

**CRITIQUE
OF THE
GOTHA
PROGRAMME**
KARL MARX & FREDERICK ENGELS

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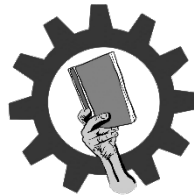
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DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to all cadre who believe with their hearts, minds, and actions in a true Bolshevik Revolution!

For one to be a true Bolshevik, one must desire wholeheartedly, without reservation, to free themselves and their fellow workers from the bonds of class antagonisms. A true Bolshevik is one who understands the foundations of Marxist-Leninist teachings; one who understands that their sole purpose in life is to crush capitalism.

We dedicate this collection of works to you in the hopes that the truths expounded in this book and others will inspire you, the reader, to work to help build Communism.

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PREFACE¹

The manuscript published here—the covering letter to Bracke as well as the critique of the draft programme—was sent

¹ Engels wrote this preface to the first edition of Marx's work *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and had it printed in *Die Neue Zeit* in connection with the forthcoming discussion in the party press of a new party programme [*Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei*] to be adopted at the next congress of the German Social Democrats. Engels hoped that the publication of this work would safeguard the party against repeating the mistakes of the Gotha programme and dispel the reformist illusions associated with the still persisting cult of Lassalle. Given the pressure of censorship, Engels considered it necessary to make certain omissions and to take the edge off the most pointed phrases. In undertaking the publication of this most important programme document of scientific communism, which was exemplary in the way it combatted opportunism, Engels sought to deal a blow at the opportunist elements among the German Social Democrats, which were becoming more active at that time. That was all the more important as at the Erfurt congress the party was going to discuss and adopt a new programme to replace that endorsed at Gotha.

The work was frowned upon by the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag and the *Vorwärts* editorial board, but, as Engels had expected the party itself and socialists in other countries welcomed it.

The *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and Engels' preface were not reprinted in his lifetime. In its original version, without Engels' deletions, the text of the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was first published in 1932 in the USSR in the Russian translation from a copy of Marx's manuscript made by Louise Kautsky.

The Preface first appeared in English, with the opening phrase slightly abridged, and under the title "Introductory Note by Engels" in: *The Socialist*

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in 1875, shortly before the Gotha Unity Congress,² to Bracke for communication to Geib, Auer, Bebel, and Liebknecht and subsequent return to Marx. Since the Halle Party Congress³ has put the discussion of the Gotha Programme on the agenda of the

Series, No. 1, 1918, pp. 3-4, published by The Socialist Labour Press, Glasgow.

² The Unity Congress in Gotha held on May 22-27, 1875, effected a merger of the two trends in the German working-class movement, the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (the Eisenachers) headed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, and the Lassallean General Association of German Workers. Prior to the congress, there had been a long struggle between the Eisenachers, who on the whole adhered to scientific communism, and the Lassalleans, who advocated a kind of petty-bourgeois socialism and refused to recognize the need for economic action and the establishment of trade unions. Up to 1890, the united party was called the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany. This healed the rift in the German working class. When in February 1875 the common platform (the draft Rules and especially the Programme) was worked out, the Eisenachers' leadership agreed to an ideological compromise with the Lassalleans submitting to the German workers' quest for unity and seeking to attain it at any price. Welcoming the establishment of a united socialist party, Marx and Engels nevertheless opposed the ideological compromise with the Lassalleans and subjected the erroneous provisions of the programme to sharp criticism. This, however, did not prevent the congress from approving it with only very minor changes.

³ The congress of the German Social Democrats held on October 12-18, 1890, in Halle was the first one following the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law: Taking part in it were 413 delegates and 17 guests from abroad. The congress adopted new Rules measuring up to the task of turning the party into a mass organization of the working class under conditions of legality. It rejected the Lassallean party programme in force at the time and, on Wilhelm Liebknecht's suggestion, passed a decision on the preparation of a new draft programme for the next party congress in Erfurt. This was to be published three months before the congress for the purpose of discussing it in local party branches and the press. The congress recognized the *Berliner Volksblatt* as the new party organ and the party assumed a new name, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

PREFACE

party, I think I would be guilty of suppression if I any longer withheld from publicity this important—perhaps the most important—document relevant to this discussion.

But the manuscript has yet another and more far-reaching significance. Here for the first time Marx's attitude to the line adopted by Lassalle in his agitation from the very beginning is clearly and firmly set forth, both as regards Lassalle's economic principles and his tactics.

The ruthless severity with which the draft programme is dissected here, the mercilessness with which the results obtained are enunciated and the shortcomings of the draft laid bare—all this today, after fifteen years, can no longer give offense. Specific Lassalleans now exist only abroad as isolated ruins, and in Halle the Gotha Programme was given up even by its creators as altogether inadequate.

Nevertheless, I have omitted a few sharp personal expressions and judgements where these were immaterial and replaced them by dots. Marx himself would have done so if he had published the manuscript today. The violence of the language in some passages was provoked by two circumstances. In the first place, Marx and I had been more intimately connected with the German movement than with any other; we were, therefore, bound to be particularly perturbed by the decidedly retrograde step manifested by this draft programme. And secondly, we were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the International,⁴ engaged in the most

⁴ The *Hague Congress of the International Working Men's Association* took place on September 2-7, 1872. Its task was to reach decisions that would consolidate the resolutions passed by the London Conference of 1871 on the political activity of the working class and against the sectarian sections. Marx and Engels did a tremendous amount of work in preparation for the congress. The General Council meetings, in which they took a most active part, discussed and approved proposals to the congress on the changes to be

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violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists, who made us responsible for everything that happened in the labour movement in Germany; hence we had to expect that we would also be saddled with the secret paternity of this programme. These considerations have now ceased to exist and with them the necessity for the passages in question.

For reasons of censorship, a few sentences have been indicated only by dots. Where I have had to choose a milder expression, this has been enclosed in square brackets. Otherwise, the text has been reproduced word for word.

London, January 6, 1891

Fr. Engels

introduced into the Rules and Regulations of the International, above all, the suggestion that the Rules should incorporate the resolutions on political activity of the working class and on the extension of the powers vested in the General Council.

The Hague Congress was the most representative one in the history of the First International being attended by 65 delegates from 15 national organizations. It took stock of the many years Marx, Engels and their followers devoted to the struggle against all brands of petty-bourgeois sectarianism in the working-class movement, above all Bakuninism. The anarchist leaders were expelled from the International. The decisions of the Hague Congress laid the groundwork for the establishment in various countries of independent political parties of the working class.

MARX LETTER TO WILHELM BRACKE

London, May 5, 1875

Dear Bracke,

Will you be so kind, after you have read the following marginal notes on the unity programme, to pass them on for Geib and Auer, Bebel, and Liebknecht to see. Notabene. *The manuscript should be returned to you* so as to be at my disposal if needs be. I have more than enough to do, and, as it is, must take on far more work than laid down for me by my doctor. Hence it was by no means a "pleasure" to write such a lengthy screed. Yet it was necessary if the steps I shall have to take later on are not to be misinterpreted by the party friends for whom this communication is intended.

After the Unity Congress is over, Engels and I will publish a short statement to the effect that we entirely disassociate ourselves from the said programme of principles and have nothing to do with it.

This is indispensable because of the view taken abroad—a totally erroneous view, carefully nurtured by party enemies—that we are secretly directing the activities of the so-called Eisenach Party from here. Only recently, in a newly published Russian work, Bakunin suggests that I, for instance, am responsible, not only for that party's every programme, etc., but actually for every step taken by Liebknecht from the day he began cooperating with the People's Party.

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Aside from this, it is my duty to refuse recognition, even by maintaining a diplomatic silence, to a programme which, I am convinced, is altogether deplorable as well as demoralizing for the party.

Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes. Hence, if it was impossible to advance *beyond* the Eisenach Programme—and circumstances at the time precluded this—they should simply have come to an agreement about action against the common foe. But to draw up programmes of principles (instead of waiting till a longish spell of common activity has prepared the ground for that sort of thing) is to set up benchmarks for all the world to see, whereby it may gauge how far the party has progressed.

The leaders of the Lassalleans came because circumstances forced them to. Had they been told from the start that there was to be no haggling over principles, they would have been *compelled* to content themselves with a programme of action or a plan of organization for common action. Instead, our people allow them to present themselves armed with mandates, and recognize those mandates as binding, thus surrendering unconditionally to men who are themselves in need of help. To crown it all, they are holding another congress *prior to the congress of compromise*, whereas our own party is holding its congress *post festum*. Obviously their idea was to elude all criticism and not allow their own party time for reflection. One knows that the mere fact of unification is enough to satisfy the workers, but it is wrong to suppose that this momentary success has not been bought too dear.

Besides, the programme's no good, even apart from its canonization of the Lassallean articles of faith.

I shall shortly be sending you the final installments of the French edition of *Capital*. Printing was held up for a

MARX LETTER TO BRACKE

considerable time by the French government ban. The thing will be finished this week or at the beginning of next. Have you received the six previous installments?⁵ Would you also very kindly send me the *address* of Bernhard Becker, to whom I must likewise send the final installments.

The *bookshop* of the *Volksstaat* has peculiar manners. For instance, they haven't as yet sent me so much as a single copy of their reprint of the *Cologne Communist Trial*.

With kind regards,

Yours,

Karl Marx

⁵ The authorized French translation of Volume One of *Capital* was published in installments in Paris between 1872 and 1875 (*Le Capital* Par Karl Marx. Traduction de M. J. Roy, entièrement révisée par l'auteur. [Vol. 1.] Paris, éditeurs, Maurice Lachâtre et C^{ie}). After the final installments had been published, the whole was brought together and published as a book. Since Lachatre was prosecuted for his activity during the Paris Commune and his shop sequestered in 1875, the legal rights were passed on to A. Quêt, a government official, who did his best to hold up the printing and distribution of the book.

MARGINAL NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY

I.

1. "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture, *and since* useful labour is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society."

First part of the paragraph: "Labour is the source of all wealth and all culture."

Labour is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labour, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labour power. The above phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct insofar as it is *implied* that labour is performed with the pertinent objects and instruments. But a socialist programme cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to pass over in silence the *conditions* that alone give them meaning. And insofar as man from the outset behaves towards nature, the primary source of all instruments and objects of labour, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labour becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for ascribing *supernatural creative power* to labour; since precisely from the fact that labour is determined by nature, it follows that the man who possesses no other property than his labour

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power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labour. He can work only with their permission, hence live only with their permission.

Let us now leave the sentence as it stands, or rather limps. What would one have expected in conclusion? Obviously this:

“Since labour is the source of all wealth, no one in society can appropriate wealth except as the product of labour. Therefore, if he himself does not work, he lives by the labour of others and also acquires his culture at the expense of the labour of others.”

Instead of this, by means of the verbal rivet “*and since*” a second proposition is added in order to draw a conclusion from this and not from the first one.

Second part of the paragraph: “Useful labour is possible only in society and through society.”

According to the first proposition, labour was the source of all wealth and all culture; therefore, no society is possible without labour. Now we learn, conversely, that no “useful” labour is possible without society.

One could just as well have said that only in society can useless and even socially harmful labour become a gainful occupation, that only in society can one live by being idle, etc., etc.—in short, one could just as well have copied the whole of Rousseau.

And what is “useful” labour? Surely only labour which produces the intended useful result. A savage—and man was a savage after he had ceased to be an ape—who kills an animal with a stone, who collects fruits, etc., performs “useful” labour.

Thirdly. The conclusion: “And since useful labour is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society.”

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A fine conclusion! If useful labour is possible only in society and through society, the proceeds of labour belong to society — and only so much therefrom accrues to the individual worker as is not required to maintain the “condition” of labour, society.

In fact, this proposition has at all times been made use of *by the champions of the state of society prevailing at any given time*. First come the claims of the government and everything that sticks to it, since it is the social organ for the maintenance of the social order; then come the claims of the various kinds of private owners for the various kinds of private property are the foundations of society, etc. One sees that such hollow phrases can be twisted and turned as desired.

The first and second parts of the paragraph have some intelligible connection only in the following wording:

“Labour becomes the source of wealth and culture only as social labour”, or, what is the same thing, “in and through society”.

This proposition is incontestably correct, for although isolated labour (its material conditions presupposed) can create use values, it can create neither wealth nor culture.

But equally incontestable is the other proposition:

“In proportion as labour develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the non-workers.”

This is the law of all history hitherto. What, therefore, had to be done here, instead of setting down general phrases about “labour” and “society”, was to prove concretely how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which enable and compel the workers to lift this historical curse.

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In fact, however, the whole paragraph, bungled in style and content, is only there in order to inscribe the Lassallean catchword of the “undiminished proceeds of labour” as a slogan at the top of the party banner. I shall return later to the “proceeds of labour”, “equal right”, etc., since the same thing recurs in a somewhat different form further on.

2. “In present-day society, the means of labour are the monopoly of the capitalist class; the resulting dependence of the working class is the cause of misery and servitude in all their forms.”

This sentence, borrowed from the Rules of the International, is incorrect in this “improved” edition.⁶

In present-day society the means of labour are the monopoly of the landowners (the monopoly of land ownership is even the basis of the monopoly of capital) *and* the capitalists. In the passage in question, the Rules of the International mention neither the one nor the other class of monopolists. They speak of the “*monopoly of the means of labour, that is, the sources of life*”. The addition, “sources of life”, makes it sufficiently clear that land is included in the means of labour.

The correction was introduced because Lassalle, for reasons now generally known,⁷ attacked *only* the capitalist class

⁶ Marx is referring to the following passage in the *Rules and Administrative Regulations of the International Working Men's Association*: “That the economical subjection of the man of labour to the monopolizer of the means of labour, that is the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence.”

⁷ An allusion to Lassalle's secret contacts with the Bismarck government (mid-May 1863-February 1864). He promised support to the Prussian government in its struggle against the liberal bourgeoisie in exchange for the introduction of universal suffrage in the country.

and not the landowners. In England, the capitalist is mostly not even the owner of the land on which his factory stands.

3. "The emancipation of labour demands the raising of the means of labour to the common property of society and the collective regulation of the total labour with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labour."

"The raising of the means of labour to common property"! Ought obviously to read their "conversion into common property". But this only in passing.

What are "*proceeds of labour*"? The product of labour or its value? And in the latter case, is it the total value of the product or only that part of the value which labour has newly added to the value of the means of production consumed?

"Proceeds of labour" is a loose notion which Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic concepts.

What is "fair" distribution?

Do not the bourgeois assert that present-day distribution is "fair"? And is it not, in fact, the only "fair" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal concepts or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise from economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about "fair" distribution?

To understand what is implied in this connection by the phrase "fair distribution", we must take the first paragraph and this one together. The latter presupposes a society wherein "the means of labour are common property and the total labour is collectively regulated", and from the first paragraph we learn that "the proceeds of labour belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society".

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“To all members of society”? To those who do not work as well? What remains then of “the undiminished proceeds of labour”? Only to those members of society who work? What remains then of “the equal right” of all members of society?

But “all members of society” and “equal right” are obviously mere phrases. The crucial point is this, that in this communist society every worker must receive his “undiminished” Lassallean “proceeds of labour”.

Let us take first of all the words “proceeds of labour” in the sense of the product of labour; then the collective proceeds of labour are the *total social product*.

From this must now be deducted:

First, cover for replacement of the means of production used up.

Secondly, additional portion for expansion of production.

Thirdly, reserve or insurance funds to provide against accidents, disturbances caused by natural factors, etc.

