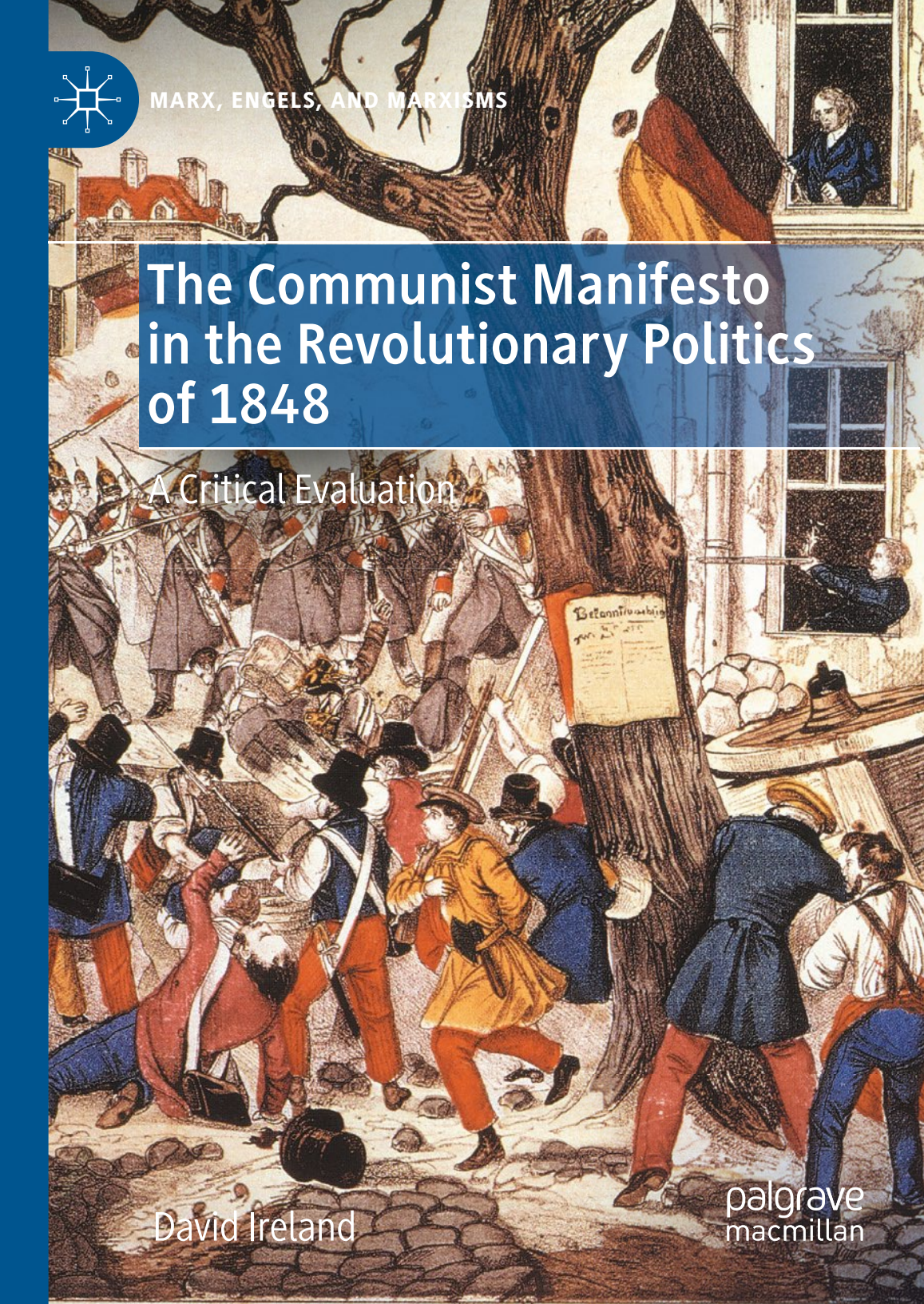

MARX, ENGELS, AND MARXISMS

The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848

A Critical Evaluation

David Ireland

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Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

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Notes

Since Germany was not unified until 1871, this book uses the formulation 'German states' wherever possible, although Marx and Engels themselves frequently refer to 'Deutschland' in the late 1840s (or, as in Engels's 1851 'Germany: Revolution and Counter-revolution' series for the *New York Daily Tribune*, 'Germany').

Where surnames belong to more than one individual, forenames are repeated, when required for clarity (e.g. August, Gerhard, Hermann and Johann Becker; Wilhelm and Ferdinand Wolff; Eduard and Samuel Bernstein; Klemens von and Germain Metternich; Rainer and Adam Koch; Dorothy and E.P. Thompson; Paul and Gottfried Stumpf; Ludwig and Karl Schneider II).

Contents

About the Author

David Ireland is an independent historian. He studied German and French at Keble College, Oxford, and more recently did an MA in Political Thought and Intellectual History at University College London (UCL)/ Queen Mary University of London. His MA addressed the journalism of Marx and Engels during the 1848–1849 revolution in the German states, Marx's writing on economic crises, Chartist fiction and Schumpeter's critique of Marx. He wrote an essay on Marx's tax policies, published in 2019 in the journal *Historical Materialism*. He has had careers as a journalist, from 1980 to 1986, initially with the original Mirror Group Training Scheme, then for the *Daily Mirror* and *London Evening Standard*, and as a financial analyst (equity research), from 1986 to 2007. He has written a biography (unpublished) on 1830s' German pamphleteer and writer Georg Büchner. He lives in London with his wife Krystyna.

Abbreviations[1]

BDA	*Brussels Democratic Association (Association Démocratique)*
CWA	Cologne Workers' Association
DBZ	*Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung* (German Brussels Newspaper)
FNA	Frankfurt National Assembly
MECW	*Marx Engels Collected Works*. Volumes 1–50, 1975–2004.
MEGA^2	*Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*. 114 volumes planned, 1975–.
MEW	*Marx Engels Werke*. Volumes 1–43, 1956–1968.
NRZ	*Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (New Rhenish Newspaper).
PNA	Prussian National Assembly
ZAV	*Zeitung des Arbeiter-Vereins zu Köln (First CWA Newspaper)*

[1] Note: *MECW* 6, 519, identifies first volume, then page number; *MEGA*^{2}. III/2, 403 identifies section (*Abteilung*), section volume and page number.

CHAPTER 1

Manifesto Style and Communism Substance

The *Communist Manifesto* has lost touch with its historical origins in 1848. For many of its readers, arguably the vast majority today, it is regarded as an artefact relocated to the era of posterity, or—a more recent, narrower sub-genre—of relevance particularly in the wake of the financial crash of 2008.

But, as Gareth Stedman Jones contends, the *Manifesto* 'was not designed for posterity',[1] or, as Eric Hobsbawm remarks, 'it is, of course, a document written for a particular moment in history'.[2] According to A.J.P. Taylor, 'what strikes a historian … is how deeply the *Communist Manifesto* is rooted in the circumstances of its time … the *Manifesto* was written in haste … for a particular occasion, the eve of the 1848 revolutions'.[3]

This not-for-posterity verdict is endorsed by Marx and Engels themselves. In the *Preface to the German Edition* of 1872, just 25 years on from the *Manifesto*'s conception, as they dated it then, they wrote, 'the general

[1] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 221.

[2] Eric Hobsbawm, *Introduction to The Communist Manifesto* (London: Verso Books, 2012), 11.

[3] A.J.P. Taylor, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 47, 24.

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principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct today as ever'. They then add, though, several riders, which serve to challenge their own posterity case: 'the practical application of the principles will depend … on the obtaining historical conditions, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II'; 'further, it is self-evident that the criticism of socialist literature [Section III] is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847[4]; also that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition parties [Section IV], although in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed.'[5] These three sections, apparently obsolete by 1872, amount to just over one-third of the *Manifesto*'s total word count.

