into action on May 12, 1839; the sections of the League marched with them and thus were involved in the common defeat.

Among the Germans arrested were Karl Schapper and Heinrich Bauer; Louis Philippe's government contented itself with deporting them after a fairly long imprisonment. Both went to London. Schapper came from Weilburg in Nassau and while a student of forestry at Giessen in 1832 was a member of the conspiracy organized by Georg Buchner; he took part in the storming of the Frankfort constable station on April 3, 1833, escaped abroad and in February 1834 joined Mazzini's march on Savoy. gigantic stature, resolute and energetic, always ready to risk civil existence and life, he was a model of the professional revolutionist that played an important role in the thirties. In spite of a certain sluggishness of thought, he was by no means incapable of profound theoretical understanding, as is proved by his development from "demagogue" to Communist, and he held then all the more rigidly to what he had once come to recognize. Precisely on that account his revolutionary passion sometimes got the better of understanding, but he always afterwards realized his mistake and openly acknowledged it. He was fully a man and what he did for the founding of the German workers' movement will not be forgotten.

Heinrich Bauer, from Franconia, was a shoemaker; a lively, alert, witty little fellow, whose little body, however, also contained much shrewdness and determination.

Arrived in London, where Schapper, who had been a compositor in Paris, now tried to earn his living as a teacher of languages, they both set to work gathering up the broken threads and made London the centre of the League. They were joined over here, if not already earlier in Paris, by Joseph Moll, a watchmaker from Cologne, a medium-sized Hercules -- how often did Schapper and he victoriously defend the entrance to a hall against hundreds of onrushing opponents! -- a man who was at least the equal of his two comrades in energy and determination, and intellectually superior to both of them. Not only was he a born diplomat, as the success of his numerous trips on various mission proved; he was also more capable of theoretical insight. I came to know all three of them in London in 1843. There were the first revolutionary proletarians whom I met, and however far apart our views were at that time -- for I still owned, as against their narrow-minded equalitarian Communism [by equalitarian Communism I understand, as stated, only that Communism which bases itself exclusively or predominantly on the demand for equality], a goodly does of just as narrow-minded philosophical arrogance -- I shall never forget the deep impression that these three real men made upon me, who was then still only wanting to become a man.

In London, as in a lesser degree in Switzerland, they had the benefit of freedoms of association and assembly. As early as February 7, 1840, the legally functioning German Workers' Educational Association, which still exists, was founded. This Association served the League as a recruiting ground for new members, and since, as always, the Communists were the most active and intelligent members of the Association, it was a matter of course that its leadership lay entirely in the hands of the League. The League soon had several communities, or, as they were then still called, "lodges", in London. The same

obvious tactics were followed in Switzerland and elsewhere. Where workers' associations could be founded, they were utilized in like manner. Where this was forbidden by law, one joined choral societies, athletic clubs, and the like. Connections were to a large extent maintained by members who were continually travelling back and forth; they also, when required, served as emissaries. In both respects the League obtained lively support through the wisdom of the governments which, by resorting to deportation, converted any objectionable worker — and in nine cases our of ten he was a member of the League — into an emissary.

The extent to which the restored League was spread was considerable. Notably in Switzerland, Weitling, August Becker (a highly gifted man who, however, like so many Germans, came to grief because of innate instability of character) and others created a strong organization more or less pledged to Weitling's communist system. This is not the place to criticize the Communism of Weitling. But as regards its significance as the first independent theoretical stirring of the German proletariat, I still today subscribe to Marx's words in the Paris Vorwarts of 1844:

"Where could the (German) bourgeoisie -- including its philosophers and learned scribes -- point to a work relating to the emancipation of the bourgeoisie -- its political emancipation -- comparable to Weitlings' _Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom_? If one compares the drab mealy-mouthed mediocrity of German political literature with this immeasurable and brilliant debut of the German workers, if one compares these gigantic children's shoes of the proletariat with the dwarf proportions of the worn-out political shows of the bourgeoisie, one must prophesy an athlete's figure for this Cinderella."

This athlete's figure confronts us today, although still far from being fully grown.