These deductions from the “undiminished proceeds of labour” are an economic necessity and their magnitude is to be determined according to available means and forces, and party by computation of probabilities, but they are in no way calculable by equity.

There remains the other part of the total product, intended to serve as means of consumption.

Before this is divided among the individuals, there has to be again deducted from it:

First, the general costs of administration not directly appertaining to production.

This part will, from the outset, be very considerably restricted in comparison with present-day society and it diminishes in proportion as the new society develops.

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Secondly, that which is intended for the common satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc.

From the outset this part grows considerably in comparison with present-day society and it grows in proportion as the new society develops.

Thirdly, funds for those unable to work, etc., in short, for what is included under so-called official poor relief today.

Only now do we come to the "distribution" which the programme, under Lassallean influence, has alone in view in its narrow fashion, namely, to that part of the means of consumption which is divided among the individual producers of the collective.

The "undiminished proceeds of labour" have already unnoticeably become converted into the "diminished" proceeds, although what the producer is deprived of in his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society.

Just as the phrase of the "undiminished proceeds of labour" has disappeared, so now does the phrase of the "proceeds of labour" disappear altogether.

Within the collective society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here *as the value* of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of the total labour. The phrase "proceeds of labour", objectionable even today on account of its ambiguity, thus loses all meaning.

What we are dealing with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society, which is thus in every

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respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labour. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labour time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another.

Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is the exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle—bourgeois *right*, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists *on the average* and not in the individual case.

In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly encumbered by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the

producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labour. But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time or can work for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal* right is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognizes no class distinctions, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes the unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity of the workers as natural privileges. *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.* Right by its nature can exist only as the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable by an equal standard only insofar as they are made subject to an equal criterion, are taken from a *certain* side only, for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Besides, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, etc., etc. Thus, given an equal amount of work done, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, etc. To avoid all these defects, right would have to be unequal rather than equal.

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and

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thereby also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of common wealth flow more abundantly — only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!

I have dealt at greater length with the "undiminished proceeds of labour", on the one hand, and with "equal right" and "fair distribution", on the other, in order to show what a crime it is to attempt, on the one hand, to force on our Party again, as dogmas, ideas which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete verbal rubbish, while again perverting, on the other, the realistic outlook, which it cost so much effort to instill into the Party but which has now taken root in it, by means of ideological, legal and other trash so common among the Democrats and French Socialists.

Quite apart from the analysis so far given, it was in general a mistake to make a fuss about so-called *distribution* and put the principal stress on it.

Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of non-workers in the form of capital and land ownership, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labour power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the

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collective property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. The vulgar socialists (and from them in turn a section of the Democrats) have taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?

4. "The emancipation of labour must be the work of the working class, in relation to which all other classes are *only one reactionary mass*."

The main clause is taken from the introductory words of the Rules of the International, but "improved". There it is said: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves"; here, on the contrary, the "working class" has to emancipate—what? "Labour". Let him understand who can.

In compensation, the subordinate clause, on the other hand, is a Lassallean quotation of the first water: "in relation to which (the working class) all other classes are *only one reactionary mass*".

In the *Communist Manifesto* it is said: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a *really revolutionary class*. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product."

The bourgeoisie is here conceived as a revolutionary class—as the bearer of large-scale industry—in relation to the feudal lords and the middle estates, who desire to maintain all social positions that are the creation of obsolete modes of

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production. Thus, they do not form *together with the bourgeoisie* only one reactionary mass.

On the other hand, the proletariat is revolutionary in relation to the bourgeoisie because, having itself grown up on the basis of large-scale industry, it strives to strip off from production the capitalist character that the bourgeoisie seeks to perpetuate. But the *Manifesto* adds that the “middle estates” are becoming revolutionary “in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat”.

From this point of view, therefore, it is again nonsense to say that they, “together with the bourgeoisie”, and with the feudal lords into the bargain, “form only one reactionary mass” in relation to the working class.

Did anyone proclaim to the artisans, small manufacturers, etc., and *peasants* during the last elections: In relation to us you, together with the bourgeoisie and feudal lords, form only one reactionary mass?⁸

Lassalle knew the *Communist Manifesto* by heart, as his faithful followers know the gospels written by him. If, therefore, he has falsified it so grossly, this has occurred only to put a good color on his alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie.

In the above paragraph, moreover, his oracular saying is dragged in by the hair, without any connection with the botched quotation from the Rules of the International. Thus, it is here simply an impertinence, and indeed not at all

⁸ The reference is to the address “An die Parteigenossen!” (*Der Volksstaat*, No. 105, October 31, 1873) issued by the leadership of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party before the elections to the German Reichstag on January 10, 1874.

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displeasing to Mr. Bismarck, one of those cheap pieces of insolence in which the Marat of Berlin⁹ deals.

5. "The working class strives for its emancipation first of all *within the framework of the present-day national state*, conscious that the necessary result of its efforts, which are common to the workers of all civilized countries, will be the international brotherhood of peoples."

Lassalle, in opposition to the *Communist Manifesto* and to all earlier socialism, conceived the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint. He is being followed in this—and that after the work of the International!

It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organize itself at home *as a class* and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. To this extent its class struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the *Communist Manifesto* says, "in form". But the "framework of the present-day national state", for instance, the German Empire, is itself in its turn economically "within the framework of the world market", politically "within the framework of the system of states". Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Mr. Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in his pursuing his kind of *international* policy.

And to what does the German workers' party reduce its internationalism? To the consciousness that the result of its efforts "will be the *international brotherhood of peoples*"—a phrase borrowed from the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom, which is intended to pass as equivalent to the

⁹ An ironical reference to Hasselmann, the editor-in-chief of the *Neuer Social-Demokrat*.

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international brotherhood of the working classes in the joint struggle against the ruling classes and their governments. So not a word *about the international functions* of the German working class! And it is thus that it is to defy its own bourgeoisie—which is already linked up in brotherhood against it with the bourgeois of all other countries—and Mr. Bismarck's international policy of conspiracy!

In fact, the internationalism of the programme stands *even infinitely below* that of the Free Trade Party. The latter also asserts that the result of its efforts will be "the international brotherhood of peoples". But it also *does* something to make trade international and by no means contents itself with the consciousness—that all peoples are carrying on trade at home.

The international activity of the working classes does not in any way depend on the existence of the "*International Working Men's Association*". This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for that activity; an attempt which was a lasting success on account of the impulse which it gave, but which was no longer realizable in *its first historical form* after the fall of the Paris Commune.

Bismarck's *Norddeutsche* was absolutely right when it announced, to the satisfaction of its master, that the German workers' party had forsworn internationalism in the new programme.¹⁰

II.

"Starting from these basic principles, the German workers' party strives by all

¹⁰ In its editorial article (the "Politischer Tagesbericht" section) the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 67, March 20, 1875, wrote in connection with the draft programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany that "the Social-Democratic propaganda has become cautious in some ways: it has disavowed Internationalism".

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legal means for the *free state-and-socialist* society; the abolition of the wage system *together with* the iron law of wages-and-exploitation in every form; the elimination of all social and political inequality."

I shall return to the "free" state later.

So, in future, the German workers' party has got to believe in Lassalle's "iron law of wages"!¹¹ That this may not be lost, the nonsense is perpetrated of speaking of the "abolition of the wage system" (it should read: system of wage labour) "*together with* the iron law of wages". If I abolish wage labour, then naturally I abolish its laws too, whether they are of "iron" or sponge. But Lassalle's attack on wage labour turns almost solely on this so-called law. In order, therefore, to prove that the Lassallean sect has won, the "wage system" must be abolished "*together with* the iron law of wages" and not without it.

It is well known that nothing of the "iron law of wages" is Lassalle's except the word "iron" borrowed from Goethe's "eternal, iron, great laws". The word *iron* is a label by which the true believers recognize one another. But if I take the law with Lassalle's stamp on it and, consequently, in his sense, then I must also take it with his substantiation. And what is that? As Lange already showed, shortly after Lassalle's death, it is the Malthusian theory of population (preached by Lange himself). But if this theory is correct, then again I *cannot* abolish the law even if I abolish wage labour a hundred times over, because the law then governs not only the system of wage labour but *every* social system. Basing themselves directly on this, the

¹¹ On page 5 of his *Arbeiterlesebuch* Lassalle quotes a passage about the "iron law of wages" from his pamphlet *Offnes Antwortschreiben an das Central-Comite zur Berufung eines Allgemeinen Deutschen Arbeitercongresses zu Leipzig*, Zurich, 1863, pp. 15-16.

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economists have been proving for fifty years and more that socialism cannot abolish destitution, *which has its basis in nature*, but can only make it *general*, distribute it simultaneously over the whole surface of society!

But all this is not the main thing. *Quite apart* from the *false* Lassallean formulation of the law, the truly outrageous retrogression consists in the following:

Since Lassalle's death there has asserted itself in *our* Party the scientific understanding that *wages* are not what they *appear* to be, namely the *value*, or *price*, of *labour*, but only a masked form for the *value*, or *price*, of *labour power*. Thereby the whole bourgeois conception of wages hitherto, as well as all the criticism hitherto directed against this conception, was thrown overboard once for all and it was made clear that the wage-worker has permission to work for his own subsistence, that is, *to live* only insofar as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist (and hence also for the latter's co-consumers of surplus value); that the whole capitalist system of production turns on increasing this gratis labour by extending the working day or by developing productivity, that is, increasing the intensity of labour power, etc.; that, consequently, the system of wage labour is a system of slavery, and indeed of a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment. And after this understanding has gained more and more ground in our Party, one returns to Lassalle's dogmas although one must have known that Lassalle *did not know* what wages were but following in the wake of the bourgeois economists took the appearance for the essence of the matter.

It is as if, among slaves who have at last got behind the secret of slavery and broken out in rebellion, a slave still in thrall to obsolete notions were to inscribe on the programme of the

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rebellion: Slavery must be abolished because the feeding of slaves in the system of slavery cannot exceed a certain low maximum!

Does not the mere fact that the representatives of our Party were capable of perpetrating such a monstrous attack on the understanding that has spread among the mass of our Party prove by itself with what criminal levity and with what lack of conscience they set to work in drawing up this compromise programme!

Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph, "the elimination of all social and political inequality", it ought to have been said that with the abolition of class distinctions all social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself.

III.

"The German workers' party, in order to pave the way for the solution of the social question demands the establishment of producers' cooperative societies with state aid under the democratic control of the working people. The producers' cooperative societies are to be called into being for industry and agriculture on such a scale that the socialist organization of the total labour will arise from them."

After the Lassallean "iron law of wages", the panacea of the prophet. The way for it is "paved" in worthy fashion. In place of the existing class struggle appears a newspaper scribbler's phrase: "*the social question*", for the "*solution*" of which one "paves the way". Instead of arising from the revolutionary process of the transformation of society, the "socialist organization of the total labour" "arises" from the "state aid" that the state gives to the producers' cooperative societies which the *state*, not

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the worker, “*calls into being*”. It is worthy of Lassalle’s imagination that with state loans one can build a new society just as well as a new railway!¹²

From the remnants of a sense of shame, “state aid” has been put—“under the democratic control of the working people”.

In the first place, the “working people” in Germany consist in their majority of peasants, and not of proletarians.

Secondly, “democratic” means in German “*volksherrschaftlich*” [“by the rule of the people”]. But what does “control of the working people by the rule of the people” mean? And particularly in the case of working people who, through these demands that they put to the state, express their full consciousness that they neither rule nor are ripe for rule!

It would be superfluous to deal here with the criticism of the recipe prescribed by Buchez in the reign of Louis Philippe in *opposition* to the French Socialists and accepted by the reactionary workers of the *Atelier*. The chief offense does not lie in having inscribed this specific nostrum in the programme, but in taking a retrograde step at all from the standpoint of a class movement to that of a sectarian movement.

That the workers desire to establish the conditions for cooperative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to transform the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of cooperative societies with state aid. But as far as the present cooperative

¹² A reference to one of Lassalle’s programme theses on the establishment of workers’ producer associations with the aid of the state. Lassalle and his followers repeatedly emphasized that what they had in mind was a state in which power would pass into the hands of the working people through universal suffrage.

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societies are concerned, they are of value *only* insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not proteges either of the governments or of the bourgeois.

IV.

I come now to the democratic section.

A. "*The free basis of the state.*"

First of all, according to II, the German workers' party strives for "the free state".

Free state—what is it?

It is by no means the purpose of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state "free". In the German Empire the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it, and even today forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state".

The German workers' party—at least if it adopts the programme—shows that its socialist ideas are not even skin-deep, in that, instead of treating existing society (and this holds good for any future one) as the *basis* of the existing *state* (or of the future state in the case of future society), it treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own "*intellectual, ethical, and libertarian bases*".

And what of the wild abuse which the programme makes of the words "*present-day state*", "*present-day society*", and of the still more riotous misconception it creates in regard to the state to which it addresses its demands?

"Present-day society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other

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hand, the “present-day state” changes with a country’s frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from that in Switzerland, and different in England from that in the United States. “The *present-day state*” is, therefore, a fiction.

Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common that they are based on modern bourgeois society, more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the “present-day state”, in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state.

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Now the programme deals neither with this nor with the future state of communist society.

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old democratic litany familiar to all: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, a people’s militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People’s Party, of the League of Peace and Freedom. They are all demands which, insofar as they are not exaggerated in fantastic presentation, have already been

implemented. Only the state to which they belong does not lie within the borders of the German Empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc. This sort of “state of the future” is a *present-day state*, although existing outside the “framework” of the German Empire.

But one thing has been forgotten. Since the German workers’ party expressly declares that it acts within “the present-day national state”, hence within its own state, the Prusso-German Empire—its demands would indeed otherwise be largely meaningless, since one only demands what one has not yet got—it should not have forgotten the chief thing, namely that all those pretty little gewgaws rest on the recognition of what is called sovereignty of the people and hence are appropriate only in a *democratic republic*.

Since one has not the courage—and wisely so, for the circumstances demand caution—to demand the democratic republic, as the French workers’ programmes under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon did, one should not have resorted to the subterfuge, neither “honest” nor decent, of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture and at the same time already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and bureaucratically carpentered, and then assuring this state into the bargain that one imagines one will be able to force such things upon it “by legal means”.

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last form of state of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion—even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism which keeps within the limits of what is permitted by the police and not permitted by logic.

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That, in fact, by the word "state" is meant the government machine or the state insofar as it forms a special organism separated from society through division of labour, is shown alone by the words

"the German workers' party demands *as the economic basis of the state: a single progressive income tax,*" etc.

Taxes are the economic basis of the government machinery and of nothing else. In the state of the future existing in Switzerland, this demand has been pretty well fulfilled. Income tax presupposes various sources of income of the various social classes, and hence capitalist society. It is, therefore, nothing remarkable that the Liverpool FINANCIAL REFORMERS, bourgeois headed by Gladstone's brother, are putting forward the same demand as the programme.¹³

B. "The German workers' party demands as the intellectual and ethical basis of the state:

1. "Universal and *equal education of the people* by the state. Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction."

Equal education of the people? What idea lies behind these words? Is it believed that in present-day society (and it is only with this that one is dealing) education can be *equal* for all classes? Or is it demanded that the upper classes also shall be compulsorily reduced to the modicum of education—the

¹³ The *Liverpool Financial Reform Association* was founded in 1848, and for a long time Robertson Gladstone was its President. Its aim was to "advocate the adoption of a simple and equitable system of direct taxation, fairly levied upon property and income, in lieu of the present unequal, complicated, and expensively-collected duties upon commodities" (*Tracts of the Liverpool Financial Reform Association*, Liverpool, 1851, p. VII).

elementary school—that alone is compatible with the economic conditions not only of the wage labourers but of the peasants as well?