Political pamphlets in general are surely written for the moment, and not for posterity. The best achieve a major impact, but, equally importantly, quickly. Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (if Horace Walpole's designation of it as a 'pamphlet' is accepted)[6] was published in two parts in March 1791 and February 1792; by May 1792, there were 50,000 copies in circulation, with claimed eventual European sales of as many as 1,500,000 copies.[7] Sales of William Cobbett's *Address to the Journeymen and Labourers*—considered later in this book—reached 44,000 by the end of its month of publication, November 1816, with a sale of 200,000 claimed by the end of 1817.[8]

Moreover, and this is one of the overarching premises behind this book, if one were contemplating a revolutionary pamphlet, 1848 was the year to be doing it. The *Manifesto* was written and published against a uniquely engaged revolutionary backdrop. As Christopher Clark observed on 15 February 2019, 'In their combination of intensity and geographical extent, the 1848 Revolutions were unique—at least in European history. Neither the French Revolution of 1789, nor the July Revolution of 1830, nor the Paris Commune of 1870, nor the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 sparked a comparable transcontinental cascade. … This was the only truly

[4] Somewhat curiously, on this reasoning, this is the only section of the *Manifesto* which Marx and Engels chose to reproduce in the final issue of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-Ökonomische Revue*, which appeared in November 1850.

[5] *Preface to the 1872 German Edition*. *Marx Engels Collected Works* (hereafter *MECW*) *23*, 174–5.

[6] John Keane, *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995), 307.

[7] Craig Nelson, *Thomas Paine* (London: Profile Books, 2007), 220. Sales estimates vary—the precise sales total is unverifiable.

[8] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 2013), 680.

European revolution that there has ever been.'[9] Jonathan Sperber describes the geographic reach of the events of 1848, 'from the Atlantic to Ukraine, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, the revolutions of 1848 brought millions of people across the European continent into political life'.[10]

More narrowly looking at the German states—the geographic focus of Marx in the *Manifesto*, and hence of this book[11]—Wolfram Siemann remarks, 'the entire population was gripped by the German revolution of 1848–1849. To a far greater extent than the Peasant Wars of the early modern age, for example, or the Wars of Liberation of 1813–1814, it affected the population on a national scale, from the smallest village community to the heart of the country.'[12] For Veit Valentin, 'the March experience of 1848 represents something which is unique in Germany's history. For the first time, all German states spoke the same political language and recognised the same political faith … actual events happened with amazing similarity in many places, often simultaneously. The German nation had become a fact. … This March of the year 1848 was the great turning point of German history in the nineteenth century.'[13]

Another German historian, Rudolf Stadelmann, agrees:

> And yet the crisis of 1848 had been a great period of German history and psychologically a genuine revolution. We have enough unadulterated witnesses from all classes and professions of the German population to be able to say: the March revolution was a real popular uprising, the like of which Germany had probably not experienced in such breadth and unanimity since the Reformation, not even in 1809 or 1813. … At that moment, all German provinces from Konstanz to Königsberg, and from Schleswig to Brünn rode the same homogenous wave.[14]

[9] Christopher Clark, "1848", London Review of Books Winter Lecture, 15 February 2019, reproduced in *London Review of Books*, 7 March, 2019, 12.

[10] Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), i.

[11] 'The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany.' *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.

[12] Wolfram Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 13.

[13] Veit Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution, 1848–1849* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1930), v1, 339.

[14] Rudolf Stadelmann, "Das Jahr 1848 und die deutsche Geschichte" in Dieter Langewiesche, ed., *Die Deutsche Revolution von 1848/49* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 26.

Taylor brings Europe and the German states together with his conclusion: '1848 was the decisive year of German, and so of European, history'.[15]

But 1848 was definitely not the decisive year of the *Manifesto*. In a preface for the new German edition of 1890, Engels would write, of the *Manifesto*'s closing, second most memorialised sentence 'working men of all countries, unite!', that 'few voices responded when we proclaimed these words to the world forty-two years ago'.[16]

That the *Manifesto*'s impact in and on 1848 was negligible is scarcely challenged. Those introducing the various commentaries, or introductions, to the *Manifesto* are almost unanimous on the *Manifesto*'s 1848 impact. According to David McLellan, 'the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* went virtually unnoticed';[17] for Mark Cowling, 'its initial impact was slight'.[18] Terrell Carver argues that 'we can safely stick with the general judgment that it had little effect on events, and had little lingering influence';[19] according to Jürgen Herres, 'it is critical to acknowledge the unimpressive effect of its first appearance … it did not affect the revolution'.[20] Stedman Jones suggests 'its immediate impact was muffled'.[21] Valentin concludes: 'to all practical purposes, it remained in the first instance quite unnoticed'.[22] In his 2016 history of Europe, Richard J Evans records that 'the *Manifesto* met with only a limited response'.[23] Michael Heinrich, in the latest of over 30 large-scale biographies on Marx, published in 2018 (and translated in 2019), concludes: 'his most famous works today, the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and the first volume of

[15] AJP Taylor, *The Course of German History* (Abingdon: Routledge Classics, 2001), 71.

[16] *Preface to the 1890 German edition. MECW 27*, 60.

[17] David McLellan, *Introduction to The Communist Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xvi.

[18] Mark Cowling, ed., *Communist Manifesto* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 2.

[19] Terrell Carver and James Farr, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to The Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 69.

[20] Carver and Farr, *Companion to The Communist Manifesto,* 26–7.

[21] Gareth Stedman Jones, Introduction to *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 14.

[22] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, v1, 287.

[23] Richard J Evans, *The Pursuit of Power: Europe 1815–1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 270.

Capital in 1867, were barely noticed at the time of publication'.[24] Hal Draper is a lone dissenting voice—'the oft-repeated statement that the *Manifesto* gained no attention whatever when it first came off the press is … inaccurate'.[25]

While Engels in 1890 wrote dismissively of the *Manifesto*'s impact in 1848, he could in 1888 rightly call the *Manifesto*, 'the most wide-spread, the most international production of all Socialist Literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of working men from Siberia to California'.[26] Nearer to our own time, Taylor, writing of Marx (in his *Introduction*), albeit in 1967, suggested, 'nearly half the world acknowledges him as master, and it is essentially the *Communist Manifesto* which it acknowledges'.[27]

If the verdict on the *Manifesto* in 1848 is widely held, there is still a curious indifference among many Marxian historians, an unwillingness to supply probing or comprehensive explanations. The main objective of this book is to get to the bottom of why a text, which has had such an enormous impact on later generations, should have left so faint an imprint on Europe's most revolutionary year. This book does not engage with the *Manifesto* in the era of posterity, a task carried out by many other commentators, or dispute its unquestionable impact on posterity; rather, its focus is firmly on 1848, and the months immediately before and after.

For a text soon approaching its 175th anniversary, whose mysteries one might reasonably assume to have long since been mined out, there are still a gratifyingly large number of unresolved talking points, of which this book considers 10:

- Does the *Manifesto*'s most memorialised phrase, 'the spectre of Communism', usually attributed to Lorenz von Stein but far more credibly borrowed from Moses Hess, deserve the attention it has received? (Chap. 1)
- Marx may, in closing, have addressed 'working men of all countries', but did he write the *Manifesto* for them? (Chap. 1)

[24] Michael Heinrich, *Karl Marx and the birth of modern society: the life of Marx and the development of His Work, Volume 1: 1818–1843* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2019), 333.

[25] Hal Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto* (Alameda: Centre for Socialist History, 2004), 1.

[26] *Preface to the 1888 English edition. MECW 26, 516.*

[27] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 8.