Numerous sections existed also in Germany; in the nature of things they were of a transient character, but those coming into existence more than made up for those passing away. Only after seven years, at the end of 1846, did the police discover traces of the League in Berlin (Mentel) and Magdeburg (Beck), without being in a position to follow them further.

In Paris, Weitling, who was still there in 1840, likewise gathered the scattered elements together again before he left for Switzerland.

The tailors formed the central force of the League. German tailors were everywhere: in Switzerland, in London, in Paris. In the last-named city, German was so much the prevailing tongue in this trade that I was acquainted there in 1846 with a Norwegian tailor who had travelled directly by sea from Trondhjem to France and in the space of eighteen months had learned hardly a word of French but had acquired an excellent knowledge of German. Two of the Paris communities in 1847 consisted predominantly of tailors, one of cabinetmakers.

After the centre of gravity had shifted from Paris to London, a new feature grew conspicuous: from being German, the League gradually became _international_. In the workers' society there were to be found,

besides German and Swiss, also members of all those nationalities for whom German served as the chief means of communication with foreigners, notably, therefore, Scandinavians, Dutch, Hungarians, Czechs, Southern Slavs, and also Russians and Alsatians. In 1847 the regular frequenters included a British grenadier of the Guards in uniform. The society soon called itself the _Communist_ Workers' Educational Association, and the membership cards bore the inscription "All Men Are Brothers", in at least twenty languages, even if not without mistakes here and there. Like the open Association, so also the secret League soon took on a more international character; at first in a restricted sense, practically through the varied nationalities of its members, theoretically through the realization that any revolution to be victorious must be a European one. One did not go any further as yet; but the foundations were there.

Close connections were maintained with the French revolutionists through the London refugees, comrades-in-arms of May 12, 1839. Similarly with the more radical Poles. The official Polish emigres, as also Mazzini, were, of course, opponents rather than allies. The English Chartists, on account of the specific English character of their movement, were disregarded as not revolutionary. The London leaders of the League came in touch with them only later, through me.

In other ways, too, the character of the League had altered with events. Although Paris was still -- and at that time quite rightly -looked upon as the mother city of the revolution, one had nevertheless emerged from the state of dependence on the Paris conspirators. spread of the League raised its self-consciousness. It was felt that roots were being struck more and more in the german working class and that these German workers were historically called upon to be the standard-bearers of the workers of the North and East of Europe. Weitling was to be found a communist theoretician who could be boldly placed at the side of his contemporary French rivals. Finally, the experience of May 12th had taught us that for the time being there was nothing to be gained by attempts at _putsches_. And if one still continued to explain every event as a sign of the approaching storm, if one still preserved intact the old, semi-conspiratorial rules, that was mainly the fault of the old revolutionary defiance, which had already begun to collide with the sounder views that were gaining headway.

However, the social doctrine of the League, indefinite as it was, contained a very great defect, but one that had its roots in the conditions themselves. The members, in so far as they were workers at all, were almost exclusively artisans. Even in the big metropolises, the man who exploited them was usually only a small master. exploitation of tailoring on a large scale, what is now called the manufacture of ready-made clothes, by the conversion of handicraft tailoring into a domestic industry working for a big capitalist, was at that time even in London only just making it appearance. On the one hand, the exploiters of these artisans was a small master; on the other hand, they all hoped ultimately to become small masters themselves. addition, a mass of inherited guild notions still clung to the German artisan at that time. The greatest honor is due to them, in that they, who were themselves not yet full proletarians but only an appendage of the petty bourgeoisie, an appendage which was passing into the modern proletariat and which did not yet stand in direct opposition to the bourgeoisie, that is, to big capital -- in that these artisans were capable of instinctively anticipating their future development and of

constituting themselves, even if not yet with full consciousness, the party of the proletariat. But it was also inevitable that their old handicraft prejudices should be a stumbling block to them at every moment, whenever it was a question of criticizing existing society in detail, that is, of investigating economic facts. And I do not believe there was a single man in the whole League at that time who had ever read a book on political economy. But that mattered little; for the time being "equality", "brotherhood" and "justice" helped them to surmount every theoretical obstacle.