“Universal compulsory school attendance. Free instruction”. The former exists even in Germany, the latter in Switzerland and in the United States in the case of elementary schools. If in some states of the latter country “upper” educational institutions are also “free”, that only means in fact defraying the cost of the education of the upper classes from the general tax receipts. Incidentally, the same holds good for “free administration of justice” demanded under A, 5. The administration of criminal justice is to be had free everywhere; that of civil justice is concerned almost exclusively with conflicts over property and hence affects almost exclusively the propertied classes. Are they to carry on their litigation at the expense of the national coffers?

The paragraph on the schools should at least have demanded technical schools (theoretical and practical) in combination with the elementary school.

“Education of the people by the state” is altogether objectionable. Defining by a general law the expenditures on the elementary schools, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the subjects of instruction, etc., and, as is done in the United States, supervising the fulfilment of these legal specifications by state inspectors, is a very different thing from appointing the state as the educator of the people! Government and Church should rather be equally excluded from any influence on the school. Particularly, indeed, in the Prusso-German Empire (and one should not take refuge in the rotten subterfuge that one is speaking of a “state of the future”; we have seen how matters stand in this respect) the state has need, on the contrary, of a very stern education by the people.

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But the whole programme, for all its democratic clang, is tainted through and through by the Lassallean sect's servile belief in the state, or, what is no better, by a democratic belief in miracles, or rather it is a compromise between these two kinds of belief in miracles, both equally remote from socialism.

"Freedom of science" says a paragraph of the Prussian Constitution. Why, then, here?

"*Freedom of conscience*"! If one desired at this time of the *Kulturkampf*¹⁴ to remind liberalism of its old catchwords, it surely could have been done only in the following form: Everyone should be able to attend to his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the workers' party ought at any rate in this connection to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of *religious unfreedom of conscience*, and that for its part it endeavors rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion. But one chooses not to transgress the "bourgeois" level.

I have now come to the end, for the appendix that now follows in the programme does not constitute a *characteristic* component part of it. Hence I can be very brief here.

¹⁴ *Kulturkampf* (struggle for culture)—the name given by bourgeois liberals to a system of measures implemented in the 1870s by Bismarck's government under the banner of a campaign for secular culture. It was directed against the Catholic Church and the Party of the Centre. Under the pretext of the anti-Catholic struggle Bismarck's government also intensified the national oppression of the Polish lands which had fallen under Prussia's sway. With this end in view, it passed laws restricting the rights of the Catholic clergy. The law of March 1872 stripped the clergy of the right to supervise school education, thus undermining the influence of the Polish clergy in this field. Education was now controlled by the Empire's officials. Additionally, by the edicts of October 26, 1872, and October 27, 1873, all schools in Posen were to use German.

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2. "Normal working day."

In no other country has the workers' party limited itself to such a vague demand but has always fixed the length of the working day that it considers normal under the given circumstances.

3. "Restriction of female labour and prohibition of child labour."

The standardization of the working day must include the restriction of female labour, insofar as it relates to the duration, breaks, etc., of the working day; otherwise, it could only mean the exclusion of female labour from branches of industry that are especially unhealthy for the female body or are morally objectionable to the female sex. If that is what was meant, it should have been said.

"Prohibition of child labour"! Here it is absolutely essential to state the *age limit*.

A *general prohibition* of child labour is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish.

Its implementation—if it were possible—would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other precautionary stipulations for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society.

4. "State supervision of factory, workshop and domestic industry."

In consideration of the Prusso-German state it should definitely have been demanded that the inspectors are to be removable only by a court of law; that any worker can have them prosecuted for neglect of duty; that they must belong to the medical profession.

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5. "Regulation of prison labour."

A petty demand in a general workers' programme. In any case, it should have been clearly stated that there is no intention from fear of competition to allow ordinary criminals to be treated like beasts, and especially that there is no desire to deprive them of their sole means of betterment, productive labour. This was surely the least one might have expected from Socialists.

6. "An effective liability law."

It should have been stated what is meant by an "effective" liability law.

Let it be noted, incidentally, that in speaking of the normal working day the part of factory legislation that deals with health regulations and safety measures, etc., has been overlooked. The liability law only comes into operation when these regulations are infringed.

In short, this appendix too is distinguished by slovenly editing.

Dixi et salvavi animam meam.

ENGELS ON THE GOTHA PROGRAMME

ENGELS LETTER TO AUGUST BEBEL (MARCH 18-28, 1875)¹⁵

London, March 18-28, 1875

Dear Bebel,

I have received your letter of February 23 and am glad to hear that you are in such good bodily health.

You ask me what we think of the unification affair. We are, unfortunately, in exactly the same boat as yourself. Neither Liebknecht nor anyone else has let us have any kind of information, and hence we too know only what is in the

¹⁵ Engels' letter to August Bebel written between March 18 and 28, 1875 is closely connected with Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and is traditionally published together with the latter work. It conveyed the joint opinion of Marx and Engels concerning the fusion of two German workers' parties, the Eisenachers and the Lassalleans, scheduled for early 1875. The immediate reason for the letter was the publication of the draft programme of the future united Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany (*Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei*) in *Der Volksstaat* (the organ of the Eisenachers) and the *Neuer Social-Demokrat* (the organ of the Lassalleans) on March 7, 1875. The draft programme was approved with slight changes by the unity congress at Gotha on May 22-27, 1875, and came to be known as the Gotha Programme.

This letter was first published by Bebel, after the lapse of 36 years, in his *Aus meinem Leben, Zweiter Teil*, Stuttgart, 1911. In the present edition the letter is printed according to this book.

It was published in English for the first time in: K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Lawrence, London [1933], pp. 51-62.

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papers—not that there was anything in them until a week or so ago, when the draft programme appeared. That astonished us not a little, I must say.

Our party had so often held out a conciliatory hand to the Lassalleans, or at least proffered cooperation, only to be rebuffed so often and so contemptuously by the Hasenclevers, Hasselmanns and Tolckes as to lead any child to the conclusion that, should these gentlemen now come and themselves proffer conciliation, they must be in a hell of a dilemma. Knowing full well what these people are like, however, it behoves us to make the most of that dilemma and insist on every conceivable guarantee that might prevent these people from restoring, at our party's expense, their shattered reputation in general working-class opinion. They should be given an exceedingly cool and cautious reception, and union be made dependent on the degree of their readiness to abandon their sectarian slogans and their state aid, and to accept in its essentials the Eisenach Programme of 1869¹⁶ or an improved edition of it adapted to the present day. Our party has *absolutely nothing to learn* from the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere, i.e., the crux of the matter where the programme is concerned, but the Lassalleans doubtless have something to learn from the party; the first prerequisite for union was that they cease to be sectarians, Lassalleans, i.e., that, first and foremost, they should, if not wholly relinquish the universal panacea of state aid, at least admit it to be a secondary provisional measure alongside and amongst many

¹⁶ Engels is referring to the *Programm und Statuten der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiter-Partei*, adopted at the general German workers' congress in Eisenach in August 1869 and published in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* on August 14, 1869. The congress founded the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany. By and large the programme complied with the principles of the International Working Men's Association.

others recognized as possible. The draft programme shows that our people, while infinitely superior to the Lassallean leaders in matters of theory, are far from being a match for them where political guile is concerned; once again the “honest men”¹⁷ have been cruelly done in the eye by the dishonest.

To begin with, they adopt the high-sounding but historically false Lassallean dictum: in relation to the working class all other classes are only one reactionary mass. This proposition is true only in certain exceptional instances, for example in the case of a revolution by the proletariat, e.g., the Commune, or in a country in which not only has the bourgeoisie constructed state and society after its own image but the democratic petty bourgeoisie, in its wake, has already carried that reconstruction to its logical conclusion. If, for instance, in Germany, the democratic petty bourgeoisie were part of this reactionary mass, then how could the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party have gone hand in hand with it, with the People’s Party,¹⁸ for years on end? How could the *Volksstaat* derive virtually all its political content from the petty-bourgeois democratic *Frankfurter Zeitung*? And how can one explain the adoption in this same programme of no less than seven demands that coincide exactly and word for word with the programme of the People’s Party and of petty-bourgeois democracy? I mean the seven political

¹⁷ The “honest men” — nickname of the members of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party (the Eisenachers), as distinct from the members of the General Association of German Workers (the Lassalleans), the “dishonest men”.

¹⁸ The *German People’s Party*, established in September 1868, embraced the democratic section of the bourgeoisie, mostly in the South-German states. The party opposed the establishment of Prussian hegemony in Germany and advocated the idea of a federative German state.

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demands, 1 to 5 and 1 to 2, of which there is not one that is not *bourgeois-democratic*.¹⁹

Secondly, the principle that the workers' movement is an international one is, to all intents and purposes, utterly denied in respect of the present, and this by men who, for the space of five years and under the most difficult conditions, upheld that principle in the most laudable manner. The German workers' position in the van of the European movement rests *essentially* on their genuinely international attitude during the war²⁰; no other proletariat would have behaved so well. And now this principle is to be denied by them at a moment when, everywhere abroad, workers are stressing it all the more by reason of the efforts made by governments to suppress every attempt at its practical application in an organization! And what is left of the internationalism of the workers' movement? The dim prospect—not even of subsequent cooperation among European workers with a view to their liberation—nay, but of a future

¹⁹ A reference to the following articles of the draft Gotha Programme: "The German workers' party demands as the free basis of the state:

"1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot for all males who have reached the age of 21, for all elections in the state and in the community. 2. Direct legislation by the people with the right to initiate and to reject bills. 3. Universal military training. A people's militia in place of the standing army. Decisions regarding war and peace to be taken by a representative assembly of the people. 4. Abolition of all exceptional laws, in particular the laws on the press, associations and assembly. 5. Jurisdiction by the people. Administration of justice without fees.

"The German workers' party demands as the intellectual and moral basis of the state:

"1. Universal and equal education of the people by the state. Compulsory school attendance. Free instruction. 2. Freedom of science. Freedom of conscience."

²⁰ The reference is to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71.

“international brotherhood of peoples” — of your Peace League bourgeois “United States of Europe”!²¹

There was, of course, no need whatever to mention the International as such. But at the very least there should have been no going back on the programme of 1869, and some sort of statement to the effect that, *though first of all* the German workers' party is acting within the limits set by its political frontiers (it has no right to speak in the name of the European proletariat, especially when what it says is wrong), it is nevertheless conscious of its solidarity with the workers of all other countries and will, as before, always be ready to meet the obligations that solidarity entails. Such obligations, even if one does not definitely proclaim or regard oneself as part of the “International”, consist for example in aid, abstention from blacklegging during strikes, making sure that the party organs keep German workers informed of the movement abroad, agitation against impending or incipient dynastic wars and, during such wars, an attitude such as was exemplarily maintained in 1870 and 1871, etc.

Thirdly, our people have allowed themselves to be saddled with the Lassallean “iron law of wages” which is based on a completely outmoded economic view, namely that on average

²¹ The *League of Peace and Freedom* — a pacifist organization set up in Switzerland in 1867 with the active participation of Victor Hugo, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and other democrats. The League asserted that it was possible to prevent wars by creating the “United States of Europe”. Its leaders did not disclose the social sources of wars and often confined anti-militarist activity to mere declarations. At the General Council meeting of August 13, 1867, Marx spoke against the International’s official participation in the League’s Inaugural Congress, since this would have meant solidarity with its bourgeois programme, but recommended that some members of the International should attend the Congress in their personal capacity in order to support revolutionary-democratic decisions.

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the workers receive only the *minimum* wage because, according to the Malthusian theory of population, there are always too many workers (such was Lassalle's reasoning). Now in *Capital* Marx has amply demonstrated that the laws governing wages are very complex, that, according to circumstances, now this law, now that, holds sway, that they are therefore by no means iron but are, on the contrary, exceedingly elastic, and that the subject really cannot be dismissed in a few words, as Lassalle imagined. Malthus' argument, upon which the law Lassalle derived from him and Ricardo (whom he misinterpreted) is based, as that argument appears, for instance, on p. 5 of the *Arbeiterlesebuch*, where it is quoted from another pamphlet of Lassalle's,²² is exhaustively refuted by Marx in the section on "Accumulation of Capital". Thus, by adopting the Lassallean "iron law" one commits oneself to a false proposition and false reasoning in support of the same.

Fourthly, as its *one and only social* demand, the programme puts forward—Lassallean state aid in its starkest form, as stolen by Lassalle from Buchez.²³ And this, after Bracke has so ably demonstrated the sheer futility of that demand; after almost all, if not all, of our party speakers have, in their struggle against the Lassalleans, been compelled to make a stand against this "state aid"! Our party could hardly demean itself further. Internationalism sunk to the level of Amand Goegg, socialism to that of the bourgeois republican Buchez, who *confronted the socialists* with this demand in order to supplant them!

²² On page 5 of his *Arbeiterlesebuch* Lassalle quotes a passage about the "iron law of wages" from his pamphlet *Offnes Antwortschreiben an das Central-Comite zur Berufung eines Allgemeinen Deutschen Arbeitercongresses zu Leipzig, Zurich, 1863*, pp. 15-16.

²³ Philippe Joseph Buchez, one of the first ideologists of the so-called Christian socialism, advanced a plan for the establishment of workers' producer associations with the aid of the state.

But “state aid” in the Lassallean sense of the word is, after all, at most only *one* measure among many others for the attainment of an end here lamely described as “paving the way for the solution of the social question”, as though in our case there were still a social *question* that remained *unsolved* in theory! Thus, if you were to say: The German workers’ party strives to abolish wage labour and hence class distinctions by introducing cooperative production into industry and agriculture, and on a national scale; it is in favor of any measure calculated to attain that end!—then no Lassallean could possibly object.

Fifthly, there is absolutely no mention of the organization of the working class as a class through the medium of trade unions. And that is a point of the utmost importance, this being the proletariat’s true class organization in which it fights its daily battles with capital, in which it trains itself and which nowadays can no longer simply be smashed, even with reaction at its worst (as presently in Paris). Considering the importance this organization is likewise assuming in Germany, it would in our view be indispensable to accord it some mention in the programme and, possibly, to leave some room for it in the organization of the party.

All these things have been done by our people to oblige the Lassalleans. And what have the others conceded? That a host of somewhat muddled and *purely democratic demands* should figure in the programme, some of them being of a purely fashionable nature—for instance “by the people” such as exists in Switzerland and does more harm than good, if it can be said to do anything at all. *Administration* by the people—that would at least be something. Similarly omitted is the first prerequisite of all liberty—that all officials be responsible for all their official actions to every citizen before the ordinary courts and in accordance with common law. That demands such as freedom of

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science and freedom of conscience figure in every liberal bourgeois programme and seem a trifle out of place here is something I shall not enlarge upon.

The free people's state is transformed into the free state. Grammatically speaking, a free state is one in which the state is free vis-a-vis its citizens, a state, that is, with a despotic government. All the palaver about the state ought to be dropped, especially after the Commune, which had ceased to be a state in the true sense of the term. The *people's state* has been flung in our teeth *ad nauseam* by the anarchists, although Marx's anti-Proudhon piece and after it the *Communist Manifesto* declare outright that, with the introduction of the socialist order of society, the state will dissolve of itself and disappear. Now, since the state is merely a transitional institution of which use is made in the struggle, in the revolution, to keep down one's enemies by force, it is utter nonsense to speak of a free people's state; so long as the proletariat still *makes use* of the state, it makes use of it, not for the purpose of freedom, but of keeping down its enemies and, as soon as there can be any question of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore suggest that *Gemeinwesen* be universally substituted for *state*; it is a good old German word that can very well do service for the French "Commune".