- Why did Marx choose to write the *Manifesto* alone in January 1848, how did Engels let him do so and what were the consequences for what had hitherto been such a collaborative project? (Chap. 2)
- How far did the measures in the *Manifesto*, and in the successor pamphlet, the 17 *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*,[28] catch the wider revolutionary mood in 1848? How far were Marx's 10 *Manifesto* measures too radical or too irrelevant? Why did Marx opt not to include in the *Manifesto* measures widely invoked by other contemporary pamphleteers? (Chap. 3)
- Why did Marx and Engels feel the need to write the 17 *Demands*, a pamphlet with a quite different target audience and measures to the *Manifesto*, only one month after the publication of the *Manifesto*? (Chap. 3)
- What prompted Marx and especially Engels to put their faith first in a 'bourgeois revolution' and then in an 'immediately following proletarian revolution' in the German states, but not, in the *Manifesto*, in a peasant revolution?[29] (Chap. 4)
- Why did the *Manifesto* turn its 'attention chiefly to Germany' and not at all substantively to England? (Chap. 4)
- Why did Marx and Engels miss the critical 'March days' of the 1848 revolution in the German states, preferring to stay on (for part of that month, in Engels's case) in Paris? (Chap. 5)
- Why had Marx and Engels already taken steps to launch, and concentrate on, the middle-class *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (NRZ) before they wrote the 17 *Demands* on behalf of the Communist League, of which Marx had only just been appointed president? (Chap. 5)
- Should Marx have done more to engage with workers' organisations, thus the Communist League, the 'Mainz Appeal', the Cologne Workers' Association (CWA), Stephan Born's *Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverbrüderung* (General German Workers' Fraternity)? What should one make of Marx's rapprochement, or re-engagement, with Born in 1849? (Chap. 6)

[28] The *Manifesto* was published around 24 February 1848, while the 17 *Demands* were written between 21 and 24 March 1848, and first published around 25 March 1848.

[29] The 17 *Demands* appealed to the collective self-interest of 'the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants'. *The Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*. *MECW 7*, 4.

To address these talking points, this book follows a number of methodological principles. It is particularly concerned with contextualising the *Manifesto* in and around 1848. It draws extensively on the writings—the *Manifesto* proper, its drafts and its inspirations, the polemics, newspaper articles, and letters—of Marx and Engels themselves. It thus seeks, in part, to unravel what happened in 1848–1849, and why, in their own words. It examines how the two men influenced, and were influenced by, revolutionary events and developments. It assesses how they worked with, or against, other influential figures of the period such as Wilhelm Wolff, Stephan Born, Andreas Gottschalk, Moses Hess, Karl Schapper, Karl Heinzen, Karl Grün and Wilhelm Weitling.

This book applies 'foresight analysis' to the tactical decisions that inform the *Manifesto*'s positioning. The European Revolutions lasted less than 20 months (if one takes their starting point to be the insurrection in Palermo on 12 January 1848 and their swansong, the surrender of Venice on 28 August 1849), but even within this comparatively brief period, there was no shortage of early recriminations and post mortems, not least from Marx and Engels themselves. It seems, though, more interesting, and valuable, to discuss how they read and acted on the revolutionary influences around them in advance, rather than to explain away every decision with wisdom months after the event. Even for Marx and Engels, who both spent the greater part of the revolutionary period in the German states, there were several significant turning points, an aspect of the period which lends itself, selectively, to a chronological account. Some chapters remain more usefully thematic. This book is chiefly concerned with the *Manifesto*, and the extent to which it, and Marx's and Engels's other activities, impacted the revolution in the German states (their own focus) in 1848–1849, rather than with the 1848–1849 European Revolutions per se: the wider picture is addressed in a series of appendices.

There seem to be frequent presumptions that anyone writing about Marx must be 'for' Marx or 'against' Marx, and, as an adjunct, that academic scepticism in a Marxian context is necessarily subjective or connotes hostility. Alternatively, such scepticism can be perceived as ideologically driven—thus, if one disagrees with Marx, one disagrees with his politics. It is certainly the case that among the sources cited here, there are East Germans, as were, such as Walter Schmidt, Gerhard Becker and Karl

Obermann, who are or were instinctive Marx loyalists, and some 'West Germans', such as Stadelmann and Ernst Schraepler, who were instinctively antipathetic (Stadelmann was also a fellow travelling Nazi, but it is his antipathy to Marx that is relevant here). But such crude compartmentalising surely misses the main point here, which is the value of the factual commentary. McLellan could conclude of Draper's five-volume *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, 'a splendidly detailed discussion aiming to show that Marx was always right',[30] but the American socialist historian and activist Draper offers many insights on the *Manifesto* (as does, of course, McLellan), as do, on 1848, Stadelmann, and the East Germans here, from their varying perspectives. Marxist historian Hobsbawm perceived many strengths in the *Manifesto*, but was quite happy to mention it had shortcomings too.

A less contentious truism in this field comes from Taylor: 'the *Communist Manifesto* must be counted as a holy book, in the same class as the Bible or the Koran. Nearly every sentence is a sacred text.'[31] There is a reverence for the *Manifesto*, and Marx, which inhibits critical, contextual, evaluation, primary concerns of this book. It seems worthwhile to put this reverence to one side, but there is at the same time little value to be added by the commentator being 'for' or 'against' Marx.

The *Manifesto* as a revolutionary pamphlet is invariably considered in a vacuum. This is true arguably of the 'spectre' metaphor, the *Manifesto* as a pamphlet, its measures, its writing style and its engagement with contemporary working-class movements. This book considers all these 'vacuums'.

The focus of this book is very much the *Manifesto* but it will also compare the *Manifesto* with five other political pamphlets written in the first half of the nineteenth century. These five comparators are not randomly chosen, being acknowledged for their significance as pamphlets and also having connections to Marx and Engels, either directly or crossing their paths. There are four thematic levers (material hardship and tax burdens, suffrage, republicanism and religion) where the majority of the comparators have something to say, relevant to the *Manifesto*, as do all five when it comes to effectively identifying and targeting an appropriate audience and in a writing style appropriate to that audience. There are also more isolated but still pertinent thematic overlaps.

[30] David McLellan, *Karl Marx: A Biography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 459.
[31] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 7.

From the German states comes first *Der Hessische Landbote* (The Hessian Country Messenger), urging the rural population of the Grand-Duchy of Hesse to rise up against its profligate and pampered masters, co-written in July 1834 by Georg Büchner and Ludwig Weidig.[32] According to authorities on Büchner, the '*Messenger* is generally acknowledged today as "the most significant revolutionary pamphlet in Germany prior to the *Communist Manifesto*"' (Thomas Michael Mayer)[33]; 'of all German-language political pamphlets, only the *Communist Manifesto* would be more frequently translated and more extensively disseminated' (Jan-Christoph Hauschild).[34] Heinrich Böll, giving the 1967 acceptance speech for the Georg-Büchner-Prize (Germany's most prestigious literary prize, just one measure of Büchner's importance in Germany to this day), lamented that Büchner, who died aged just 23 and (the nearly five years younger) Marx did not meet. Böll further suggested that 'with its powerful language, the *Hessian Country Messenger*, as populist as it was right in the fundamentals, is undoubtedly as striking a political text as the *Communist Manifesto*'.[35]

Cobbett asks, in 1816, the *Journeymen and Labourers of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, to reflect 'on the cause of their present miseries'. As noted, this pamphlet achieved a claimed circulation a year after publication of a prodigious 200,000 copies. It was read by, among many others, Percy Bysshe Shelley, but Cobbett was also well known to Marx and Engels, Marx making 'excerpts from the works of such writers as William Cobbett' in Manchester's Chetham's Library in 1845. Marx called Cobbett 'the greatest pamphleteer England has ever possessed',[36] 'a plebeian by instinct and sympathy' but also, more ambivalently, though a not unreasonable synopsis, 'on one hand an anticipated modern Chartist … on the other hand … an inveterate John Bull'.[37]

[32] A second version, written by Weidig alone, appeared in November 1834.

[33] Cited in John Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, *Complete Plays, Lenz and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 1993), 273.

[34] Jan-Christoph Hauschild, *Georg Büchner: Verschwörung für die Gleichheit* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2013), 335.