Meanwhile a second, essentially different Communism was developed alongside that of the League and of Weitling. While I was in Manchester, it was tangibly brought home to me that the economic facts, which have so far played no role or only a contemptible one in the writing of history, are, at least in the modern world, a decisive historical force; that they form the basis of the origination of the present-day class antagonisms; that these class antagonisms, in the countries where they have become fully developed, thanks to large-scale industry, hence especially in England, are in their turn the basis of the formation of political parties and of party struggles, and thus of all political history. Marx had not only arrived at the same view, but had already, in the _German-French Annuals_ (1844), generalized it to the effect that, speaking generally, it is not the state which conditions and regulates the state, and, consequently, that policy and its history are to be explained from the economic relations and their development, and not vice versa. When I visited Marx in Paris in the summer of 1844, our complete agreement in all theoretical fields became evident and our joint work dates from that time. When, in the spring of 1845, we met again in Brussels, Marx had already fully developed his materialist theory of history in its main features form the above-mentioned basis and we now applied ourselves to the detailed elaboration of the newly-won mode of outlook in the most varied directions.

This discovery, which revolutionized the science of history and, as we have seen, is essentially the work of Marx -- a discovery in which I can claim for myself only a very insignificant share -- was, however, of immediate importance for the contemporary workers' movement. Communism among the French and Germans, Chartism among the English, now no longer appeared as something accidental which could just as well not have These movements now presented themselves as a movement of the occurred. modern oppressed class, the proletariat, as the more or less developed forms of its historically necessary struggle against the ruling class, the bourgeoisie; as forms of the class struggle, but distinguished from all earlier class struggles by this one thing, that the present-day oppressed class the proletariat, cannot achieve its emancipation without at the same time emancipating society as a whole from division into classes and, therefore, from class struggles. And Communism now no longer meant the concoction, by means of the imagination, of an ideal society as perfect as possible, but insight into the nature, the conditions and the consequent general aims of the struggle wages by the proletariat.

Now, we were by no means of the opinion that the new scientific results should be confided in large tomes exclusively to the "learned" world. Quite the contrary. We were both of us already deeply involved in the political movement, and possessed a certain following in the

educated world, especially of Western Germany, and abundant contact with the organized proletariat. It was our duty to provide a scientific foundation for our view, but it was equally important for us to win over the European and in the first place the German proletariat to our conviction. As soon as we had become clear in our own minds, we set about the task. We founded a German workers' society in Brussels and took over the _Deutsche Brusseler Zeitung_, which served us as an organ up to the February Revolution. We kept in touch with the revolutionary section of the English Chartists through Julian Harney, the editor of the central organ of the movement, _The Northern Star_, to which I was a contributor. We entered likewise into a sort of cartel with the Brussels democrats (Marx was vice-president of the Democratic Society) and with the French social-democrats of the Reforme , which I furnished with news of the English and German movements. In short, our connections with the radical and proletarian organizations and press organs were quite what one could wish.

Our relations with the League of the Just were as follows: The existence of the League was, of course, known to us; in 1843 Schapper had suggested that I join it, which I at that time naturally refused to do. But we not only kept up our continuous correspondence with the Londoners but remained on still closer terms with Dr Ewerbeck, then the leader of the Paris communities. Without going into the League's internal affairs, we learnt of every important happening. On the other hand, we influenced the theoretical views of the most important members of the League by word of mouth, by letter and through the press. this purpose we also made us of various lithographed circulars, which we dispatched to our friends and correspondents throughout the world on particular occasions, when it was a question of the internal affairs of the Communist Party in process of formation. In these, the League itself sometimes came to be dealt with. Thus, a young Westphalian student, Hermann Kriege, who went to America, came forward there as an emissary of the League and associated himself with the crazy Harro Harring for the purpose of using the League to turn South America upside down. He founded a paper in which, in the name of the League, he preached an extravagant Communism of love dreaming, based on "love" and overflowing with love. Against this we let fly with a circular that did not fail of its effect. Kriege vanished from the League scene.