"The elimination of all social and political inequality", rather than "the abolition of all class distinctions", is similarly a most dubious expression. As between one country, one province and even one place and another, living conditions will always evince a *certain* inequality which may be reduced to a minimum but never wholly eliminated. The living conditions of Alpine dwellers will always be different from those of the plainsmen. The concept of a socialist society as a realm of *equality* is a one-sided French concept deriving from the old "liberty,

equality, fraternity", a concept which was justified in that, in its own time and place, it signified a *phase of development*, but which, like all the one-sided ideas of earlier socialist schools, ought now to be superseded, since they produce nothing but mental confusion, and more accurate ways of presenting the matter have been discovered.

I shall desist, although almost every word in this programme, a programme which is, moreover, insipidly written, lays itself open to criticism. It is such that, should it be adopted, Marx and I could *never* recognize a *new* party set up on that basis and shall have to consider most seriously what attitude—public as well as private—we should adopt towards it.²⁴ Remember that abroad *we* are held responsible for any and every statement and action of the German Social-Democratic Workers' Party. e.g., by Bakunin in his work *Statehood and Anarchy*, in which we are made to answer for every injudicious word spoken or written by Liebknecht since the inception of the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*. People imagine that we run the whole show from here, whereas you know as well as I do that we have hardly ever interfered in the least with internal party affairs, and then only in an attempt to make good, as far as possible, what we considered to have been blunders—and *only theoretical* blunders at that. But, as you yourself will realize, this programme marks a turning-point which may very well force us to renounce any kind of responsibility in regard to the party that adopts it.

²⁴ On October 12, 1875, Engels wrote to Bebel concerning this programme that, since both workers and their political opponents "interpreted it communistically", "it is *this circumstance alone* which has made it possible for Marx and myself not to disassociate ourselves publicly from a programme such as this. So long as our opponents as well as the workers continue to read our views into that programme, we are justified in saying nothing about it"

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Generally speaking, less importance attaches to the official programme of a party than to what it does. But a *new* programme is after all a banner planted in public, and the outside world judges the party by it. Hence, whatever happens there should be no going back, as there is here, on the Eisenach programme. It should further be considered what the workers of other countries will think of this programme; what impression will be created by this genuflection on the part of the entire German socialist proletariat before Lassalleanism.

I am, moreover, convinced that a union on *this* basis would not last a year. Are the best minds of our party to descend to repeating, parrot-fashion, Lassallean maxims concerning the iron law of wages and state aid? I'd like to see you, for one, thus employed! And were they to do so, their audiences would hiss them off the stage. And I feel sure that it is precisely on *these* bits of the programme that the Lassalleans are insisting, like Shylock the Jew on his pound of flesh. The split will come; but we shall have "made honest men" again of Hasselmann, Hasenclever and Tölcke and Co.; we shall emerge from the split weaker and the Lassalleans stronger; our party will have lost its political virginity and will never again be able to come out whole-heartedly against the Lassallean maxims which for a time it inscribed on its own banner; and then, should the Lassalleans again declare themselves to be the sole and most genuine workers' party and our people to be bourgeois, the programme would be there to prove it. All the socialist measures in it are *theirs*, and *our* party has introduced nothing save the demands of that petty-bourgeois democracy which it has *itself* described in that same programme as part of the "reactionary mass"!

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I had held this letter back in view of the fact that you would only be released on April 1, in honor of Bismarck's birthday,²⁵ not wanting to expose it to the risk of interception in the course of an attempt to smuggle it in. Well, I have just had a letter from Bracke, who has also felt grave doubts about the programme and asks for our opinion. I shall therefore send this letter to him for forwarding, so that he can read it without my having to write the whole thing over again. I have, by the way, also spoken my mind to Ramm; to Liebknecht I wrote but briefly. I cannot forgive his not having told us a *single word* about the whole business (whereas Ramm and others believed he had given us exact information) until it was, in a manner of speaking, too late. True, this has always been his wont—hence the large amount of disagreeable correspondence which we, both Marx and myself, have had with him, but this time it really is too bad, and *we definitely shan't act in concert with him*.

Do see that you manage to come here in the summer; you would, of course, stay with me and, if the weather is fine, we might spend a day or two taking sea baths, which would really do you good after your long spell in jail.

Ever your friend,

F. E.

²⁵ In March 1872 August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were sentenced to two years' confinement in a fortress for their adhesion to the International Working Men's Association and their socialist views. In April Bebel was sentenced, in addition, to nine months' imprisonment and deprived of his mandate as a Reichstag member for "insulting His Majesty". Liebknecht was released on April 15, 1874, while Bebel was freed on April 1, 1875.

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ENGELS LETTER TO WILHELM BRACKE (OCTOBER 11, 1875)²⁶

London, October 11, 1875
122 Regent's Park Road, N. W.

Dear Bracke,

I have put off answering your last letters, the most recent dated June 28, firstly because Marx and I have been apart for six weeks—he at Karlsbad²⁷ and I at the seaside,²⁸ where I didn't see the *Volksstaat*—and next, because I wanted to wait and see how the new coalition and the combined committee²⁹ got on in practice.

We entirely share your view that Liebknecht, in his anxiety to achieve unity and pay *any* price for it, has made a complete mess of everything. Even if they deemed this necessary, there was no need to say or indicate as much to the other contracting party. Thereafter the vindication of one mistake has inevitably entailed another. The Unity Congress,³⁰ once established on an unsound basis and blazoned abroad, could on no account be

²⁶ This letter was published in English for the first time in: K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Lawrence, London, [1933]

²⁷ Between August 15 and September 11, 1875, Marx was in Karlsbad for a second time taking treatment. On his way there, he stopped over in Frankfurt am Main. On his way back to London, he spent several days in Prague visiting Max Oppenheim.

²⁸ Engels was on holiday in Ramsgate between mid-August and September 22, 1875.

²⁹ Engels is referring to the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany formed at the unity congress in Gotha in May 1875, whose Executive Committee consisted of three Lassalleans and two Eisenachers.

³⁰ The original plan was to hold the unity congress in Gotha on 23-25 May 1875, the Lassalleans' congress prior to it, and the Eisenachers' congress on 25-27 May. In reality, the unity congress took place on 22-27 May, and the Eisenachers' and the Lassalleans' congresses were held during it.

allowed to fail, and thus they again had to give way on essential issues. You are perfectly right: this unification bears within it the seeds of dissension, and I shall be happy if, when the split does come, the *only* ones to go are the incurable fanatics, and not, with them, the whole of the otherwise sound rank and file who could, if given a good training, be licked into shape. That will depend on the time when, and the circumstances under which, the inevitable happens.

The programme in its final version³¹ consists of 3 parts:

1. Lassallean dicta and slogans which ought in no circumstances to be adopted. When two factions are agreed, they should include in the programme what is agreed, not what is contested. By permitting this regardless, our people voluntarily passed under the Caudine yoke;³²
2. a series of vulgar democratic demands, drawn up in the spirit and style of the People's Party;³³

³¹ The reference is to the programme of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany adopted by the unity congress in Gotha in May 1875. Marx described it and gave a critical analysis of it in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, as well as in his letter to Wilhelm Bracke of May 5, 1875. Engels dealt with it in his letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875.

The programme adopted at the congress ignored Marx's and Engels' comments on some of fundamental points. The point on proletarian internationalism was included at Liebknecht's suggestion

³² In 321 B.C., during the second Samnite war, the Samnites surrounded the Roman legions in the Caudine Forks near the Roman town of Caudium and drove them under a yoke, which signified the worst possible disgrace for a defeated army. Hence the phrase 'to pass under the Caudine yoke': to be submitted to extreme humiliation.

³³ The *German People's Party*, founded in September 1868, embraced the democratic section of the bourgeoisie, mostly in the South-German states, which campaigned against Prussian hegemony in Germany and called for a federative German state.

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3. a number of would-be communist propositions, for the most part borrowed from the *Manifesto*, but so reworded that, looked at in the light of day, everyone without exception contains hair-raising balderdash. If they don't understand these things, they should either leave them alone or else copy them word for word from those who are generally admitted to know what they are talking about.

Luckily the programme fared better than it deserved. Working men, bourgeois and petty bourgeois alike read into it what it ought, in fact, to contain but doesn't contain, and it occurred to no one, of whatever complexion, to submit one of these wondrous propositions to public scrutiny in order to discover its real import. That's what has made it possible for us to say nothing about this programme. A further consideration is that one cannot translate these propositions into any foreign language without being *forced* either to write down stuff that is palpably idiotic or else place a communist construction on them, the latter having already been done by friend and foe alike. I myself have had to do so when making a translation for our Spanish friends.³⁴

What I have seen of the committee's activities has not so far been gratifying. Firstly, their proceedings against your book and that of B. Becker; it wasn't the committee's fault if they didn't succeed.³⁵ Secondly, Sonnemann, whom Marx saw

³⁴ As is clear from Jose Mesa's letter to Engels of July 4, 1875, Engels had read the text of the Gotha Programme to him during Mesa's stay in London, which he left for Paris in late June. In his letter, Mesa asked Engels for the latest news of his friends in Germany, their merger with the Lassalleans and the Gotha Programme. Mesa intended to pass on the information to his friends in Madrid.

³⁵ In his letter to Engels of June 28-July 7, 1875, Wilhelm Bracke wrote that the Executive Committee of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany decided, by the Lassalleans' three votes to the Eisenachers' two, to delete from

when in transit, said that he had offered Vahlteich the post of correspondent to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* but that the committee had *forbidden* Vahlteich to accept! That's worse than censorship, and how Vahlteich could possibly submit to anything of the kind is beyond my comprehension. And then, what ineptitude! Rather they should have ensured that, everywhere in Germany, it was our people who worked for the *Frankfurter*! Finally, the methods adopted by the Lassallean members at the founding of the Berlin cooperative printing office would seem to me not altogether above board; after our people had confidently appointed the committee as supervisory board of the Leipzig printing office, those in Berlin had first to be *coerced* into doing so.³⁶ But I am not very well acquainted with the details in this instance.

However, it's a good thing that the committee is comparatively inactive and, as C. Hirsch says, who was over here recently, confines itself to the humdrum existence of a news and information agency. Any vigorous intervention on its part would only precipitate the crisis, something its members would appear to sense.

the list of Party literature printed in its central organs, *Der Volksstaat* and the *Neuer Social-Demokrat*, two anti-Lassallean works, namely Wilhelm Bracke's 'Der Lassalle'sche Vorschlag' (Brunswick, 1873) and Bernhard Becker's 'Geschichte der Arbeiter-Agitation Ferdinand Lassalle's' (Brunswick, 1874). Both books had been issued by Wilhelm Bracke's publishing house. On Bracke's resolute demand, this decision by the Executive Committee was revoked.

³⁶ The national German cooperative printing office in Berlin was founded in August 1875. Its board comprised the Lassalleans Wilhelm Hasselmann, Friedrich Wilhelm Fritzsche and Heinrich Rackow, The Leipzig cooperative printing office had been set up by the Eisenachers in July 1872. After the introduction of the Anti-Socialist Law the Social-Democratic cooperative printing offices were closed down.

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And what weakness, assenting to a committee of three Lassalleans and two of our chaps!³⁷

All in all, it looks as though they'll get away with a black eye, if a mighty one. Let us hope that that will be all and that meanwhile propaganda will have its effect upon the Lassalleans. If things hold out until the next Reichstag elections,³⁸ all may be well. But then Stieber and Tessedorf will do their damndest and then, too, the time will come when our folk will see for the first time *what* exactly they have taken on in the persons of Hasselmann and Hasenclever.

Marx has returned from Karlsbad a completely different man, strong, invigorated, cheerful and healthy, and will soon be able to get down seriously to work again. He and I send our cordial regards. Write again every now and then and let us know how things are going. The Leipzigers have all of them too deep interests of their own to be frank and open with us, and at this particular juncture the party would not dream of washing its *dirty linen* in public.

Most sincerely yours,

F. E.

³⁷ In line with the decision of the Gotha unity congress of 1875, the leading bodies of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany were the Executive Committee (Vorstand), Control Commission (Controlkommission) and Committee (Ausschuss). The Executive Committee elected at the Gotha Congress had five members: Hasenclever and Hartmann, the chairmen; Auer and Derossi, the secretaries, and Geib, the treasurer. Thus, the Executive came to comprise three Lassalleans (Hasenclever, Hartmann and Derossi) and two Eisenachers (Auer and Geib). The Executive Committee was to be based in Hamburg.

³⁸ The next Reichstag elections were held on January 10, 1877.

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ENGELS LETTER TO AUGUST BEBEL (OCTOBER 12, 1875)³⁹

London, October 12, 1975

Dear Bebel,

Your letter wholly corroborates our view that for us unification⁴⁰ is premature and bears within it the seeds of future dissension. Should it prove possible to stave off such dissension until after the next Reichstag elections—well and good...

The programme, as it now stands, consists of three parts:

1. of Lassallean propositions and slogans whose adoption is a lasting stigma on our party. When two factions agree upon a common programme, they should include in it what is agreed, and not touch on anything where they disagree. True, Lassallean state aid figures in the Eisenach programme, but as *one* of many *transitional measures* and, from all I have heard, it would almost certainly have been thrown out on Bracke's motion at this year's Congress⁴¹ had there been *no* unification.

³⁹ This letter was published in English for the first time in: K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Lawrence, London, [1933].

⁴⁰ At the *Gotha Congress*, which met between May 22 and 27, 1875, the two trends in the German working-class movement—the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (the Eisenachers) led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht and the Lassallean General Association of German Workers—united to form the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany. This put an end to the split in the German working class. The draft programme of the united party, which Marx and Engels subjected to fierce criticism, was adopted by the congress with only insignificant amendments.

⁴¹ Engels is referring to Wilhelm Bracke's work *Der Lassalle'sche Vorschlag. Ein Wort an den 4. Congreß der social-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei* (1873), which criticized Article 10 of the Eisenach programme. As an immediate target it demanded that the party campaign for 'state promotion of cooperatives and state credit for the free producer associations with democratic guarantees'. Bracke proposed that this provision be replaced by a statement of the need to set up an all-embracing trade union organizations, 'to abolish

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Now it figures as a unique and infallible panacea for all social ills. To have let the 'iron law of wages' and other Lassallean dicta be imposed upon it was for our party a tremendous moral defeat. It became converted to the Lassallean creed. That is something which brooks no denial. This part of the programme is the Caudine yoke beneath which our party has crawled for the greater glory of Saint Lassalle;

2. of democratic demands, drawn up in the very spirit and style of the People's Party;

3. of demands on the '*present-day state*' (there is no knowing to whom, if anyone, the other 'demands' are addressed), which are very muddled and illogical;

4. of general propositions, for the most part borrowed from the *Communist Manifesto* and the Rules of the International, but so reworded that what they convey is either *totally wrong* or pure *balderdash*, as Marx has made abundantly clear in the essay known to you.