[35] Heinrich Böll, *Georg Büchners Gegenwärtigkeit*, Georg-Büchner-Prize Acceptance Speech, Darmstadt, 21 October 1967 (hosted by the German Academy for Language and Literature).

[36] *Capital Punishment—Mr Cobden's Pamphlet. MECW 11*, 498.

[37] *Layard's Motion. MECW 12*, 188–9.

Shelley's 1817 *Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte* initially juxtaposed the death in childbirth of a then popular royal with the no less tragic if less lamented deaths of ordinary women 'in childbed'. More particularly, it dealt with the coincidental 'execution of Brandreth, Ludlam and Turner' for their leading role in the Pentridge Rising of June 1817—described by E.P. Thompson as 'one of the first attempts in history to mount a wholly proletarian insurrection'[38]—and defended by Cobbett in his *Political Register* through 1818.[39] The pamphlet also contains 'effective though simplified passages of economic analysis, in which Shelley locates the root cause of political oppression in the economic exploitation of labourers and factory hands'. Shelley biographer Richard Holmes further describes the pamphlet as 'one of the earliest pieces of recognisably "pre-Marxist" analysis to be found in English'.[40] There is a reading of Shelley poetry at Engels's talk in Elberfeld (in current North-Rhine Westphalia) on communism in February 1845, rather summing up the bourgeois ambience of that gathering. Engels separately hailed 'Shelley, the genius, the prophet … Shelley, and Byron … find most of their readers in the proletariat'[41] while Marx said 'they grieve that Shelley died at 29 because he was essentially a revolutionist and he would always have been one of the most advanced guard of socialism'.[42]

Wilhelm Schulz's 1819 *Frag- und Antwortbüchlein über allerlei, was im deutschen Vaterland besonders Not tut* (Question and Answer Booklet on Everything that is Especially Wanting in the German Fatherland), aimed at 'German citizens and peasants', is described by Schulz commentator Karl-Ludwig Ay as 'one of the most important revolutionary pamphlets in the German language … occupying a prominent position in a significant tradition, to which Büchner's *Hessian Country Messenger* and the *Communist Manifesto* belong as the standalone high-points'.[43] Schulz first

[38] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 733.

[39] Though in the Pentridge trial, Brandreth's defence counsel, 'Lawyer Cross', tried to blame 'one of the most malignant and diabolical publications ever issued from the English press. … It is entitled—"An Address to the Journeymen and Labourers".' E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 728.

[40] Richard Holmes, *Shelley: The Pursuit* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 386, 387.

[41] *The Condition of the Working-Class in England. MECW 4*, 528.

[42] Edward and Eleanor (Marx) Aveling, *Shelley's Socialism* (Manchester: Leslie Preger, 1947), iii. Siegbert Prawer questioned the authenticity of the Marx quote, which Paul Foot defended.

[43] Karl-Ludwig Ay, "Das Frag- und Antwortbüchlein des Darmstädtischen Offiziers Friedrich Wilhelm Schulz" in *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 35 (1972): 728.

met Büchner in Strasbourg in 1835 and was a fellow lodger in Zürich in 1837, where (with his wife Caroline) he attended to Büchner at the latter's deathbed in February that year. In 1843, Schulz published an investigation into Weidig's suspicious death in jail on 23 February 1837, four days after Büchner's death. Marx quotes Schulz extensively in his 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, and again, if less liberally, in *Capital*. The title, in English, of Walter Grab's Schulz biography is *A Man Who Gave Marx Ideas*.[44]

Our final comparator pamphlet is *The Rotten House of Commons* of 1836, whose seven demands prefigure Chartism's 'People's Charter' two years later.[45] *The Rotten House* was signed off by the committee of the London Working Men's Association, but published by Henry Hetherington. It sought, in particular, universal suffrage, but also, quite untypically within our pamphlet sample, the homespun goal of 'just legislation as a means of adding to the happiness of every human being'.[46] Writing of the politicisation of the emergent working class, Edward Royle comments that 'Cobbett had blazed the trail … Richard Carlisle had spent longer inside gaol than outside for publishing the blasphemous views of Paine, but the hero of the 1830s was undoubtedly Henry Hetherington, leading publisher of the unstamped press'.[47] Engels wrote nearly 40 articles for the Chartist *Northern Star*—'one of the best journals in Europe'[48] in his view—between 1843 and 1849, and was in touch with the Chartist leadership (whom Marx first met in London in the summer of 1845). Helen Macfarlane, who first translated the *Manifesto* into English in 1850, was a Scottish Chartist.

The balance of this opening chapter sets the scene for the *Manifesto*:

- It considers the origin, significance and context of 'the spectre of Communism'.
- It asks who the *Manifesto* in 1848 was written for; it discusses the readers of revolutionary pamphlets in general, their levels of

[44] Walter Grab, *Ein Mann der Marx Ideen Gab: Wilhelm Schulz, Weggefährte Georg Büchners, Demokrat der Paulskirche* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1979).

[45] *The Rotten House* included five of the six points in the later People's Charter.

[46] Henry Hetherington et al., *The Rotten House of Commons* (London: British Library Historical Print Editions, 1837 Original), 7.

[47] Edward Royle, *Chartism* (Harlow: Longman, 1980), 11.

[48] *The Festival of Nations in London*. *MECW 6*, 8.

education but also of political awareness; what might constitute an effective pamphlet, in terms of its writing style.
– It examines the state and essence of communism, both in the period running up to the appearance of the *Manifesto* in 1848 and within the *Manifesto* itself.

Moses Hess, once fondly described by Engels as 'the first communist of the party',[49] by now despised by Marx almost as much as by Engels, came up with a striking phrase, 'das "Gespenst des Kommunismus"', the 'spectre of Communism',[50] in an article appearing on 7 November 1847. It was his third piece for the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung* (German Brussels Newspaper, or *DBZ*)[51] on *Die Folgen einer Revolution des Proletariats* (The Consequences of a Revolution of the Proletariat).

So striking was this phrase that Marx borrows it word-for-word for the most memorialised, opening sentence, 'A spectre stalks Europe—the spectre of Communism', of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, sent to London for printing at the end of January 1848, less than three months later. Marx's borrowing can't be proved, but the circumstantial evidence is very compelling. Engels (the likely plagiarist by proxy here) first draws literal attention to the Hess articles in his letter to Marx of 26 October 1847: 'what has so bitten this poor Moses that he doesn't stop exposing his fantasies in the newspaper on the consequences of a revolution of the proletariat?'[52] This is 12 days after Hess's first '*Consequences*' article appears in the *DBZ*.

On 23 November 1847, Engels returns to the attack, complaining in a second letter to Marx: 'I have been completely at a loss to understand why you have not put a stop to Moses's tittle-tattle. It's been giving rise to the most devilish confusion for me here and the most tedious contradictory speeches to the workers.'[53] Hess writes six articles in total for the *DBZ*, two in November 1847, the same month in which Marx has three articles, and Engels one, published in the newspaper. It seems inconceivable that

[49] *Progress of Social Reform on the Continent. MECW 3*, 406.

[50] Moses Hess, *Philosophische und Sozialistische Schriften 1837–50* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 439. The British Library holds a facsimile version of the *DBZ*, 7 November 1847 edition.

[51] The *DBZ*, a German political emigrants' newspaper, appeared in a bi-weekly edition of 300 copies, from 1 January 1847 to 27 February 1848.

[52] *Engels to Marx, 26 October 1847. MECW 38*, 140.

[53] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 146.

Marx, as well as Engels, were not well aware of what Hess was writing at this time.

Hess has never been identified as the source of the *Manifesto*'s opening phrase, which is attributed by many writers on Marx[54] to Lorenz von Stein, though the latter's description in his 1842 book, *The Socialism and Communism of Today's France*, of communism as a 'dark, threatening spectre'[55] is hardly a verbatim inspiration. The contribution of Schulz, championed by others as a source, to the 1846 *Staats-Lexikon* (State Lexicon), 'for a few years, the talk in Germany is of communism, and already it has become a threatening spectre', seems merely imitative of Stein.