Later, Weitling came to Brussels. But he was no loner the naive young journeyman-tailor who, astonished at his own talents, was trying to clarify in his own mind just what a communist society would look like. He was now the great man, persecuted by the environs on account of his superiority, who scented rivals, secret enemies and traps everywhere -- the prophet, driven from country to country, who carried a recipe for the realization of heaven on earth ready-made in his pocket, and who was was possessed with the idea that everybody intended to steal it from him. He had already fallen out with the members of the League in London; and in Brussels, where Marx and his wife welcomed him with almost superhuman forbearance, he also could not get along with anyone. So he soon afterwards went to America to try out his role of prophet there.

All these circumstance contributed to the quiet revolution that was taking place in the League, and especially among the leaders in London. The inadequacy of the previous conception of Communism, both the simple French equalitarian Communism and that of Weitling, became more and more

clear to them. The tracing of Communism back to primitive Christianity introduced by Weitling -- no matter how brilliant certain passages to be found in his _Gospel of Poor Sinners_ -- had resulted in delivering the movement in Switzerland to a large extent into the hands, first of fools like Albrecht, and then of exploiting fake prophets like Kuhlmann. "true Socialism" dealt in by a few literary writers -- a translation of French socialist phraseology into corrupt Hegelian German, and sentimental love dreaming (see the section on German of "True" Socialism in the Communist Manifesto -- that Kriege and the study of the corresponding literature introduced in the League was found soon to disqust the old revolutionaries of the league, if only because of its slobbering feebleness. As against the untenability of the previous theoretical views, and as against the practical aberrations resulting therefrom, it was realized more and more in London that Marx and I were right in our new theory. This understanding was undoubtedly promoted by the fact that among the London leaders there were now two men who were considerably superior to those previously mentioned in capacity for theoretical knowledge: the miniature painter Karl Pfander from Heilbronn and the tailor Georg Eccarius from Thuringia.

[Engels footnote: Pfander died about eight years ago in London. he was a man of peculiarly fine intelligence, witty, ironical and dialectical. Eccarius, as we know, was later for many years Secretary of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association, in the General Council of which the following old League members were to be found, among others: Eccarius, Pfander, Lessner, Lochner, Marx and myself. Eccarius subsequently devoted himself exclusively to the English trade union movement.]

It suffices to say that in the spring of 1847 Moll visited Marx in Brussels and immediately afterwards me in Paris, and invited us repeatedly, in the name of his comrades, to enter the League. He reported that they were as much convinced of the general correctness of our mode of outlook as of the necessity of freeing the League from the old conspiratorial traditions and forms. Should we enter, we would be given an opportunity of expounding our critical Communism before a congress of the League in a manifesto, which would then be published as the manifesto of the League; we would likewise be able to contribute our quota towards the replacement of the obsolete League organization by one in keeping with the new times and aims.

We entertained no doubt that an organization within the German working class was necessary, if only for propaganda purposes, and that this organization, in so far as it would not be merely local in character, could only be a secret one, even outside Germany. Now, there already existed exactly such an organization in the shape of the League. What we previously objected to in this League was now relinquished as erroneous by the representatives of the League themselves; we were even invited to co-operate in the work of reorganization. Could we say no? Certainly not. Therefore, we entered the League; Marx founded a League community in Brussels from among our close friends, while I attended the three Paris communities.

In the summer of 1847, the first league Congress took place in London, at which W. Wolff represented the Brussels and I the Paris communities. At this congress the reorganization of the League was carried through first of all. Whatever remained of the old mystical

names dating back to the conspiratorial period was now abolished; the League now consisted of communities, circles, leading circles, a Central Committee and a Congress, and henceforth called itself the "Communist League".

"The aim of the League is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old, bourgeois society based on class antagonisms and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property"

-- thus ran the first article. The organization itself was thoroughly democratic, with elective and always removable boards. This alone barred all hankering after conspiracy, which requires dictatorship, and the League was converted -- for ordinary peace times at least -- into a pure propaganda society. These new Rules were submitted to the communities for discussion -- so democratic was the procedure now followed -- then once again debated at the Second Congress and finally adopted by the latter on December 8, 1847. They are to be found reprinted in Wermuth and Stieber, vol.I, p.239, Appendix X.