The whole thing is excessively disjointed, muddled, inconsequential, illogical and discreditable. Had the bourgeois press possessed a single critical mind, he would have gone through this programme proposition by proposition, examined each proposition for its true content, shown it quite clearly to be nonsensical and enlarged on the contradictions and economic howlers (when it says, for instance, that the means of labour are today 'a monopoly of the capitalist class', as though there were no landowners, or talks of 'freeing *labour*' instead of the working class, the trouble nowadays being that labour as such is *far too free!*), thus exposing our whole party to the most dreadful ridicule. Instead of that the jackasses on the bourgeois papers have taken this programme perfectly seriously, reading

private ownership of what at present constitutes capital', and to 'attain the international unity of the proletariat'.

into it what isn't there and interpreting it communistically. The workers are apparently doing the same. It is *this circumstance alone* which has made it possible for Marx and myself not to disassociate ourselves publicly from a programme such as this. So long as our opponents as well as the workers continue to read our views into that programme, we are justified in saying nothing about it.

If you are satisfied with the outcome in the matter of personnel, then our side must have lowered its sights considerably. Two of our men and three Lassalleans! So here again our people are not equal allies but losers and outvoted from the start. Nor, from what we know of it, is the committee's activity edifying:

1. Resolution *not* to place the two books about Lassalleism by Bracke and B. Becker on the party's list; if this was withdrawn, the fault did not lie with the committee or Liebknecht;
2. Ban on Vahlteich's acceptance of the post of correspondent to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* offered by Sonnemann, who himself told Marx this when he was in transit there. What surprises me even more than the arrogance of the committee and the readiness with which Vahlteich knuckled under instead of giving the committee a piece of his mind, is the colossal stupidity of the said resolution. Rather, the committee should have ensured that a paper like the *Frankfurter* be served *exclusively* by our people in all districts.

...You are perfectly right when you say that the whole thing is an educational experiment which promises the most favorable results even with circumstances as they are. The unification as such may be considered a great success if it holds out for two years. But it was undoubtedly to be had at a far cheaper price.

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ENGELS LETTER TO KARL KAUTSKY (JANUARY 7, 1891)⁴²

London, January 7, 1891

Dear Kautsky,

Yesterday I sent to you by *registered* post Marx's manuscript which will have given you much pleasure.⁴³ I doubt whether it will be able to appear in the Holy German Empire *as it stands*. Take a look at it and delete the objectionable bits wherever feasible, replacing them with dots. Where the context does not permit of this, however, kindly mark the passages for me in the proofs and, if possible, inform me in a couple of lines of the *reasons* for the objection and I shall then do what I can. I should then place the amended bits in brackets and point out in my

⁴² Part of this letter was first published in the journal *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 5, 1932.

⁴³ This refers to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, prepared by Engels for publication in the journal *Neue Zeit*. By publishing this programme document of scientific socialism, a model of uncompromising struggle against opportunism, Engels sought to deal a blow at the increasingly active reformist elements in German Social-Democracy. It was especially important to do this in view of the forthcoming Erfurt party congress, which was to adopt a new programme to replace the Gotha one. In having the *Critique* published Engels had to overcome some opposition from the leaders of German Social-Democracy. The publication was deplored by the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag and the editorial board of *Vorwärts*. At the same time, as Engels had foreseen, Marx's work was welcomed both within the German party itself and by socialists in other countries, who regarded it as a programme document for the entire international socialist movement. The *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, along with Marx's letter to Wilhelm Bracke of May 5, 1875 and Engels' preface, was printed in *Die Neue Zeit*, 9.Jg., 1890/91, I. Bd., Nr. 18.

introductory note that these are *amended* passages. So let me have your corrections on the galleys, please.

But there may well be other people, apart from the bigwigs in the police, who will be displeased when it appears. Should you feel it necessary to take this into account, I would ask you to send the manuscript *registered* to Adler. In Vienna it will doubtless be possible to print it (with the exception, alas, of the splendid passage on religious needs) in its entirety *and printed it will be, whatever happens*. I should imagine, however, that this *very positive* intention of mine, of which I herewith notify you, will afford you complete protection against whatever lamentations may arise. For after all, since none of you can stop its being printed, it would be far better for it to appear in Germany itself and in the *Neue Zeit*, the party organ founded expressly for such purposes.

I have stopped work on the *Brentano*⁴⁴ so as to get this thing ready for you; for I want to make good use of the passages it contains on the iron law of wages and it would have been pointless not to have got this thing ready for the press at the same

⁴⁴ In his preface to the fourth German edition of Volume I of *Capital* in June 1890 Engels described in detail Marx's 1872 polemic with the German economist Lujo Brentano, who had accused Marx of misquoting a passage from Gladstone's parliamentary speech of April 16, 1863, in reproducing it in the *Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association* and in Volume I of *Capital*. Brentano's reaction to Engels' presentation of the case was the pamphlet *Meine Polemik mit Karl Marx*, Berlin, 1890, the introduction to which was published in *Deutsches Wochenblatt*, No. 45, November 6, 1890. On December 4 this journal carried a note containing two passages from Gladstone's letters to Brentano of November 22 and 28, 1890 in which Gladstone asserted that Brentano was right.

Engels replied in a brief article, 'In the Case of Brentano Versus Marx' (*Die Neue Zeit*, 9. Jg., 1890/91, I. Bd., Nr. 13) and, at greater length, in a pamphlet of the same title, published in April 1891, which contained a large number of documents, including the above-mentioned article.

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time. I had intended to polish off *Brentano* this week but once again so many disturbances and so much correspondence have intervened that it will be virtually impossible to do so.

So, if you come up against any snags, be so good as to let me know.

Over here it's still freezing hard. Poor Schorlemmer has a cold and is temporarily deaf; he was unable to come for Christmas. Sam Moore is seriously ill in Asaba and I am anxiously awaiting further news.

Yours,

F. Engels

Regards to Tauscher.

ENGELS LETTER TO KARL KAUTSKY (JANUARY 15, 1891)⁴⁵

London, January 15, 1891

Dear Baron,

You will see from the accompanying corrected proofs that I am not inhuman and have even gone so far as to inject some soothing morphine and bromide into the introduction, which no doubt will have a sufficiently anodyne effect on the melancholy mood of our friend Dietz. I shall only write to Bebel today.⁴⁶ I didn't mention the matter to him before since I had no

⁴⁵ Part of this letter was first published in the journal *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 5, 1932.

⁴⁶ This letter to August Bebel (presumably of January 15, 1891) has not been found. As can be seen from Bebel's reply (January 21, 1891), Engels had informed him of the forthcoming publication of *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and asked whether he knew of any objections by Marx to the compromise Gotha programme. Bebel answered that he had heard nothing to this effect during his imprisonment (up to April 1, 1875) or thereafter but had written to Wilhelm Liebknecht from prison saying that the programme would not stand up to criticism and suggesting amendments.

desire to place him in a false position vis-a-vis Liebknecht. He would have been *honor bound* to speak to the latter about it and Liebknecht, who has made extracts from the manuscript, as is evident from his speech on the programme at Halle,⁴⁷ would have raised heaven and earth to prevent its being published.

If the passage 'to attend to his religious *as well as his bodily* [needs]' cannot very well stand, delete the five words underlined and insert dots. The allusion will then gain in subtlety and still be sufficiently comprehensible. In which case it will not, I trust, give rise to misgivings.

For the rest I have obliged you and Dietz by doing everything you wanted and *more*, as you will see.

The Mendelsons have arrived here from Paris. On his release the magistrate *forbade* him to leave France. The Minister, *Constans*, on the other hand, *enjoined* him to leave voluntarily, failing which he would be expelled.⁴⁸ Constans entrusted Labruyere, who is notoriously hand in glove with the police, with the task of spiriting Padlewski away. Had Padlewski appeared before a jury, the intrigues with the Russians would have come to a head. The activities of the Russian *mouehards* in Paris could not have been concealed from the court and Padlewski might have been *acquitted!* Consequently, he was an enormous embarrassment to the government and had to go. Ask Lafargue to write an article for you on the disruption by

⁴⁷ This refers to Wilhelm Liebknecht's report on the programme of German Social-Democracy at the Halle party congress, which met October 12 to 18, 1890. In discussing the Gotha programme Liebknecht made use of some propositions from Marx's manuscript devoted to it, without mentioning his name.

⁴⁸ Stanislaw Mendelson was arrested on charges of complicity in Padlewski's case. After an inquiry of several weeks the French authorities, threatening expulsion, compelled Mendelson, and his wife to leave France.

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Padlewski of the Russo-French alliance.⁴⁹ Liebknecht has got hold of completely the wrong end of the stick, as he always does where foreign affairs are concerned.

The Mendelsons arrived here without any addresses and fell into the hands of Smith Headingley and Hyndman who took them to a meeting,⁵⁰ etc. Finally, they came to my house and I gave them Ede's address; on my paying them a formal return visit for diplomatic reasons, who should come in at the door but Mr. Smith Headingley. This gave me an opportunity to treat him with icy disdain in front of the Poles, which seemed to have the desired effect. They were here on Sunday, and today they, the Edes and Avelings are coming to dine at my house. This will doubtless frustrate the intrigues set in train in the interests of Brousse, Hyndman & Co. Pity you won't be there. We start off with oysters.

Yours,

F.E.

ENGELS LETTER TO KARL KAUTSKY (FEBRUARY 3, 1891)⁵¹

London, February 3, 1891

Dear Kautsky,

You'd have thought that we over here would have been bombarded with letters about Marx's article on the contrary; not a sign nor a word have we had.

⁴⁹ General Seliverstov, chief of the Tsarist secret police in Paris, was killed by the Polish socialist S. Padlewski on November 18, 1890.

⁵⁰ Engels means Mendelson's and his wife's presence at a meeting of one of the branches of the Social Democratic Federation, which was reported in *Justice*, No. 364, January 3, 1891 ('Mendelson in London').

⁵¹ Part of this letter was first published in the journal *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 5, 1932.

When the *Neue Zeit* failed to arrive on Saturday, I thought something had gone wrong again. On Sunday, Ede arrived and showed me your letter, whereupon I believed that the attempt at suppression had been successful. The issue finally arrived on Monday and, not long after, I found the piece had been reprinted in the *Vorwärts*.⁵²

The disciplinary action *a la* Anti-Socialist Law having failed;⁵³ this daring move was the best thing the chaps could have done. But it was also good in another way, namely in going a fair way towards repairing the almost unbridgeable gulf alluded to by August in the first moment of alarm. Not that that alarm was in any way unjustified, arising as it did out of concern for what their opponents might make of the thing. By printing it in the official organ, they forestalled hostile exploitation and put themselves in the position of being able to say: 'See how we criticize ourselves—we are the only party that can afford to do so; just you try and do the same!' This was, in fact, the correct attitude and one the chaps should have adopted from the start. Another consequence is that it will be difficult to initiate disciplinary action against yourself. My request that the thing might be sent to Adlerd was intended on the one hand to put pressure on Dietz and, on the other, to relieve you of responsibility by presenting you with Robson's choice. I also wrote and told August that I was prepared to take full responsibility.

⁵² Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was reprinted, without Engels' preface, in supplements to the newspaper *Vorwärts*, Nos. 27 and 28, February 1 and 3, 1891 from *Die Neue Zeit*, 9. Jg., 1890/91, I. Bd., Nr. 18.

⁵³ This refers to the attempt by Wilhelm Liebknecht and other leaders of German Social-Democracy to prevent the distribution of No. 18 of *Die Neue Zeit*, which contained Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

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If anyone else is to be held responsible, that person is Dietz. As he is aware, I have, where he is concerned, always shown myself very *coulant* over such matters. I have not only complied with, but actually exceeded, every request he has made to tone things down. Had he sidelined anything else, that too would have received consideration. But if a thing met with no objection from Dietz, why should it not be passed by me?

Come to that, having once got over their initial alarm, almost everyone save Liebknecht will be grateful to me for having published the thing. It will eliminate all possibility of prevarication and phrasemongering in the next programme and will provide irrefutable arguments such as the majority of them would hardly have had the courage to advance on their own initiative. Their failure to change a bad programme while the Anti-Socialist Law was in force because unable to do so is no cause for reproach. And they have after all now voluntarily relinquished that programme. Nor need they hesitate to admit today that, 15 years ago, they behaved like boobies over the matter of unification and allowed themselves to be done in the eye by Hasselmann, etc. At all events, the programme's 3 ingredients: 1. specific Lassalleanism, 2. vulgar democracy *a la* People's Party and 3. balderdash, have not improved as a result of 15 years' pickling qua official party programme, and if this can't be openly said today, when if ever can it be?

If you hear anything new, please let us know. Many regards,

Yours,

F.E.

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ENGELS LETTER TO KARL KAUTSKY (FEBRUARY 11, 1891)⁵⁴

London, February 11, 1891

Dear Kautsky,

Many thanks for your two letters.⁵⁵ I return herewith those of Bebel and Schippel.

The boycott imposed upon me by the Berliners has not yet been lifted; there's been no sign of a letter and it's obvious they haven't yet made up their minds. By contrast, the *Hamburger Echo* published a leading article that was very fair,⁵⁶ considering that the chaps are still strongly tainted with Lassalleanism and actually swear by the system of acquired rights.⁵⁷ From this, and from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, I also gathered that the onslaught of the opposition press was already at its height, if not actually abating. Once they have survived that—and so far as I could see, it has so far been very mild—the chaps will recover from their initial alarm. By contrast, Adler's Berlin correspondent (A. Braun?) has actually thanked me for publishing the thing.⁵⁸ A few more such voices and the opposition will

⁵⁴ Part of this letter was first published in the journal *Die Gesellschaft*, No. 5, 1932.

⁵⁵ This refers to Kautsky's letters February 6 and 9, 1891, in which he informed Engels of reactions in Social-Democratic circles to the publication of *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in *Neue Zeit* and of Bebel and Liebknecht's attempt to prevent the publication.

⁵⁶ The article in question, headlined 'Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen Programms' (*Hamburger Echo*, No. 33, February 8, 1891), noted the importance of Marx's programmatic letter, published by Engels, for the working out of German Social-Democracy's new programme.

⁵⁷ Engels' mention of the *stem of acquired rights* is an allusion to Lassalle's work of the same title, *Das System der erworbenen Rechts Eine Versöhnung des positiven Rechts und der Rechtsphilosophie*. In zwei Theilen. Leipzig, 1861.

⁵⁸ On February 6, 1891, the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, No. 6, reported from Berlin, in the column 'Deutschland', that a document of great theoretical and

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languish. It became evident to me that the document had been deliberately suppressed and concealed from Bebel in May/June 1875 the moment he informed me that the date of his release from prison had been April 1; indeed, I have written to him saying that he was *bound* to have seen it unless 'something untoward' had happened. In due course I shall, if necessary, request him to reply to this point. For a long time, the document was held by Liebknecht from whose clutches Bracke had some difficulty in retrieving it; Liebknecht wished to keep it entirely to himself in order to use it for the final version of the programme. How, needs no saying.

Send me Lafargue's article⁵⁹ by registered book post as a manuscript; I'll smooth things out all right. Come to that, his article on Padlewski was quite good and very useful, considering the way the *Vorwärts* misrepresents French politics. All in all, Wilhelm would seem to be out of luck in this respect. *He* is always praising the French Republic to the skies while Guesde, the correspondent whom he himself appointed, is forever tearing it to pieces.⁶⁰

practical importance, Marx's critique of the programme adopted by the German party at its 1875 Gotha Congress, had been published by Engels in Germany. Speaking of the service rendered by Engels, the author of the report, Adolf Braun, pointed out: 'The time has come to formulate the theoretical foundations of our party with full clarity and uncompromisingly, so the present publication is very timely indeed.'