Not that Hess, or even Stein, were spectre pioneers. As early as 1831, the mercurial English playwright, poet and exile Thomas Lovell Beddoes[56] penned a sketch for the *Bayrisches Volksblatt* (Bavarian People's Press). His *Die Gespenster* (The Spectres) deployed (11 years in advance) Stein's 'threatening' adjective ('drohend') to precede the 'Spectre of Revolution', which 'torments the minds of courtiers, aristocrats, the rich and the powerful'.[57]

The general point is that 'Spectre', in the 1840s and before, was ubiquitous. Freiburg academic Jörn Leonhard saw so much mileage in the 'spectre' concept that in 2007 he devoted 17 pages to an essay on *Spectre-metaphors and Historic Zombies in German History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.[58] Leonhard started out in 1790, missed Hess, but referred among others to Stein, Schulz, Heinrich Heine as another early spectre user and Max Weber as a late one.

Wolfgang Schieder, in his 75-page essay on communism, is even more comprehensive than Leonhard, covering 20 1840s' political spectres,

[54] For instance, leading *Manifesto* bibliographer Bert Andréas, Arnold Winkler, Wolfgang Schieder, Draper, Peter Osborne, Ingar Solty.

[55] Lorenz von Stein, *Der Sozialismus und Communismus der heutigen Frankreich: Ein Beitrag zur Zeitgeschichte* (Leipzig: Otto Wiegand, 1842), 4.

[56] Beddoes, in his medical capacity, in 1837 visited the Zürich deathbed of Büchner. Beddoes was preoccupied with death (particularly his own suicide), medical science and revolutionary politics.

[57] Cited in Frederick Burwick, "Beddoes, Bayern und die Burschenschaften" in *Comparative Literature* XXI, no. 4, 1969, 297.

[58] Jörn Leonhard, "Verheissung, Wiederauferstehung, Erlösung: Gespenstermetaphern und historische Wiedergänger in der deutschen Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts" in *Gespenster und Politik*, ed. Fabrice d'Almeida and Claire Gantet (Paderborn: Fink, 2007), 303–320.

some pale, some airy, along with their half-siblings (bogeymen, phantoms, terror images, even a solitary Medusa-head).[59]

Hess may not have been the first to coin the phrase, 'Spectre of Communism'—the contention here is that he is surely the most visible, and close at hand, from Marx's perspective.

Schieder, in his communism essay, uncovers an actual 'Spectre of Communism' ('Gespenst des Kommunismus') in a transcribed, self-published lecture of Karl Biedermann, a professor of political science in Leipzig.[60] Biedermann certainly wrote the precise phrase before Hess—the preface to the book of his lectures (*Lectures on Socialism and Social Questions*) is dated 30 July 1847—but it's hard to clarify whether Marx came across the Biedermann lectures, before he surely read Hess's use of the phrase in the 7 November 1847 issue of the *DBZ*.[61]

Biedermann was hardly an unknown, but whereas Engels writes to Marx in September 1846 about an article the month before on communism by Biedermann (in the series, *Our Present and Future*), neither Engels nor Marx mentions the Biedermann *Lectures on Socialism*. We don't know the publication date of the transcribed lectures, their print-run or availability, and in any event, Biedermann's personal archive (not previously accessible to researchers) was destroyed in a bombing raid on Berlin in August 1943.[62]

There is similarly no evidence that Marx or Engels read *Der Pauperismus und die Volksschule: ein ernstes Wort über eine der wichtigsten Fragen unserer Zeit* (Pauperism and the Elementary School: A Serious Word About One of the Most Important Questions of Our Time), an anonymous 63-page work, also published in Leipzig some time in 1847, which contained on its second page the phrase, 'the pale spectre of communism'.

Engels too had got caught up in 1840s spectre-fever. In a letter to Marx of 23 October 1846, Engels caustically observes that 'even the

[59] Wolfgang Schieder, "Kommunismus" in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, v3, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004), 484–7.

[60] Schieder, *Kommunismus*, 486.

[61] Herres cites the Biedermann lectures in *Sozialismus und Kommunismus*. Jürgen Herres, "Sozialismus und Kommunismus" in Bernd Rill, ed., *1848—Epochenjahr für Demokratie und Rechtsstaat in Deutschland* (Munich: Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, 1998), 257–275.

[62] Richard Bazillion, *Modernising Germany: Karl Biedermann's Career in the Kingdom of Saxony, 1835–1901* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 47.

cabinet-makers[63] … entertain a superstitious ghostly-fear (Gespensterfurcht) of "bread-and-butter communism"'.[64] Some three years earlier, overlooked by all other commentators, Engels had discussed, in the *Schweizerischer Republikaner* (Swiss Republican) of 23 May 1843, the 'spectre of Chartism'.[65]

By 1848, the 'spectre' concept was thoroughly hackneyed[66] and seemingly available for hire by political movements other than communism. This hasn't stopped many of the best-known commentators on Marx from being impressed by the power of the *Manifesto*'s opening sentence. For Hobsbawm, it's a 'memorable aphorism',[67] for Stedman Jones a 'memorable phrase',[68] for Sperber there's the 'trumpet blast of the introductory paragraph',[69] for Gregory Claeys it's a 'resounding phrase … it would ring immortally across the next century',[70] while for Yanis Varoufakis 'its most infamous lines, including the opening one … have a Shakespearian quality'.[71] Sven-Eric Liedmann suggests that 'the very first sentence has achieved iconic status'.[72]

Putting spectres to one side, who was the *Manifesto* written for in 1848? Its decisive finale sentence—'Working men of all countries, unite!'—would point to this being a fatuous question, but Gustav Mayer argues that between the second Engels draft of 1847 (*Principles of Communism*) and the Marx final version, the target readership, and its level of political understanding, changed:

> Engels had been compelled to respect the journeymen in Paris whom he represented: this fact tied his hands in the early "creed". But Marx was addressing a more modern audience, the Workers' Educational Association

[63] Engels writes in 1885 that 'two of the Paris communities consisted of tailors, one of cabinet-makers'. *On the History of the Communist League. MECW 26*, 315–6.

[64] *Engels to Marx, about 23 October 1846. MECW 38*, 87; *Marx Engels Werke* (hereafter *MEW*, *Marx Engels Works*) *27*, 66.

[65] *Letters from London. MECW 3*, 383.

[66] Stedman Jones comments that 'In Central Europe the image was almost commonplace in the late 1840s'. Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 27.

[67] Hobsbawm, *Manifesto Introduction*, 15.

[68] Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 10.

[69] Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life* (New York: Liveright, 2013), 203.

[70] Gregory Claeys, *Marx and Marxism* (London: Pelican, 2018), 118.

[71] Yanis Varoufakis, "A Manifesto for Right Now", *Guardian Long Read*, 20 April 2018, 9.

[72] Sven-Eric Liedmann, *A World to Win* (London: Verso Books, 2018), 233.

> of Brussels. And as soon as Engels could cast off the bonds which hampered him, he also refused to adapt the *Manifesto* to the mentality of a backward section of the proletariat. The first sketch could presuppose no historical or economical background in its readers, whereas the language of the *Manifesto* shows that its authors did not belong to the working classes. In the *Principles* are expressed the real needs and hopes of the proletarian: the *Manifesto* unfolds a terrific panorama of past, present, and future; it deploys, with the power of genius, a vast mass of facts.