The Second Congress took place during the end of November and beginning of December of the same year. Marx also attended this time and expounded the new theory in a fairly long debate -- the congress lasted at least ten days. All contradiction and doubt were finally set at rest, the new basic principles were unanimously adopted, and Marx and I were commissioned to draw up the Manifesto. This was done immediately afterwards. A few weeks before the February Revolution it was sent to London to be printed. Since then it has travelled round the world, has been translated into almost all languages and today still serves in numerous countries as a guide for the proletarian movement. In place of the old League motto, "All Men Are Brothers", appeared the new battle cry, "Working Men of All Countries, Unite!" which openly proclaimed the international character of the struggle. Seventeen years later this battle cry resounded throughout the world as the watchword of the International Working Men's Association, and today the militant proletariat of all countries has inscribed it in its banner.

The February Revolution broke out. The London Central Committee functioning hitherto immediately transferred its powers to the Brussels leading circle. But this decision came at a time when an actual state of siege already existed in Brussels, and the Germans in particular could no longer assemble anywhere. We were all of us just on the point of going to Paris, and so the new Central Committee decided likewise to dissolve, to hand over all its powers to Marx and to empower him immediately to constitute a new Central Committee in Paris. Hardly had the five persons who adopted this decision (March 3, 1848) separated, before police forced their way into Marx's house, arrested him and compelled him to leave for France the following day, which was just where he was wanting to go.

In Paris we all soon came together again. There the following document was drawn up and signed by all the members of the new Central Committee. It was distributed throughout Germany and many a one can still learn something from it even today:

- 1. The whole of Germany shall be declared a single indivisible republic.
- 3. Representatives of the people shall be paid sot hat workers also can sit in the parliament of the German people.
- 4. Universal arming of the people.
- 7. The estates of the princes and other feudal estates, all mines, pits, etc., shall be transformed into state property. On these estates, agriculture is to be conducted on a very large scale and with the most modern scientific means for the benefit of all society.
- 8. Mortgages on peasant holdings shall be declared state property; interest on such mortgages shall be paid by the peasants to the state.
- 9. In the districts where tenant farming is developed, land rent or farming dues shall be paid to the state as a tax.
- 11. All means of transport: railway, canals, steamships, roads, post, etc., shall be taken over by the state. They are to be converted into state property and put at the disposal of the non-possessing class free of charge.
- 14. Limitation of the right of inheritance.
- 15. Introduction of a steeply graded progressive taxation and abolition of taxes on consumer goods.
- 16. Establishment of national workshops. The state shall guarantee a living to all workers and provide for those unable to work.
- 17. Universal free elementary education.

It is in the interest of the German proletariat, of the petite Bourgeoisie and peasantry, to work with all possible energy to put the above measures through. For only by their education can the millions in Germany, who up to now have been exploited by a small number of people and whom it will be attempted to keep in further subjection, get their rights and the power that are their due as the producers of all wealth.

The Committee: Karl Marx, Karl Schapper,
H. Bauer, F. Engels, J. Moll, W. Wolff

At that time the craze for revolutionary legions prevailed ni Paris. Spaniards, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, Poles and Germans flocked together in crowds to liberate their respective fatherlands. The German legion was led by Herwegh, Bornsted, Bornstein. Since immediately after the revolution all foreign workers not only lost their jobs but in addition were harassed by the public, the influx into these legions was very great. the new government saw in them a means of getting rid of foreign workers and granted them _l'etape du soldat_, that is, quarters

along their line of march and a marching allowance of 50 centimes per day up to the frontier, whereafter the eloquent Lamartine, the Foreign Minister who was so readily moved to tears, quickly found an opportunity of betraying them to their respective governments.

We opposed this playing with revolution in the most decisive fashion. To carry an invasion, which was to import the revolution forcibly from outside, into the midst of the ferment then going on in Germany, meant to undermine the revolution in Germany itself, to strengthen the governments and to deliver the legionnaires -- Lamartine guaranteed for that -- defenceless into the hands of the German troops. When subsequently the revolution was victorious in Vienna and Berlin, the legion became all the more purposeless; but once begun, the game was continued.