⁵⁹ This article by Paul Lafargue, intended for *Neue Zeit*, did not appear in it. In his letter to Engels of 6 February Kautsky characterized it as slipshod and containing serious mistakes and asked what he should do with it. The article was published later in *La Revue socialiste*, t. XVI, No. 93, 1892, under the title 'La théorie de la valeur et de la plus-value de Marx et les économistes bourgeois'.

⁶⁰ In his 'Briefe aus Frankreich' ('Letters from France'), published in *Vorwärts*, Nos 23 and 25 on 28 and January 30, 1891, Jules Guesde exposed the policy of the moderate bourgeois republicans (the 'opportunists') led by

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The parliamentary group's pronouncement,⁶¹ heralded by Schippel, is a matter of complete indifference to me. Should they wish, I am prepared to confirm that I am not in the habit of asking their permission. Whether or not they approve of the fact of publication is all one to me. Nor do I begrudge them the right to express their disapproval of this and that. Unless the affair turns out in such a way as absolutely to compel me to take it up, it would not occur to me to reply. So, we shall wait and see.

I shall not write to Bebel about it, for in the first place he himself must first let me know what view of the matter he has finally arrived at and, in the second, every resolution is signed by everybody in the parliamentary group whether or not they voted for it. By the way, Bebel is wrong in thinking I would allow myself to become embroiled in acrimonious dispute. For that to happen, they would first have to provoke me with falsehoods, etc., which I could not overlook. On the contrary, I am positively steeped in a spirit of conciliation, having after all no cause for anger, and am only too anxious to build that bridge pontoon bridge, trestle bridge, iron, stone or even golden bridge across the potential abyss or gulf which Bebel thought he saw yawning in the distance.

Odd! Schippel now writes of the many old Lassalleans who pride themselves on their Lassalleanism yet when they were

Jean Antoine Constans, Pierre Maurice Rouvier and others. He showed that it aimed at suppressing the working-class movement in the country and compromised the republic.

⁶¹ On February 13, 1891, *Vorwärts* (No. 37) carried a leading article, 'Der Marx'sche Programm-Brief, written-by Wilhelm Liebknecht, in which the Reichstag Social-Democratic group expressed disagreement with the assessment of the Gotha programme and Lassalle's role given in Marx's *Critique*.

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over here,⁶² it was unanimously agreed that there were no Lassalleans left in Germany! Indeed, this was the main reason for my abandoning many of my reservations. And then Bebel also chimes in, saying that a large number of the best comrades are seriously offended. If [so], they ought to have [described] things to me as they really were.

Come to that, if you cannot now, 15 years later, speak your mind about Lassalle's theoretical balderdash and his prophetic mission, when if ever will you be able to?

However, the party as such, the Executive, the parliamentary group and *tutti quanti* are exempted by the Anti-Socialist Law 11 from all blame save that of having accepted such a programme (and there is no getting round this). So long as that law was in force there could be no question of any revision; no sooner was it suspended than revision was included in the agenda. So, what more do they want?

It is also imperative that the chaps should at long last throw off the habit of handling the party officials—their servants—with kid gloves and kowtowing to them as infallible bureaucrats, instead of confronting them critically.

Yours,

F.E.

You will no doubt have heard that Aveling is standing for Northampton in place of Bradlaugh. The invitation came from the local BRANCHES OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION⁶³

⁶² This refers to August Bebel's, Wilhelm Liebknecht's, and Paul Singer's stay in London, from November 27 to early December 1890, as Engels' guests on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

⁶³ The *Social Democratic Federation*, set up in August 1884, consisted of English socialists of different orientations, mostly intellectuals. For a long time, the leadership of the Federation was in the hands of reformists led by

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and from the GASWORKERS. He went down there and his tub-thumping met with great applause. He was assured of 900-1,000 votes. But he hadn't got the deposit for the election expenses and, when offered this by a TORY agent, indignantly refused it. Thus, he was not nominated, but from now on will stand as labour candidate for Northampton.

ENGELS LETTER TO FRIEDRICH ADOLPH SORGE (FEBRUARY 11, 1891)⁶⁴

London, February 11, 1891

Dear Sorge,

Letter of January 16 received.

I am *delighted* to hear that you propose to do away with the *Nationalist*. Over here I can find no one, not a solitary soul, who is prepared to read it, and I myself have not got the time to scrutinize the sagacious lucubrations of all the various RESPECTABLE panjandrums. I would have suggested such a course long since had I not thought that, if a chap like you sent me the thing, there was bound to be something in it *some time*.

The photograph is in the offing. Heinrich Scheu wishes to do a wood-cut of me, for which reason I recently had to position myself before the lens again. Of the seven pictures, one will presumably turn out well.

Hyndman, an opportunist sectarian. In opposition to them, the revolutionary Marxists within the Federation (Eleanor Marx-Aveling, Edward Aveling, Tom Mann, and others) worked for close ties with the revolutionary labour movement. In the autumn of 1884—following a split and the establishment by the Left wing of an independent organization, the Socialist League—the opportunists' influence in the Federation increased. However, revolutionary elements, discontented with the opportunist leadership, continued to form within the Federation, under the impact of the masses.

⁶⁴ An excerpt from this letter was first published in English in *The Labour Monthly*, No. 6, 1934.

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I trust your wife will have completely recovered by the time you get this; also, you yourself.

I cannot tell you anything about the AMERICAN EDITION OF *Capital*, since I have never seen it and do not know what it contains. That the people over there *can* pirate our stuff, we are aware. That they *do* so proves that it's a good speculation and is gratifying, although detrimental to the heirs. But it was something we had to reckon with the moment sales assumed significant proportions over there.

By now you will presumably have had the fourth edition.

You will have read Marx's article in the *Neue Zeit*. To begin with it aroused great wrath in the socialist powers-that-be in Germany but now they appear to be simmering down a bit. In the party itself, on the other hand, there was great rejoicing, except among the old Lassalleans. The Berlin correspondent of the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which you will get by the *next* post, actually thanks me for the service I have rendered the party (I believe it's Adolf Braun, Victor Adler's brother-in-law and Liebknecht's deputy editor on the *Vorwärts*). Liebknecht, of course, is furious, since all the criticism was aimed specifically at him and he was the progenitor, together with that bugger Hasselmann, of the rotten programme. I can comprehend the initial dismay felt by the chaps, who have hitherto insisted that 'comrades' should approach them only with the utmost delicacy, on finding themselves being handled thus *sans façon*, and their programme unmasked as pure rubbish. According to what I hear from K. Kautsky who has behaved very courageously throughout this affair, the parliamentary group intends to issue an edict⁶⁵ to the effect that publication took place

⁶⁵ On February 13, 1891, *Vorwärts* (No. 37) carried a leading article, 'Der Marx'sche Programm-Brief, written by Wilhelm Liebknecht, in which the

without their knowledge and is deplored by them. They're welcome to that gratification. However, it may come to nothing if the party increasingly voices its assent and the fuss about 'placing a weapon against ourselves in the hands of our foes' is found to be without substance.

In the meantime, I am being boycotted by the gentlemen, which suits me very well as it saves me quite a deal of time. Not that it's likely to last for long.

After Bradlaugh's death, Aveling was invited to stand in Northampton and by none other than the local BRANCH OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION, i.e., nominally Hyndman's people. Because of the leap forward made by the movement generally in the past 18 months, the FEDERATION has acquired a large following. These people are glad to leave foreign policy (plotting with the Possibilists, 3 etc.), which is quite outside their ken, to Hyndman & Co., but are completely unaware of the said gentry's previous plotting and intriguing at home and would certainly deny all responsibility for the same;—IN FACT, it is only because Hyndman & Co. have, since that time, pretty well eluded attack at home that they have acquired the aforementioned following. Hence the move made by the Northampton people which seriously alarmed Hyndman, the more so since the BRANCH immediately informed the Executive Council of what they had done. A certain amount of plotting ensued, but to no avail. Aveling went down and was given a brilliant reception, but it was only 4 days until nomination day, and a £100 deposit had to be raised for election expenses. Twenty working men undertook to put up £5 each, and a man turned up who offered to provide the money against that undertaking. But upon closer investigation this man proved to be one of the

Reichstag Social-Democratic group expressed disagreement with the assessment of the Gotha programme and Lassalle's role given in Marx's *Critique*.

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Conservatives' principal agents, whereupon Aveling refused the money with a proper display of righteous indignation and withdrew. This must have been doubly vexatious for Hyndman in as much as, 5 years ago, he and Champion accepted £250 or £350 from the TORIES for electoral purposes.⁶⁶ At all events, Aveling is now the workers' nominee for Northampton and stands a good chance of obtaining an increasing number of votes. On this occasion he would have received between nine hundred and a thousand.

The young man I recommended to you will already have come to see you. The Romms, by the by, know him personally, something of which I was unaware at the time.

The French are very angry because this year the Germans intend to celebrate May Day on the 3rd of May, and not the 1st. It's all nonsense; by celebrating on May 1 last year, the Hamburg chaps involved themselves in a LOCKOUT (for which, having no contracts, the manufacturers yearn); it cost the workers there 100,000 marks—not counting outside contributions—broke the backs of their TRADES UNIONS, which were the best organized, and crippled them for a long time to come. In Germany today there is chronic overproduction in all branches of industry and, since a general celebration throughout Germany could not be held on May 1 without breach of contract and would thus bring about a general LOCKOUT, use up all our funds, disrupt all our TRADES UNIONS and engender discouragement rather than enthusiasm, it would be madness. However, at the Paris Congress, our people evinced such enthusiasm for the 1st of May,⁵¹ that this now looks like a retreat. And

⁶⁶ During the November 1885 parliamentary elections Hyndman and Champion accepted money from the leadership of the Conservative Party to finance the campaign of the Social Democratic Federation.

again, the parliamentary group's proclamation is a deplorably feeble affair.⁶⁷

Here in England the day is to be decided next Sunday. Realizing what a mistake they had made last year, Hyndman and Co. are intent on somehow pushing themselves to the fore on this occasion, and May 1 will find many supporters. But since the capitalists in this country are ever eager to seize on any pretext for disrupting the two best hated TRADES UNIONS—the DOCKERS and more particularly that BOSSED by Tussy, the GASWORKERS AND GENERAL LABOURERS,⁶⁸ Tussy is going

⁶⁷ The proclamation 'Parteigenossen!', issued by the Reichstag Social-Democratic group, was published in *Vorwärts*, No. 31, on February 6, 1891. The group urged the German workers to observe May Day on May 3rd rather than May 1st and, to substantiate its stand, cited the relevant resolution of the Paris International Socialist Workers' Congress which said that 'workers in different countries will have to organize the celebration in a form suitable to the local conditions'. Engels criticized the proclamation for the tendency, manifest in it, to fix the first Sunday of May as the official day for the workers' May Day celebrations for all time.

⁶⁸ The *Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers*, Britain's first trades union of unskilled workers, was set up in late March-early April 1889, against the background of the rising strike movement of the 1880s and 90s. Eleanor Marx-Aveling and Edward Aveling played an important role in organizing and leading the union. It put forward the demand for an eight-hour working day and within a short time became very influential among large sections of the working class. About 100,000 gas workers joined it during the first year. The union gave great help in organizing the famous London dock strike in 1889. The strike and the Gas Union's activities gave rise to the Dockers' Union, another large organization of unskilled workers, which in its turn contributed significantly to the establishment of more mass trades unions, to the fight for the eight-hour day and to the organization of May Day demonstrations of British workers in the 1890s.

The gas workers readily responded to socialist and internationalist ideas, preached to them above all by Eleanor Marx-Aveling, and exerted an important influence on the labour movement in Ireland, where they initiated mass trades unions embracing, among others, farm labourers. The National

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to do all she can to avoid providing them with the pretext of breach of contract and will propose May 3 as being a Sunday. The GASWORKERS are now the most powerful organization in Ireland and, in the next elections, are going to put up their own candidates regardless of Parnell or M'Carthy. Parnell's demonstrative friendliness towards working men is the result of a meeting he had with these selfsame GASWORKERS who didn't hesitate to give him a piece of their mind. Even Michael Davitt, who used to call for independent Irish TRADES UNIONS, now knows better: The constitution they have got allows them HOME-RULE with no strings attached. It is to them that credit is due for having, for the first time, got the labour movement in Ireland going. Many of their BRANCHES consist of AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.

Kindest regards to your wife,

Yours,

F.E.

ENGELS LETTER TO KARL KAUTSKY (FEBRUARY 23, 1891)⁶⁹

London, February 23, 1891

Dear Kautsky,

You will have got my hasty congratulations of the day before yesterday. So let us now return to the matter in hand, namely Marx's letter.

Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers of Great Britain and Ireland (the union's full name) maintained links with workers' organizations in other countries. Eleanor Marx-Aveling and William Thorne represented it as delegates at the International Socialist Workers' Congress in Brussels.

⁶⁹ This letter was first published in English in: K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1933.

The fear that it would place a weapon in the hands of our opponents was unfounded. Malicious insinuations are, of course, made about anything and everything, but by and large the impression gained by our opponents was nevertheless one of utter stupefaction at this ruthless self-criticism, stupefaction combined with the feeling that a party must be possessed of great inner strength if it could treat itself to that sort of thing. This much is apparent from the opposition newspapers I have been getting from you (very many thanks) and elsewhere. And I frankly admit that this was what I had in mind when I published the document. That it was bound at first to give grave offense in certain quarters I was aware, but it couldn't be helped and in my view this consideration was more than outweighed by its factual content. And I knew that the party was amply strong enough to stand it and I reckoned that today it would even *tolerate* the forthright language used 15 years ago, that it would point with justifiable pride to this test of its strength and say: Show us another party that would dare do the same. In the meantime, this has been left to the Saxon and the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and the *Züricher Post*.⁷⁰

To have assumed, in No. 21 of the *Neue Zeit*, responsibility for its publication is most courageous of you,⁷¹ but don't forget

⁷⁰ The *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung* reprinted Marx's work in its Nos 30, 31, 33 and 35; 6, 7, 10 and February 12, 1891, with an editorial introductory note emphasizing the special significance of this programmatic letter for German Social-Democracy.

Züricher Post, No. 34, February 10, 1891, carried an editorial (written by Franz Mehring) headlined 'Hängen und Würgen', which stressed that the publication of Marx's work testified to the strength and fighting spirit of German Social-Democracy which, with the objectivity and self-criticism characteristic of it, sought to clarify for itself the goals of its struggle.

⁷¹ *Die Neue Zeit* (9. Jg., 1890/91, 1. Bd., Nr. 21) reprinted the leading article from *Vorwärts*, No. 37, February 13, 1891, adding a brief introduction and

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that it was I, after all, who first instigated the thing and, in addition, presented you, as it were, with Hobson's choice. Accordingly, I consider the main responsibility to be mine. As to details, one can of course always hold differing views about such things. I deleted or altered everything that you and Dietz took exception to and, even if Dietz had made more deletions, I should still have been *coulant* wherever possible; at no time have I failed to give the two of you proof of this. As to the main issue, however, it was *my duty* to publish the thing the moment the programme came up for discussion. And especially after Liebknecht's speech at Halle, in which he coolly quotes parts of it as though they were his own, while contesting others without naming their source, Marx would unquestionably have confronted this version with the original and in place of him I was duty bound to do the same. Unfortunately, the document was not immediately to hand and I only found it much later after a long search.

You mention that Bebel has written to you saying that Marx's treatment of Lassalle has caused bad blood amongst the old Lassalleans. That may be. Those people don't, of course, know the true story and nobody seems to have done anything to enlighten them on the subject. If they don't know that Lassalle's reputation as a great man is solely attributable to the fact that for years Marx allowed him to flaunt as his own the fruits of Marx's research and, what's more, to distort them because of his inadequate grounding in political economy, that is no fault of mine. But I am Marx's literary executor and as such I also have my obligations.

the following note: 'It is a fact that we of course did not feel obliged to submit Marx's letter for approval to the party leadership or the parliamentary group... but it is also a fact that we made no secret of our intention to publish it. The responsibility for the publication is ours entirely.'