There are several points here with which one might take issue: Engels representing journeymen in the *Principles*, Marx addressing in the *Manifesto* the Brussels Workers' Educational Association—with its 105 members at most—Engels being a co-author not a co-drafter. But these quibbles are incidental, for Mayer is implying something much more interesting, namely that the *Manifesto* is not concerned with 'the real needs and hopes of the proletarian', that consequently, there was no obligation for Marx and Engels to talk down to the 'backward proletariat', since, as Mayer has it, 'the book is intended for advanced readers'.[73]

This is a very revolutionary reading of the *Manifesto*, which turns much accepted wisdom on its head. Conventionally, it's argued, the *Manifesto's* intended audience in the first instance was members of the Communist League, the pamphlet's sponsor. Engels wrote a rather selective history of the League in 1885. Here is his view of the membership in the late 1840s: 'the members, insofar as they were workers at all, were almost exclusively real artisans'. Elsewhere in this same history, Engels says these 'artisans' were tailors and cabinet-makers; the League is also said to include boot-makers. Engels continues: 'The greatest honour is due to them, in that they … were themselves not yet full proletarians but only an appendage of the petty bourgeoisie. … But it was also inevitable that their old handicraft prejudices were a stumbling block to them at every moment, whenever it was a question of criticising existing society in detail, that is, of investigating economic facts. And I do not believe there was a single man in the whole League at that time who had ever read a book on political economy.'[74]

Support for this final Engels observation comes from Hans-Joachim Ruckhäberle, in his study of German political pamphlets, writing of the

[73] Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: A Biography* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1936), 85–6.
[74] *On the History of the Communist League*. *MECW 26,* 317.

German states in the 1830s, 'without a doubt, the [political] consciousness of the nascent proletariat shouldn't be overrated'.[75]

Born, in the view of Franz Mehring, agreed: 'Born understood the *Communist Manifesto* very well, but he was less successful in applying its principles to the undeveloped class consciousness of the proletariat of the greater part of Germany'.[76]

But perhaps targeting 'working men' was not the *Manifesto*'s intention. The level at which other leading commentators pitch their assessment of the way in which the *Manifesto* was written chimes with Mayer's contention that this was a pamphlet for 'advanced readers'. There is no shortage of admirers of the *Manifesto*'s literary style and, in particular, of its rhetorical brilliance. Hobsbawm hails 'the intellectual and stylistic force of this astonishing pamphlet. … Whatever else it is, the *Communist Manifesto* as political rhetoric has an almost biblical force. In short, it is impossible to deny its compelling power as literature.'[77] Stedman Jones notes 'its power as a text, its rhetorical force'.[78]

In his essay, *A Rhetorical Approach to the Communist Manifesto*, Haig Bosmajian brings out Marx's use of 'balance, metonymy … metaphor, synecdoche … antithesis … accumulation, anaphora, epistrophe … and anadiplosis'.[79] James Martin, who has written extensively on rhetoric, mentions in his separate essay, *The Rhetoric of the Manifesto* (as does Bosmajian), Marx's translation of parts of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Martin assesses the *Manifesto* with reference to three canons of rhetoric, often known by their Latin names, namely *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio*. He also considers Marx's use of parataxis, antithesis and chiasmus (or antimetabole).[80]

The sophisticated deconstruction in these two essays of the *Manifesto*'s rhetorical component parts, be they Greek or Latin, certainly fixes the appeal of the *Manifesto* to an advanced readership. Separately, there are champions of the *Manifesto*'s accessibility. Martin additionally discusses in his piece 'the style of the language Marx and Engels use, which is notable

[75] Hans-Joachim Ruckhäberle, *Flugschriftenliteratur im historischen Umkreis Georg Büchners* (Kronberg: Scriptor Verlag, 1975), 132.

[76] Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936), 184–5.

[77] Hobsbawm, *Manifesto Introduction*, 15.

[78] Stedman Jones, *Introduction to The Communist Manifesto*, 10.

[79] Frederic Bender ed., *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), 181.

[80] Carver and Farr, *Companion to The Communist Manifesto*, 52, 56, 60–1.

for its accessibility and economy'.[81] Claeys agrees, of the *Manifesto*, 'it is justly accounted Marx's most accessible work'.[82]

The accessibility of the *Manifesto* seems worthy of further discussion, particularly if the debate about whether it was written for 'advanced readers', or, even if perhaps at one remove, 'backward proletarians', is deemed inconclusive.

August Becker[83] was obliged to testify to Friedrich Noellner's Weidig Inquiry (his report eventually being published in 1844) which in part focused on *Treasonable Undertakings through the Composition and Distribution of Pamphlets*. Giving evidence in 1837, Becker expounded the approach Büchner had brought to his pamphlet, the *Hessian Country Messenger*: 'If the revolution were ever to be realised in an effective way, then it could only happen through the great mass of the people … the task in hand was to win over this great mass, which for the present would be brought about by pamphlets. Previous pamphlets, which in theory shared this aim, were simply not appropriate for it; in them, the talk was always of the Vienna Congress, press freedom, parliamentary announcements and the like, just the sort of thing the peasants (for it was to them, above all, one must turn, was Büchner's view) simply didn't worry about, as long as they were preoccupied with their material wants; for these people have no interest in the honour and freedom of their nation, no concept of the rights of man.'[84]

Büchner in person had little time for 'Men of Letters' spearheading social change or pitching sophisticated revolutionary ideas to an unsophisticated working-class audience. Writing to his mentor Karl Gutzkow in 1836, Büchner argued, 'By the way, to be quite honest, you and your friends don't seem to have followed exactly the wisest course. Reform society by means of *ideas* deriving from the *educated* class? Impossible! … You will never bridge the gulf between the educated and uneducated classes of society.'[85]

[81] Carver and Farr, *Companion to The Communist Manifesto,* 60.

[82] Claeys, *Marx and Marxism*, 118.

[83] Close confidant of Büchner, and co-conspirator for the *Hessian Country Messenger* in 1834.

[84] Friedrich Noellner, *Actenmäßige Darlegung des wegen Hochverraths eingeleiteten gerichtlichen Verfarhrens gegen Pfarrer D. Friedrich Ludwig Weidig* (Darmstadt: Verlag von Carl Wilhelm Leske, 1844), 421.

[85] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 204.

Now consider the openings to two of our six pamphlets (thus, the *Manifesto*, and our five comparators) whose common theme is the struggle between classes. Which, one wonders, would resonate with, say, modern 'Men of Letters', and which with a readership of 1848 proletarians, petty bourgeoisie and small peasants:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.[86]

> The life of the gentry is one long Sunday, they live in fine houses, wear elegant clothes, have over-fed faces and speak their own language; but the people lie before them like dung on the fields. … The life of the peasant is one long work-day; strangers devour his land before his eyes, his whole body is a scar, his sweat is the salt on the gentry's table.[87]

The first pamphlet is, of course, the *Manifesto*, the second, Büchner's and Weidig's *Hessian Country Messenger*. The first extract begins the nearly 4400-word Section I of the *Manifesto*, *Bourgeois and Proletarians*, by no means exclusively a densely written academic or broadsheet treatise, but certainly discursive and not consistently inspirational. The *Hessian Country Messenger* can labour its points, given its extensive use of supporting Hessian budget statistics, but it does more credibly try to reach out to a down-to-earth readership. Gottfried Weissert suggests 'by comparison with the *Hessian Country Messenger*, the *Communist Manifesto* will appear prosaic, even dull'.[88]

The relative sophistication of the readership clearly has bearings on a revolutionary pamphlet's content, written style and reception. Marx makes a case in one of the *Manifesto*'s most quoted and most misinterpreted passages, early on in Section I, *Bourgeois and Proletarians*, for the bourgeoisie having usefully lifted the worldliness of the population. The 1888 Moore translation reads, 'the bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of

[86] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 482.

[87] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 167–8.