We founded a German communist club, in which we advised the workers to keep away from the legion and to return instead to their homes singly and work there for the movement. Our old friend Flocon, who had a seat in the Provisional Government, obtained for the workers sent by us the same travel facilities as had been granted to the legionnaires. In this way we returned three or four hundred workers to Germany, including the great majority of the League members.

As could easily be foreseen, the League proved to be much too weak a lever as against the popular mass movement that had now broken out. Three-quarters of the League members who had previously lived abroad had changed their domicile by returning to their homeland; their previous communities were thus to a great extent dissolved and they lost all contact with the League. One part, the more ambitious among them, did not even try to resume this contact, but each one began a small separate movement on his own account in his own locality. Finally, the conditions in each separate petty state, each province and each town were so different that the League would have been incapable of giving more than the most general directives; such directives were, however, much better disseminated through the press. In short, from the moment when the causes which had made the secret League necessary ceased to exist, the secret League as such ceased to mean anything. But this could least of all surprise the persons who had just stripped this same secret League of the last vestige of its conspiratorial character.

That, however, the League had been an excellent school for revolutionary activity was now demonstrated. On the Rhine, where the _Neue Rheinische Zeitung_ provided a firm centre, in Nassau, in Rhenish Hesse, etc., everywhere members of the League stood at the head of the extreme democratic movement. The same was the case in Hamburg. South germany the predominance of petty-bourgeois democracy stood in the In Breslau, Wilhelm Wolff was active with great success until the summer of 1848; in addition he received a Silesian mandate as an alternate representative in the Frankfort parliament. Finally, the compositor Stephan Born, who had worked in Brussels and Paris as an active member of the League, founded a Workers' Brotherhood in Berlin which became fairly widespread and existed until 1850. Born, a very talented young man, who, however, was a bit too much in a hurry to become a political figure, "fraternized" with the most miscellaneous ragtag and bobtail in order to get a crowd together, and was not at all the man who could bring unity into the conflicting tendencies, light into the chaos. Consequently, in the official publications of the

association the views represented in the _Communist Manifesto_ were mingled hodge-podge with guild recollections and guild aspirations, fragments of Louis Blanc and Proudhon, protectionism, etc.; in short, they wanted to please everybody [allen alles sein]. In particular, strikes, trade unions and producers' co-operatives were set going and it was forgotten that above all it was a question of first conquering, by means of political victories, the field in which alone such things could be realized on a lasting basis. When, afterwards, the victories of the reaction made the leaders of the Brotherhood realize the necessity of taking a direct part in the revolutionary struggle, they were naturally left in the lurch by the confused mass which they had grouped around themselves. Born took part in the Dresden uprising in May, 1849 and had a lucky escape. But, in contrast to the great political movement of the proletariat, the Workers' Brotherhood proved to be a pure _Sonderbund_ [separate league], which to a large extent existed only on paper and played such a subordinate role that the reaction did not find it necessary to suppress it until 1850, and its surviving branches until several years later. Born, whose real name was Buttermilch, has not become a big political figure but a petty Swiss professor, who no longer translates Marx into quild language but the meek Renan into his own fulsome German.

With June 13, 1849, the defeat of the May insurrections in Germany and the suppression of the Hungarian revolution by the Russians, a great period of the 1848 Revolution came to a close. But the victory of the reaction was as yet by no means final. A reorganziation of the scattered revolutionary forces was required, and hence also of the League. The situation again forbade, as in 1848, any open organization of the proletariat; hence one had to organize again in secret.