For the past 26 years Lassalle has been part of history. If, while the Exceptional Law⁷² was in force, he has been exempt from historical criticism, it is now high time that such criticism came into its own and that light be thrown on Lassalle's position in regard to Marx. The legend which veils the true image of Lassalle and deifies him cannot, after all, become an article of faith for the party. However highly one may rate Lassalle's services on behalf of the movement, his historical role inside it remains an equivocal one. Everywhere Lassalle the socialist goes hand in hand with Lassalle the demagogue. In Lassalle the agitator and organizer, the Lassalle who conducted the Hatzfeldt lawsuit⁷³ is everywhere apparent: the same cynicism in the choice of methods, the same predilection for consorting with corrupt and shady people who may be used simply as tools and then be discarded. Up till 1862 a specifically Prussian vulgar democrat in practice with marked Bonapartist tendencies (I have just been looking through his letters to Marx), he

⁷² The *Anti-Socialist Law*, initiated by the Bismarck government and passed by the Reichstag on October 21, 1878, was directed against the socialist and working-class movement. The Social-Democratic Party of Germany was virtually driven into the underground. All party and mass working-class organizations and their press were banned, socialist literature was subject to confiscation, Social-Democrats made the object of reprisals. However, with the active help of Marx and Engels, the Social-Democratic Party succeeded in overcoming both the opportunist (Eduard Bernstein et al.) and 'ultra-Left' (J. Most et al.) tendencies within its ranks and was able, by combining underground activities with an efficient utilization of legal means, to use the period of the operation of the law for considerably strengthening and expanding its influence among the masses. Prolonged in 1881, 1884, 1886 and 1888, the Anti-Socialist Law was repealed on October 1, 1890. For Engels' assessment of it see his article 'Bismarck and the German Working Men's Party'.

⁷³ This refers to Countess Sophie Hatzfeldt's divorce suit, conducted by Lassalle from 1846 to 1854.

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made a sudden volte-face for purely personal reasons and began to engage in agitation. And before 2 years had gone by, he was demanding that the workers side with the monarchy against the bourgeoisie and had begun intriguing with his kindred spirit Bismarck in a manner that could only have led to the actual betrayal of the movement had he not, luckily for him, been shot in the nick of time. In his propagandist writings the correct arguments he borrowed from Marx are so interwoven with his own invariably false ones that it is virtually impossible to separate the two. Such workers as have been offended by Marx's judgment know nothing of Lassalle save for his 2 years of agitation and, furthermore, see the latter only through rose-tinted spectacles. But historical criticism cannot forever remain standing hat in hand before such prejudices. It was my duty to settle accounts once and for all between Marx and Lassalle. That has been done. With this I can content myself for the time being. Besides, I have other things to do. And the publication of Marx's ruthless judgment of Lassalle will undoubtedly prove effective on its own and put heart into others. But if I were forced to do so, there'd be no alternative: I should have to dispose of the Lassallean legend once and for all.

That voices should have been raised in the parliamentary group demanding that the *Neue Zeit* be subject to censorship is truly delectable. Is the spectre of the parliamentary group's dictatorship at the time of the Anti-Socialist Law (a dictatorship that was, of course, essential, and excellently managed) still at large or is it a harking back to the sometime close-knit organization of von Schweitzer? After the liberation of German socialist science from Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law, what more brilliant idea than to subject it to a new Anti-Socialist Law to be thought up and implemented by the officials of the Social-

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Democratic Party. However, we've taken care that they don't get too big for their boots.

I have lost no sleep over the *Vorwärts* article. I shall await Liebknecht's account of the affair and then reply to both in as amicable tones as possible. There are only a few inaccuracies to put right in the *Vorwärts* article (e.g., that we hadn't wanted unification, that events had given Marx the lie, etc.) and some obvious points to confirm. I intend that this reply should conclude the debate so far as I am concerned, provided I am not compelled to resume it as a result of fresh attacks or inaccurate statements.

Tell Dietz that I am revising the *Origin*. However, I have today also heard from Fischer who writes to say that he wants three new prefaces!

Yours,

F.E.

ENGELS LETTER TO FRIEDRICH ADOLPH SORGE (MARCH 4, 1891)⁷⁴

London, March 4, 1891

Dear Sorge,

Your letter of February 19 received. In the meantime, you will doubtless have heard various things about the great indignation of the Social-Democratic parliamentary group at the publication in the *Neue Zeit* of Marx's article on the programme. The matter is still taking its course. For the present I shall let the chaps make fools of themselves, an end towards which Liebknecht has materially contributed in the *Vorwärts*. Obviously I shall reply in due course though without needless acrimony; without some gentle irony, however, I hardly think it can be

⁷⁴ An excerpt from this letter was first published in English in: K. Marx and F. Engels, *Letters on 'Capital'*, New Park, London, 1983.

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done. All those who count for anything in the field of theory are, of course, on my side—I must except only Bebel who was, in fact, not altogether unjustified in feeling offended by my action—but that was inevitable. Owing to an excess of work I have not been able to look at the *Volkszeitung* for the last 4 weeks, so I don't know whether any answering sparks have been struck in America—after all you have plenty of Lassallean leftovers where you are, and in Europe these people are beside themselves with rage.

I now have three pamphlets to finish. The re-issue of 1. *The Civil War in France*—the General Council's address with regard to the Commune. I am arranging for this to be reprinted in a *revised* version together with the 2 addresses of the General Council on the Franco-Prussian War which are more topical today than ever before. Also, an introduction by me.—2. *Wage Labour and Capital* by Marx which I must bring up to the standard of *Capital*, for otherwise it will cause confusion in working-class circles—on account of the then still imperfect terminology (e.g., sale of labour instead of labour *power*, etc.) for which reason an introduction is also needed.—3. My *Entwicklung des Sozialismus*; this will be popularized if possible, but no more;

The party is publishing them, each in an edition of 10,000. This will ensure I get a bit of peace in *that* quarter. But I had to take the thing on because it was essential to counter the never-ending flow of rubbishy Lassallean reprints. Luckily a *new* edition of Lassalle with notes, etc. is to appear under *Bernstein's* aegis⁷⁵ (*this between ourselves*).

⁷⁵ In 1891 the Executive of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany decided to publish the collected works of Ferdinand Lassalle. They appeared under the title *Reden und Schriften. Neue Gesamt-Ausgabe. Mit einer biographischen Einleitung herausgegeben von Ed. Bernstein*, London, vols I-III, Berlin, 1892-93. In his introduction, entitled 'Ferdinand Lassalle und seine Bedeutung in der

In order that the person I recommended should not lie fallow, I enclose herewith a CHEQUE for £10 out of which you can make him payments as you think fit, either with a view to his removal to one of the larger cities in the interior, which may be the best thing if he is to get on, or to enable him to keep his head above water where he is.

Hyndman is again inveighing against me;⁷⁶ it happens every 6 months, but he can talk till he's blue in the face and shout from every rooftop in London without eliciting a reply from me. He has also resumed his attacks upon Aveling and is again bringing up the American business. Now that Rosenberg has been chucked out,⁷⁷ do you think it might be possible to get a satisfactory statement from the party over there? All I want is

Geschichte der Sozialdemokratie', Bernstein gave a by and large correct assessment of Lassalle's role in the German working-class movement and provided a critical analysis of his theoretical views and political line. In his later edition of Lassalle's works Bernstein changed his views.

⁷⁶ Engels means the slander campaign against him launched by Hyndman in connection with the publication of *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In February 1891 Hyndman published several items in the newspaper *Justice* describing Engels as the leader of 'the Marxist clique' engaged in plotting and intrigues fraught with the danger of a split. Hyndman supported the stand taken by the Reichstag Social-Democratic group and the editorial board of *Vorwärts* in regard of the publication of Marx's work.

To prevent Edward Aveling's nomination in Northampton Hyndman publicized in *Justice* the slanderous accusations levelled at Aveling by the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party of North America ('The Northampton Election', 'Dr Aveling?', 'Dr Aveling Again'). The Committee, which had financed a US lecture tour by Edward Aveling, Eleanor Marx-Aveling and Wilhelm Liebknecht in September-December 1886, had charged Aveling with excessive expenditure and the forging of bills.

⁷⁷ Wilhelm Rosenberg and his followers pursued a sectarian policy underestimating the party's work in America's mass labour organizations, above all in the trades unions. In September 1889 they were removed from the leadership of the Socialist Labor Party of North America.

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your opinion; I'm not authorized to request that any sort of steps be taken.

The French are furious because the Germans and English will be celebrating on Sunday the 3rd instead of Friday the 1st of May. But there was no alternative. Last year the 1st of May celebrations in Hamburg involved the party in a strike (or rather LOCKOUT) which cost the chaps in Hamburg 100,000 marks—and now that trade is more wretched than ever, the bourgeois are longing for a pretext to shut down. And over here the DOCKERS are gradually being brought to heel, nor dare they grumble, for otherwise their TRADES UNION would be completely disrupted—admittedly a partial consequence of their own blunders—and only by dint of the utmost caution will the GASWORKERS be capable of saving themselves from a STRIKE which would disrupt them too. At the outset the transformation of GASWORKS into municipal undertakings will still mean an attempt by your philistine to extract as much profit as possible so as to bring down the rates in his municipality; the point of view that the municipality should insist on the gasworkers' being well paid, precisely *because* they are workers, has yet to penetrate. The disruption of the GASWORKERS and DOCKERS, however, would bring with it the complete disruption of the new TRADES UNIONS which were introduced over here 2 years ago and the old conservative TRADES UNIONS, the ones that are *rich* and for that very reason cowardly, would then have the field to themselves.

The French are not wholly in the wrong. At the congress everyone enthusiastically supported the 1st of May.⁷⁸ But why

⁷⁸ The *International Socialist Workers' Congress* in Paris—virtually the inaugural congress of the Second International—opened on July 14, 1889, the centenary of the capture of the Bastille. Some 400 delegates from 20 countries of Europe and America attended. The congress heard the reports of the

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should the French of all people, whose mighty words have so often been followed by insignificant deeds, now insist all of a sudden that no one else may pitch things a bit too high from time to time. The point is that, so far as we are concerned, the situation in France is remarkably favorable, especially now, as a result of the collapse of the Possibilists⁷⁹ and if, on this occasion, the 1st of May were to be celebrated successfully and simultaneously throughout the world it might well destroy the Possibilists completely. But that will happen either way.

So, until my next.—My kind regards to your wife. I hope she is now quite better.

Yours,

F.E.

representatives of socialist parties on the state of the labour movement in their respective countries and worked out the fundamentals of international labour legislation, demanding a legal eight-hour day, the outlawing of child labour, and measures to protect working women and juveniles. It stressed the need for the political organization of the proletariat and a struggle to ensure satisfaction of the workers' democratic demands. It also spoke out for the disbandment of standing armies and the universal arming of the people. The congress's most important resolution was the decision to hold demonstrations and meetings in all countries on May 1, 1890, to back up demands for an eight-hour working day and labour legislation. The anarchists opposed the congress resolutions but were overwhelmingly outvoted.⁷⁹ Engels means the signs of a forthcoming dissociation within the Possibilist Workers' Party. At their congress in Chatellerault, October 9 to 15, 1890, the Possibilists split into two groups—the Broussists and the Allemanists. The latter formed an organization of their own, the *Socialist Revolutionary Workers' Party*. The Allemanists retained the Possibilists' ideological and tactical principles but, in contrast to them, attached great importance to propaganda within the trades unions, which they regarded as the workers' principal form of organization. The Allemanists' ultimate weapon was the call for a general strike. Like the Possibilists, they denied the need for a united, centralized party and advocated autonomy and the struggle to win seats on the municipal councils.

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Louise Kautsky sends you both her best wishes.

ENGELS LETTER TO AUGUST BEBEL (MAY 1-2, 1891)⁸⁰

London, May 1, 1891

Dear Bebel,

Today I shall reply to your two letters of March 30, and April 25.⁸¹ I was delighted to hear that your silver wedding went off so well and has whetted your appetite for the next, your golden one. I sincerely hope that you will both live to see it. We shall need you long after the devil has come for me—the old man of Dessau used to say.

I must—I hope for the last time—revert to Marx's critique of the programme. That 'no one would have raised any objection to its publication' I feel bound to contest. Liebknecht would never have willingly consented and would have done everything in his power to prevent it. So greatly has the critique rankled since 1875 that he recalls it the moment the word

⁸⁰ Part of this letter was first published in English in: K. Marx, F. Engels, V. I. Lenin, *The Communist View on Morality*, Novosti, Moscow, 1974.

⁸¹ In his letter of March 30, 1891 Bebel, explaining his long silence, said that he had been reluctant to write immediately after the publication of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, concerning the party programme because he had been put out by the manner of publication, and later he had been kept busy by Reichstag matters. Bebel considered the publication ill-advised because, in his opinion, Marx's letter concerned not the programme but the party leadership. Its publication, he said, had provided a weapon to the enemies of socialism, and the sharp criticism of Lassalle was incomprehensible to young party members and offensive to former Lassalleans now belonging to the party.

In his letter of April 25 Bebel informed Engels about the state of the working-class movement in Germany, in particular about the strike of the Rhine-Westphalian miners. He considered the strike ill-timed because under the obtaining economic crisis it was being exploited by the mine owners to prevent a decline in the price of coal.

‘programme’ is mentioned. The whole of his Halle speech turns upon it. His pompous *Vorwärts* article is, throughout, nothing but an expression of his bad conscience in regard to this self-same critique. And it was, in fact, primarily aimed at him. We regarded, and I still regard him, as the progenitor of the unification programme or the *shoddier* aspects thereof. And it was this point that led me to act off my own bat. Had I been able to discuss the thing with you alone and then send it straight on to K. Kautsky for publication, a couple of hours would have sufficed for us to agree. But as it was, I considered you were under an obligation—both from the personal and the party viewpoint—to consult Liebknecht as well. And I knew what the result would be if I went ahead regardless. Either suppression or an open row—a temporary one at any rate—even with yourself. That I wasn’t wrong is evident from what follows: Now, since you came out of quod on April 1 [1875], and the document is dated May 5, it is obvious—until some other explanation is forthcoming—that the thing was *deliberately withheld* from you and that this could, in fact, *only* have been done *by Liebknecht*. But just for the sake of peace and quiet you have allowed him to disseminate the lie that, because you were under lock and key, you had not been able to see the thing.⁸² Hence I take it that, even before publication, you could have spared his feelings in order to avoid a rumpus in the Executive. Indeed, I find this explicable, as I trust you will likewise find my having allowed for the fact that this, in all probability, was how you acted.

I have just taken another look at the thing. It’s possible that some of it could have been left out without impairing the whole. But certainly not *very much*. What was the position? We

⁸² This assertion was contained in a report published in the column ‘Politische Uebersicht’, *Vorwärts*, No. 48, February 26, 1891.

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knew as well as you did and, for instance, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of March 9, 1875, which I found, that the *matter was decided* when your accredited representatives accepted the draft. Hence Marx wrote the thing merely to salve his conscience, as is testified by the words he appended—*dixi et salvavi animam meam*—and not with any hope of success. Hence Liebknecht's big talk about the 'categorical no'⁸³ is mere braggadocio and he knows it. Well, if you blundered in choosing your representatives and were then forced to swallow the programme lest the whole business of unification came to naught, you surely cannot object to the publication, *fifteen years later*, of the warning that was sent you before you finally made up your minds. It does not brand you either fools or traitors unless, of course, you lay claim to infallibility so far as your official actions are concerned.