[88] Gottfried Weissert, *Georg Büchner, Der Hessische Landbote, Karl Marx, Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei, Ein Vergleich* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1973), 15.

the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life.'[89]

Much of this passage is factually inaccurate, certainly as regards the German states. The bourgeoisie had not 'subjected the country to the rule of the towns'—in 1849, a de facto 78% of the population of even 'advanced' Prussia was rural. Nor had it created 'enormous cities'—according to Obermann, of Prussia's largest towns in 1846, only two, Berlin and Breslau, had populations above 100,000, the bottom 16 all being below 50,000.[90] Silesia, Prussia's most populous province, had a population in 1846 of just over 3.0 million, 74% of which lived in the country, in 5511 villages, that is the average village had just 400 inhabitants. The Rhineland, the province of Prussia with the greatest population density, had 2.8 million inhabitants, with only 27% living in towns; of its 29 towns, 9 had a population below 15,000.[91] Hesse, the target of Büchner's and Weidig's *Hessian Country Messenger*, had a population of ca. 700,000 in the 1830s, 85% of whom lived in the country. As Siemann emphasises, 'before 1848, Germany was overwhelmingly a land of peasants … small-town life was almost always closely linked to the countryside'.[92]

It is, though, the final phrase of this Section I extract that is the most telling. As both Hobsbawm and Draper point out, the German phrase 'Idiotismus des Landlebens', which Moore renders as 'idiocy of rural life', actually implies (being derived from the Greek 'idiotes') 'narrow horizons' or 'isolation from wider society'.[93] Draper further notes that Engels, in his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, writes of rural weavers as a class 'which had remained sunk in apathetic indifference to the universal interests of mankind'.[94]

But how accurate, and fair, is this depiction of rural backwardness? Here, one needs to draw some distinctions, on schooling and literacy, on

[89] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. *MECW 6*, 488.

[90] Karl Obermann, "Zur Klassenstruktur und zur Sozialen Lage der Bevölkerung in Preussen 1846 bis 1849" in *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1973/1972, 82.

[91] Ernst Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine 1830–1853: die politische Tätigkeit deutscher Sozialisten von Wilhelm Weitling bis Karl Marx* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 239–40.

[92] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 28.

[93] Hobsbawm, *Manifesto Introduction*, 11.

[94] *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*. *MECW 4*, 309. Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 220.

perceived and actual political attitudes. First, the German states undoubtedly had a well-schooled society—Sigmann points out that 'in 1848 school attendance rose to 93% in Prussia, 80% in Bavaria'.[95] According to Ken Barkin, by 1850, Prussia's literacy rate (for reading and writing)—not unrepresentative of that of the rest of the German states—had reached 85%, compared with 61% in France (reading only) and 52% for England (reading and writing).[96] Siemann claims an 80% literacy rate in Prussia, as against 40–50% in Austria-Hungary.[97]

Barkin's 1983 essay, 'Social Control and the Volksschule[98] in Vormärz Prussia', is a revealing investigation into where all this schooling was supposed to have led and what it may actually have achieved. Studies in the 1970s, in contrast to an earlier uncritical glorification of the Prussian school system, saw compulsory schooling offering a means of indoctrinating children in religion and political submissiveness, and softening them up for a tedious industrial working life. Social mobility and instruction in democracy were not at all part of the early nineteenth-century educators' brief.[99]

Not altogether accurate, Barkin argues. First, Prussia couldn't control its schools; witness the fact that between 1819 and 1853, Prussian leaders had repeatedly to return to the task of trying to instil docility in the school system. Secondly, and much more intriguingly, 'is the significant role played by Volksschule teachers in the revolution of 1848. … They fostered in the proletariat discontent with their status and their position, and approved of their inclination to undermine the moral and religious foundations of society … in the reactionary aftermath to the revolution, teachers were prominent among those jailed, exiled, or forbidden to practise their profession.'[100] Barkin cites Joseph Kay, who in 1850 'praised Prussia's 29,000 teachers for having brought Prussian despotism to its knees in 1848 and expressed doubt whether the revolution could have taken place

[95] Jean Sigmann, *Eighteen-fortyeight: the Romantic and Democratic Revolutions in Europe* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973), 28.

[96] Kenneth Barkin, "Social Control and the Volkschule in Vormärz Prussia" in *Central European History*, Vol 16, No 1 (March 1983): 50.

[97] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 117.

[98] Elementary or primary school.

[99] Barkin, *Social Control and the Volksschule in Vormärz Prussia*, 32.

[100] Barkin, *Social Control and the Volksschule in Vormärz Prussia*, 36–7.

at all without the groundwork laid by the schools'.[101] The Gymnasium,[102] additionally, was deemed a particular source of political dissent.[103]

But did a politically engaged teaching cohort, in both primary and secondary schools, automatically lead to a politically engaged, or even aware, population in the German states? Siemann draws attention to the prevalence in 1848–1849 of caricatures of 'der deutsche Michel' ('Michael the German'), a figure said to personify 'Germany'. Joseph Eiselstein's 1840 dictionary suggested he stood for the 'the whole, corpulent German people' while the 'General German Encyclopaedia' of 1846 saw in him the personification of the 'foolishness and wrong-headedness' of the German nation.

August Becker argued, this time in his 1843 *Die Volksphilosophie unserer Tage* (Populist Philosophy in our Time), and bearing in mind the overwhelming preponderance of peasants in the German states of the 1840s:

> how then could a peasant be interested in the free press … free, uncensored pamphlets, handed to him, reclaiming rights whose loss in the meantime only seems to matter to the educated. Why should he be especially bothered that the thoughts of other people, with whom he has no connection remotely, have been struck out by the censor? Of the rights of man and citizens, he hasn't a clue. Speak with the peasants in the poor districts of Germany, and you'll soon notice, where the shoe pinches. The political rights of the state isn't a thorn in his eye, rather just his own rights. Toil and trouble, and still have nothing! The poor person never amounts to anything—who's got it, has got it.[104]

Against this somewhat conflicting background, Ruckhäberle argues that 'the problem of the differentiation of pamphleteering agitation is … much more the problem of the framing of the information'.[105] This is a central issue with the writing style of the *Manifesto*—whether the brilliant rhetorical flourishes simply go over the heads of the mainstream working-class audience (supposedly targeted?) of the period. How effective was its literary style in winning the hearts and minds of potentially communist proletarians, and (in the 17 *Demands* iteration) additionally petty bourgeois and peasants in 1848?

[101] Joseph Kay, *The Social Condition and Education of the People of England and Europe*, v2. (London: Longman, 1850), 23–5.

[102] Secondary or grammar school.

[103] Barkin, *Social Control and the Volksschule in Vormärz Prussia*, 49.

[104] August Becker, *Die Volksphilosophie unserer Tage* (Neumünster: Hess, 1843), 31–2.

[105] Ruckhäberle, *Flugschriftenliteratur im historischen Umkreis Georg Büchners*, 136.

Ruckhäberle also contends that 'the use of specific "class-language" is not a core issue' in differentiating pamphlets.[106] It is instructive, first, to consider measures in the *Manifesto* and those of the 17 *Demands*, which overlap with the programme set out 'for the workers' published on 10 June 1848 in Born's populist *Das Volk* newspaper, but also presented (if not identically) as a petition to the Frankfurt National Assembly (FNA) on 2 September 1848 by *Das Volk*'s successor, *Die Verbrüderung*. Two measures in the *Manifesto* calling for tax reform and free education are broadly replicated in both the 17 *Demands* and *Das Volk*. The 17 *Demands* and *Das Volk* in turn together call for national workshops, a welfare safety net and male suffrage, albeit again with some variations.

As can be seen visually (the meaning of the German here not being the point) in the calls for the introduction of progressive (income) tax and the abolition of indirect/consumption taxes, expressed as 'Einführung progressiver Einkommensteuer, Aufhebung der indirekten Steuern' in *Das Volk* and as 'Einführung von starken Progressivsteuern, Abschaffung der Konsumtionssteuern' in the 17 *Demands*, the German phraseology and its visual complexity are little different. Free, universal education—'Allgemeine, unentgeltliche Volkserziehung' in the 17 *Demands*, 'unentgeltliche Erziehung aller Kinder' in the *Manifesto*, 'Der Staat übernimmt den unentgeltlichen Unterricht' in *Das Volk*—sees the identical German adjective ('unentgeltlich') for 'free' being employed.