In the autumn of 1849, most of the member of the previous central committees and congresses gathered again in London. The only ones still missing were Schapper, who was jailed in Wiesbaden but came after his acquittal, in the spring of 1850, and Moll, who, after he had accomplished a series of most dangerous missions and agitational journeys -- in the end he recruited mounted gunners for the Palatinate artillery right in the midst of the Prussian army in the Rhine Province -- joined the Besancon workers' company of Willich's corps and was killed by a shot in the head during the encounter at the Murg in front of the Rotenfels Bridge. On the other hand, Willich now entered upon the scene. Willich was one of those sentimental Communists so common in Western Germany since 1845, who on that account alone was instinctively, furtively antagonistic to our critical tendency. More than that, he was entirely the prophet, convinced of his personal mission as the predestined liberator of the German proletariat and as such a direct claimant as much to political as to military dictatorship. Thus, to the primitive Christian Communism previously preached by Weitling was added a kind of communist Islam. However, the propaganda of this new religion was for the first time being restricted to the refugee barracks under Willich's command.

Hence, the League was organized afresh; the Address of march 1850 was issued and Heinrich bauer sent as an emissary to Germany. The Address, composed by Marx and myself, is still of interest today, because petite-bourgeois democracy is even now the party which must certainly be the first to come to power in Germany as the savior of society from the communist workers on the occassion of the next European

upheaval now soon due (the European revolutions, 1815, 1830, 1848-52, 1870, have occurred at intervals of 15 to 18 years in our century). Much of what is said there is, therefore, still applicable today. Heinrich bauer's mission was crowned with complete success. The trusty little shoemaker was a born diplomat. He brought the former members of the League, who had partly become laggards and partly were acting on their own account, back into the active organization, and particularly also the then leaders of the Workers' Brotherhood. The League began to play the dominant role in the workers', peasants' and athletic associations to a far greater extent than before 1848, so that the next quarterly address to the communities, in June 1850, could already report that the student Schurz from Bonn (later on American ex-minister), who was touring Germany in the interest of petty-bourgeois democracy, "had found all fit forces already in the hands of the League". The League was undoutbedly the only revolutionary organization that had any significance in Germany.

But what purpose this organization should serve depended very substantially on whether the prospects of a renewed upsurge of the revolution were realized. And in the course of the year 1850 this became more and more improbable, indeed impossible. The industrial crisis of 1847, which had paved the way for the Revolution of 1848, had been overcome; a new, unprecedented period of industrial prosperity had set in; whoever had eyes to see and used them must have clearly realized that the revolutionary storm of 1848 was gradually spending itself.

"With this general prosperity, in which the productive forces of bourgeois society develop as luxuriantly as is at all possible within bourgeois relationships, _there can be no talk of a real revolution_. Such a revolution is only possible in the periods when both these factors, the modern productive forces and the bourgeois productive forms, come in collision with each other. The various quarrels in which the representatives of the industrial factions of the continental party of order now indulge and mutually compromise themselves, far from providing the occassion for new revolutions are, on the contrary, possible only because the basis of the relationships is momentarily so secure and, what the reaction does not know, so _bourgeois_. From it all attempts of the reaction to hold up bourgeois development _will rebound just as certainly as all moral indignation and all enthusiastic proclamations of the democrats_".

Thus Marx and I wrote in the "Revue of May to October 1850" in the _Neue Rheinische Zeitung_, _Politisch-okonomische Revue_, Nos.V and VI, Hamburg, 1850, p.153.

This cool estimation of the situation, however, was regarded as heresy among many persons, at a time when Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, Mazzini, Kossuth and, among the lesser German lights, Ruge, Kinkel, Gogg and the rest of them crowded in London to form provisional governments of the future not only for their respective fatherlands but for the whole of Europe, and when the only still still necessary was to obtain the requisite money from America as a loan for the revolution to realize at a moment's notice the European revolution and the various republics which went with it was a matter of course. Can anyone be surprised that a man like Willich was taken in by this, that Schapper, acting on his old revolutionary impulse, also allowed himself to be fooled, and that

the majority of the London workers, to a large extent refugees themselves, followed them into the camp of the bourgeois-democratic artificers of revolution? Suffice it to say that the reserve maintained by us was not to the mind of these people; one was to enter into the game of making revolutions. We most decidedly refused to do so. A split ensued; more about this is to be read in the _Revelations_. Then came the arrest of Nothjung, followed by that of Haupt, in Hamburg. The latter turned traitor by divulging the names of the Cologne Central Committee and being slated as the chief witness in the trial; but his relatives had no desires to be thus disgraced and bundled him off to Rio de Janerio, where he later established himself as a businessman and in recognition of his services was appointed first Prussian and then German Consul General. He is now again in Europe.