You, however, did not see that warning. Indeed, this fact has been made public and you are thus in an exceptionally favorable position as compared with the others who, though they had seen it, nevertheless fell in with the draft.

I consider the accompanying letter to be most important. For it propounds what would have been the only correct policy. Parallel action for a trial period—that was the one thing that could have saved you from trafficking in principles. But, come what may, Liebknecht was determined not to forego the glory of having effected unification and, in the circumstances, it is a miracle that he didn't make even more concessions than he did. From bourgeois democracy he brought with him and has retained ever since a positive mania for unification.

⁸³ A leading article in *Vorwärts*, No. 37, February 13, 1891, maintained that the addressees of Marx's letter on the Gotha Programme had replied to his recommendations with a 'categorical no'.

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The fact that the Lassalleans came over because they *had to*, because their entire party was disintegrating and because their leaders were scoundrels or jackasses whom the masses would no longer follow, is something that can be said today in tastefully moderate form. Their 'tightly knit organization' naturally ended in total dissolution. Hence it is absurd when Liebknecht excuses the wholesale acceptance of the Lassallean articles of faith on the grounds that the Lassalleans had sacrificed their tightly knit organization—there was nothing left of it to sacrifice!

You wonder about the provenance of the muddle-headed and convoluted clichés in the programme. But all these are surely quintessential Liebknecht; they have been a bone of contention between us for years and the chap's besotted with them. Theoretically he has always been muddle-headed and our clear-cut style is still an abomination to him today. As a sometime member of the People's Party, he, on the other hand, still loves resounding phrases which leave one free to think what one will or, for that matter, not think at all. The mere fact that, long ago and out of ignorance, some muddle-headed Frenchman, Englishman or American spoke of the 'emancipation of labour' rather than of the working *class*, and that, even in the documents of the International one sometimes had to use the language of the people one was addressing, was, to Liebknecht, reason enough for forcibly making the phraseology of the German party conform to this same outmoded point of view. Nor can he possibly be said to have done this 'despite his knowing better' for he really didn't know better and I am not sure whether this is not still the case today. At all events, he is still as susceptible as he ever was to the old, woolly phraseology which, rhetorically, is certainly easier to use. And since he undoubtedly attached at least as much importance to basic

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democratic demands, which he thought he understood, as to economic principles, of which he had no clear understanding, he was undoubtedly sincere in believing he had pulled off a splendid deal in bartering democratic staples for Lassallean dogmas.

So far as the attacks on Lassalle are concerned, these seemed to me, as I have already said, more important than anything else. By accepting *all* the essential Lassallean economic catchwords and demands, the Eisenachers had *in fact turned into Lassalleans*—at least if the programme is anything to go by. The Lassalleans had sacrificed nothing, nothing whatever that was capable of preservation. And so as to make the latter's victory more complete you people adopted for your party anthem the rhymed, moralizing prose in which Mr. Audorf celebrates Lassalle.⁸⁴ During the 13 years in which the Anti-Socialist Law was in force there was, of course, no possibility of combatting the Lassalle cult within the party. This had got to be quashed and I set about doing so. I shall no longer permit Lassalle's bogus reputation to be maintained and revived *at Marx's expense*. Those who knew and revered Lassalle personally are thin on the ground; in the case of all the rest, the Lassallean cult is *purely factitious*, the result of our having tacitly tolerated it against our better judgment; hence it has not even the justification of personal attachment. We showed ample consideration for the feelings of inexperienced and new recruits by publishing the thing in the *Neue Zeit*. But I am in no way prepared to concede that in such circumstances historical truth—after 15 years of meek

⁸⁴ Engels means the refrain of Jacob Audorf's *Lied der deutschen Arbeiter* (Arbeiter-Marseillaise), written in 1864: 'Nicht zählen wir den Feind, nicht die Gefahren all! Der kühnen Bahn nur folgen wir, die uns geführt Lassalle!' ('We do not count the foes, the dangers—not at all! We boldly forge ahead along the path shown by Lassalle!').

forbearance—should give way to expediency and the fear of causing offence within the party. That deserving people should have their feelings hurt on such occasions is unavoidable and their grumbling after the event no less so. And if they then proceed to say that Marx was envious of Lassalle, and the German press, including even (!!) the Chicago *Vorbote* (which writes for more self-confessed Lassalleans—in Chicago—than exist in the whole of Germany) chimes in, it affects me no more than a flea-bite. We have had far worse things cast in our teeth and none the less carried on with the business in hand. The example has been set; Marx has laid rough hands on the sacrosanct Ferdinand Lassalle and that for the time being is enough.

And now just one more thing. In view of the attempt made by you people forcibly to prevent publication of the article, and your warnings to the *Neue Zeit* that, in the event of a recurrence, it, too, might be taken over and subjected to censorship by the party, the latter's appropriation of your entire press cannot but appear to me in a singular light. In what respect do you differ from Puttkamer if you introduce an Anti-Socialist Law into your own ranks? So far as I myself am concerned, it doesn't signify; no party in any country can impose silence upon me once I have made up my mind to speak. But all the same I would suggest you consider whether you would not do well to show yourselves slightly less touchy and, in your actions, slightly less—Prussian. You—the party—*need* socialist science and this cannot exist without freedom to develop. Hence one has to put up with the unpleasantnesses and to do so for preference with good grace and without flinching. Tension, however slight, let alone a rift, between the German party and German socialist science would be an unprecedented misfortune and disgrace. That the Executive and/or you yourself still have and must retain considerable *moral* sway over the *Neue Zeit* and everything

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else that is published, goes without saying. But with that you must and can rest content. Inalienable freedom of discussion is constantly being vaunted in the *Vorwärts* but is not greatly in evidence. You have absolutely no idea how odd an impression this proclivity for forcible measures makes upon one who lives abroad and is accustomed to see the most venerable party leaders being well and truly taken to task within their own party (e.g., the TORY government by Lord Randolph Churchill). And again, you should not forget that discipline in a big party cannot be anything like as strict as it is in a small sect, and that the Anti-Socialist Law, which forged the Eisenachers and Lassalleans into a single whole (though Liebknecht avers this was the work of his magnificent programme) and necessitated such close cohesion, no longer exists.

Ouf! So much for that old affair, and now for something else. There would seem to be some high jinks going on in the upper regions over there.⁸⁵ But it's all to the good. That the state machine should be thrown out of gear in this way suits us very well. Always providing peace is maintained by the universal fear of what the outcome of a war might be! For Moltke's death has removed the last obstacle to the disorganization of the army

⁸⁵ This refers to the revelations concerning the *Guelphic Fund*, which had far-reaching repercussions in Germany and caused a scandal in government circles.

The Fund, set up by the former Hanover royal court and, at the time in question, managed by Bismarck, was used to bribe the press. In March 1891 it became known that State Secretary Bötticher had received 360,000 marks out of it to pay the debts of his father-in-law, Bismarck. In this connection *Vorwärts* published a number of articles exposing corruption within the ruling classes (Nos 70, 71 and 74; March 24, 25 and 29, 1891)

by the arbitrary appointment of new commanders, and every year must contribute towards making victory more uncertain and defeat more probable. And little though I would wish for another Sedan, I am no more anxious to see the Russians and their allies victorious, even if they are republicans and otherwise have cause for complaint about the Peace of Frankfurt.⁸⁶

The trouble you expended on the revision of trade regulations has not been in vain. Better propaganda would be difficult to imagine. We over here followed the business with considerable interest and were delighted by the pertinence of the speeches.⁸⁷ In this connection I recalled the words of old Fritz: 'For the rest, our soldiers' genius lies in the attack, as is, indeed, right and proper.' And what party, given the same number of deputies, could boast so many confident and forceful speakers? Bravo me lads!

No doubt you deplore the pit strike in the Ruhr,⁸⁸ but what can you do? After all, it is usually via the unpremeditated wild-

⁸⁶ At *Sedan*, one of the major battles of the Franco-Prussian war was fought on September 1 and 2, 1870. It ended in the rout of the French forces. Under the peace treaty signed in Frankfurt and Main on May 10, 1871, France ceded Alsace and East Lorraine to Germany and undertook to pay an indemnity of 5,000 million francs. The Alsace-Lorraine question was a permanent cause of Franco-German friction and international tension in the 1880s and 90s.

⁸⁷ Engels means the speeches made by the Social-Democratic deputies, above all August Bebel, Paul Singer, and Wilhelm Liebknecht, in the Reichstag in February and April 1891 in the course of the debate on a bill to amend the trades regulations. The bill was part of the Prussian government's 'labour protection legislation'. The Social-Democratic group voted against the bill in its third reading. Bebel criticized the bill and analyzed the Social-Democrats' counterproposals in an article headlined 'Die Gewerbeordnungs-Novelle', published in *Die Neue Zeit*, 9.Jg., 1890/91, 2. Bd., Nr. 37-39.

⁸⁸ The miners' strike in question started spontaneously in the Ruhr on April 16, 1891, spreading eventually to almost the whole of the Rhine-Westphalia

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cat strike that we acquire large new categories of workers. In my view, insufficient account was taken of *this* fact in discussing the matter in the *Vorwärts*.⁸⁹ Liebknecht ignores all nuances; to him everything is either black or white and if he feels it incumbent on him to prove to the world that our party did not stir up this strike but actually poured oil on troubled waters, then God help the poor strikers; they're getting less consideration than they ought if they are to come over to us in the near future. But come they will in any case. By the way, what's wrong with the *Vorwärts*? Not a cheap out of my Liebknecht for 2 days; no doubt he's on his travels. Today, May 2, he is back again, live and kicking.

May 2. Come to that, the pit strike will doubtless soon fizzle out; it would seem to be only a very partial one and in no way to accord with the assertions and assurances at the delegates' meeting. It's all to the good. Not for one moment do I doubt that there's a powerful urge to resort to the sword and the musket.

The *first* [of May] went off very well. Vienna again takes pride of place. In Paris it fell more or less flat thanks to the bickering which is as yet by no means a thing of the past. Mistakes have been made there on every side. Our people in Lille and Calais had committed themselves to a specific type of

coal region. The strikers' main demands were for higher wages and an eight-hour working day. The strike ended in defeat for the workers at the beginning of May. In his letter of April 25, Kautsky criticized the stand taken by *Vorwärts*, which was demoralizing the strikers by predicting their defeat.

⁸⁹ Engels probably has in mind the leading article on the miners' strike, headlined 'Sie haben's errichtet!', and the article 'Der Streik der Bergarbeiter', published in *Vorwärts*, respectively No. 96, 26 April, and No. 97, April 28, 1891.

demonstration—the sending of delegates to the Chamber.⁹⁰ The Blanquists were not asked. The Allemanists did not join the demonstration *comité* until later. This suited neither the Blanquists nor the Allemanists; in the Chamber, the Blanquists had apostates who had been elected under Boulanger’s aegis, the Allemanists had a Broussist opponent⁹¹ there, and neither party wanted to appear as petitioners before these men. The same applied to the deputations which our chaps suggested sending to the 20 Paris *mairies* to which it was also proposed to summon the municipal councilors so that they might there hear ‘the will of the people’. Thus, a split ensued, our chaps withdrew and the demonstration split up into 3 or 4 partial demonstrations. Lafargue sent me word yesterday afternoon; under the circumstances he is fairly satisfied with what happened but maintains that Paris will come off badly by comparison with the provinces. Of one thing we may be certain; the countries which chose the 3rd [of May]—Germany and England—will muster the most impressive crowds, providing the weather’s not too bad. It’s wretched here today, heavy, drenching showers, a strong wind and only an occasional ray of sunshine.

Fischer will have received what he wanted for *Wage Labour and Capital*. *Entwicklung* will follow in a few days’ time. But then

⁹⁰ This form of May Day demonstration had been decided upon by the congress of the French Workers’ Party in Lille, October 11-12, 1890 and endorsed by the congress of French trade unions in Calais, October 13-18, 1890.

⁹¹ The *Possibilists* (or Broussists) were a trend in the French socialist movement. Their leaders—Paul Brousse, Benoit Malon and others—advocated the gradual transformation of the capitalist system into a socialist one by means of reform, through a ‘policy of pursuing the possible’. In 1882 they caused a split in the French Workers’ Party and formed a new party named *Federacion des Travailleurs socialistes*. In the 1890s the Possibilists lost a great deal of their influence; in 1902 the majority of them joined the reformist French Socialist Party, founded by Jean Leon Jaures.

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there must be no more requests. I have been promising a new edition of the *Origin* for a year now, and that has got to go off, after which I shall undertake *nothing further whatsoever* until the 3rd volume of *Capital* is ready in manuscript. That has *got* to be completed. So, if over there you hear rumors of fresh demands to be made on my time, I would beg you to back me up. I shall also reduce my correspondence to a minimum, with only one exception, namely yourself. It is through you that I can most easily remain in touch with the German party and again, to be honest, I enjoy this correspondence far more than any other. Once Volume III is in print I can get cracking again, starting with the revision of the *Peasant War*. And if I have nothing else to do, I shall probably complete Volume III this year.

Well, kindest regards to your wife, Paul, Fischer, Liebknecht and *tutti quantie* from.



THE PARTY OF COMMUNISTS USA

The Party of Communists USA (PCUSA) traces its roots to the dropped clubs from the revisionist Communist Party USA (CPUSA). The PCUSA is the political party of the working class and is dedicated to the interests of all working and oppressed peoples. Its aim is a socialist society, on the road to building communism.

The PCUSA is dedicated to upholding of Marxism-Leninism, scientific socialism, proletarian internationalism, and socialism-communism. Our focus is on class struggle, workers' rights, and creating the conditions for a socialist revolution. The PCUSA follows the model created by Comrade Lenin of the *Party of a New Type*, adhering to the principles of Democratic Centralism.





LEAGUE OF YOUNG COMMUNISTS USA

LEAGUE OF YOUNG COMMUNISTS USA

The League of Young Communists USA (LYCUSA) is the communist youth organization of the PCUSA. The League is politically united with the PCUSA, and yet is organizationally autonomous with our own constitution, membership, and publications. We call for a stronger, more active, and more united youth and student movement.

The purpose of our communist youth organization is to prepare young cadre to become full members of the PCUSA. The LYCUSA's main task is to give our members the most learning and experience possible. However, the LYCUSA is specifically tasked with creating a generation of Marxist-Leninists, dedicated to internationalism, scientific socialism, and the class struggle to build socialism into communism.





PEOPLE'S SCHOOL FOR MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES

Tuesdays & Thursdays | 8:00 – 9:40 PM EST

The sole goal of the People's School for Marxist-Leninist Studies (PSMLS) is to educate the working class to prepare to build socialism in the United States.

The PSMLS is the current manifestation in the long line of Party-sponsored schools in the US. Today, the People's School continues the task of ideologically educating workers, including those who are unemployed, oppressed peoples, women, and youth in the science of Marxism-Leninism and its application in various struggles.





US FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

US Friends of the Soviet People is dedicated to supporting struggles to restore socialism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. USFSP is the US affiliate of the International Council for Friendship and Solidarity with the Soviet People.

USFSP acts as a unifying force to help consolidate and coordinate the anti-imperialist forces of the world with the ongoing movement to restore the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as socialist states. The people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe themselves will choose their paths toward socialism.