[Engels footnote: Schapper in London at the end of the sixties. Willich took part in the American Civil War with distinction; he became Brigadier-General and was shot in the chest during the battle of Murfreesboro (Tennessee) but recovered and died about ten years ago in America. Of the other persons mentioned above, I will only remark that Heinrich Bauer was lost track of in Australia, and that Weitling and Ewerbeck died in America.]

For a better understanding of the _Revelations_, I give the list of the Cologne accused:

- (1) P. G. Roser, cigarmaker;
- (2) Heinrich Burgers, who later died a progressive deputy to the Landtag;
- (3) Peter Nothjung, tailor, who died a few years ago a photographer in Breslau;
- (4) W. J. Reiff;
- (5) Dr. Hermann Becker, now chief burgomaster of Cologne and member of the Upper House;
- (6) Dr. Roland Daniels, physician, who died a few years after the trial as a result of tuberculosis contracted in prison;
- (7) Karl Otto, chemist;
- (8) Dr. Abraham Jacoby, now physician in New York;
- (9) Dr. I. J. Klein, now physician and town councillor in Cologne;
- (10) Ferdinand Freiligrath, who, however, was at that time already
 in London;
- (11) I. L. Ehrhard, clerk;
- (12) Friedrich Lessner, tailor, now in London.

After a public trail before a jury lasting from October 4 to November 12, 1852, the following were sentenced for attempted high treason: Roser, Burgers and Nothjung to six, Reiff, Otto and Becker to five, and Lessner to three years' confinement in a fortress; Daniels, Klein, Jacoby and Ehrhard were acquitted.

With the Cologne trial the first period of the German communist workers' movement comes to an end. Immediately after the sentence we dissolved our League; a few months later the Willich-Schapper separate league was also laid to eternal rest.

*

was a country of handicraft and of domestic industry based on hand labor; now it is a big industrial country still undergoing continual industrial transformation. At that time one had to seek out one by one the workers who had an understanding of their position as workers and of their historico-economic antagonism to capital, because this antagonism itself was only just beginning to develop. Today the entire German proletariat has to be placed under exceptional laws, merely in order to slow down a little the process of its development to full consciousness of its position as an oppressed class. At that time the few persons whose minds had penetrated to the realization of the historical role of the proletariat had to forgather in secret, to assemble clandestinely in small communities of 3 to 20 persons. Today the German proletariat no longer needs any official organization, either public or secret. simple self-evident interconnection of like-minded class comrades suffices, without any rules, boards, resolutions or other tangible forms, to shake the whole German Empire to its foundations. Bismarck is the arbiter of Europe beyond the frontiers of Germany, but within them there grows daily more threatening the athletic figure of the German proletariat that Marx foresaw already in 1844, the giant for whom the cramped imperial edifice designed to fit the philistine is even now becoming inadequate and whose mighty stature and broad shoulder are growing until the moment comes when by merely rising from his seat he will shatter the whole structure of the imperial constitution into fragments. And still more. The international movement of the European and American proletariat has become so much strengthened that not merely its first narrow form -- the secret League -- but even its second, infinitely wider form -- the open International Working Men's Association -- has become a fetter for it, and that the simple feeling of solidarity based on the understanding of the identity of class position suffices to create and to hold together one and the same great party of the proletariat among the workers of all countries and tongues. the doctrines which the League represented from 1847 to 1852, and which at that time could be treated by the wise philistines with a shrug of the shoulders as the hallucinations of utter madcaps, as the secret doctrine of a few scattered sectarians, has now innumerable adherents in all civilized countries of the world, among those condemned to the Siberian mines as much as among the gold diggers of California; and the founder of this doctrine, the most hated, most slandered man of his time, Karl Marx, was, when he died, the ever-sought-for and ever-willing counsellor of the proletariat of both the old and the new world.

transcribed by zodiac@io.org