What is different is that *Das Volk* otherwise engages with its readers in a far more direct and empathetic way. In his pitch to readers, 'What We Want', in the opening issue (in fact, trial issue) of 25 May 1848 (it ran till 28 August that year), Born proclaims, 'when we speak of "the people", all too often that means the whole world, but this newspaper will represent one specific class in the State, the working class … which is in the pay of others, whose very existence is a precarious one, dependent on work and wages being on offer … which has no future other than poverty and hopeless resistance'.

The *Manifesto*, of course, closes with a direct appeal to 'Working Men of All Countries', but this follows a final section in which Marx frequently refers to 'the Communists' in the third person. The 17 *Demands* are similarly impersonal—'it is to the interest of the German proletariat'. As to the *NRZ*, its prospectus is unrepresentative, being written by the soon-to-be side-lined Heinrich Bürgers, but there is no *Das Volk*-style first-issue pitch

[106] Ruckhäberle, *Flugschriftenliteratur im historischen Umkreis Georg Büchners*, 136.

to the new readership—the first front page on 1 June 1848 is preoccupied with procedural issues (the appearance of the *NRZ* a month earlier than expected, and subscription rates), before launching straight into 'official news', with a major piece on the opening days of the FNA.

It does, of course, proclaim itself to be the 'Organ of Democracy', although as Engels observed much later, in his 1884 review of the *NRZ*, this was 'a democracy which everywhere emphasised in every point the specific proletarian character which it could not yet inscribe once for all on its banner'. There is potentially a steer with Marx's 1 June 1848 *NRZ* article on *The Democratic Party* but as he briskly points out in his very first paragraph, 'every new organ of public opinion is generally expected to show enthusiasm for the party whose principles it supports, unqualified confidence in the strength of this party', but 'we shall not live up to these expectations'.[107] In some ways, it's an academic disclaimer—Fernbach explains that 'the "democratic party" of this article refers to the broad democratic movement, not to any particular organised group'.[108]

Das Volk is, to an extent, rather ponderous and prosaic in the style with which it seeks rapport with its readership. Mathilde Anneke is much more conversationally to the point in the launch issue of *Frauen-Zeitung*, not, as one might have expected from the title, a feminist newspaper to reflect her own views, but an instantly repackaged version of *Die Neue Kölnische Zeitung* (when temporarily banned on 26 September 1848, her new paper appeared the very following day, although it too was soon caught up in the general short-term ban on Cologne newspapers). On *Frauen-Zeitung*'s first front page, she explained (to the subscribers), 'Look, this is how they do it to us … *Die Neue Kölnische Zeitung*, which spoke the truth so very simply and honestly, has been rendered null and void by the state of siege in Cologne … my husband[109] finds himself, as I'm sure you'll know, in prison … my friend thinks he wants to edit another little paper like *Die Neue Kölnische Zeitung* with the title *Silver Nitrate*[110] but I think they'd allow *Silver Nitrate* an even shorter life than our little Cologne paper'.

Mathias Wessel, Cologne master baker, Cologne Workers' Association activist and red republican, was an altogether more extreme populist. His

[107] *The Democratic Party. MECW 7*, 21, 27.
[108] David Fernbach, *The Revolutions of 1848* (London: Verso, 2010), 112.
[109] Friedrich 'Fritz' Anneke.
[110] A poisonous compound, used to cauterise wounds.

Verfolger der Bosheit (Persecutor of Evil)[111] campaigned against those who exploited the working class, be they officials, landlords or the bourgeoisie in general.[112] The front page for 15 December 1849 (with many words blazoned in bold) gives a flavour: 'Let freedom be our morning greeting. … Man can think about his whole future, but if he can't bring himself to recognise freedom as something human in all of us—if he believes—that we're not born to freedom, then he'll find himself an Unperson, and must spend his days among the animals, in the woods and the wilderness, for among them, as is well known, only the strongest are free, the weakest are the unfree, their slaves, even their food.'

Shelley's *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte* demonstrates how it is possible to interweave varying content and tones, in a pamphlet 'not addressed to the "literate few" but to the masses'.[113] Holmes describes *An Address* as 'brilliantly readable'.[114] Although less than one-third the length of the *Manifesto* (and written a good deal more quickly, over one evening and the following day),[115] *An Address* opens with a sub-plot—the respective deaths of Princess Charlotte and poor mothers in childbirth—as a pretext to an account of the localised Pentridge Rising and the judicial execution of its ring-leaders, which is in turn a cue for a demand for both national economic and political reform. While Shelley makes early historical references to Paine (in the sub-title) and then to national figureheads John Milton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire, obviously outside some readers' register, he then swiftly contends: 'we cannot truly grieve … beyond the circle of those especially dear to us'. Political commentary, pitched at the level of its audience ('The labourer, he that tills the ground and manufactures cloth'), gives way to lurid tabloid reporting—'when the stroke of the axe was heard, there was a burst of horror from the crowd'—before closing poetic (but still accessible) touches: 'Mourn then People of England … LIBERTY is dead'.[116]

[111] The paper appeared 45 times, every Saturday, from May 1849.

[112] Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 214.

[113] Paul Foot, *Red Shelley* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1980), 209.

[114] Holmes, *Shelley*, 385.

[115] 11–12 November 1817.

[116] Harry Forman, ed., *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1880), 103, 109, 112, 113.

Marx frequently writes humorously or satirically, but without Wilhelm Wolff's common touch,[117] as can be seen by a comparison between the closing section of the 1848 *Manifesto*, and the 1847 *Kommunistische Zeitschrift* (Communist Magazine) article, *Political and Social Survey*, attributed by David Ryazanov to Wolff. This comparison is particularly pertinent because both the *Manifesto* and the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift* were in the first instance 'house' publications of the Communist League, and because both Marx and Wolff were describing relations at the time between German proletarians and bourgeois.

First, the *Manifesto*:

> In Germany they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie. But they never cease, for a single instant, to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightaway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.[118]

Now, Wolff's version (Lola Montez incidentally—full real name Eliza Gilbert—was an Irish dancer, actress and mistress of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, who made her Countess of Landsfeld[119]; 'Fat Frederick' is King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia):

> GERMANY. The grand duke of Hesse forbids proletarians to marry—no matter! We can be fruitful and multiply just as well without the priest's blessing. Lola Montez still terrorises the loyal Bavarians. Good luck to her! Fat Frederick William in Berlin issues ordinances concerning moustaches and

[117] Marx acknowledged in a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer in January 1852, 'no one else among us all has his popular style'. *Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 23 January 1852. MECW 39*, 14.

[118] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.

[119] Valentin over-enthusiastically recounts that Ludwig was smitten after 'he questioned the genuineness of her beautifully curved bosom—whereupon Lola took a pair of scissors from the table and cut open her dress'. Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, v1, 115. Evans recounts the same anecdote, rather more dispassionately. Evans, *The Pursuit of Power*, 183. Engels tells Marx in March 1847 of his own letter/pamphlet (this has not survived) on Montez, 'pullulating with smutty jokes'.

> passes sentence on the noble Poles, who wish to liberate their unhappy country. The Prussian bourgeoisie marches slowly forward and fat Fritz and his house will in the future not only serve the Lord but also Mr Moneybags. Ferdinand in Vienna is counting the panes of glass in the windows of his palace, while Metternich is thirsting after fresh blood. The other German fathers of the people are indulging in pleasure jaunts, while the hungry German masses tighten their belts.[120]

In the context of accessibility, the *Hessian Country Messenger*'s closing lines provide no less pertinent a comparison with the *Manifesto* than the respective opening ones. First Büchner's and Weidig's *Messenger*:

> For many long years you have bowed to your labour in the thorn-fields of servitude; you will sweat for a hot summer in the vineyard of freedom, then be free even unto the thousandth generation. You have laboured all your life at digging the soil, now you shall dig your tyrants' grave. You built their fortresses, now you shall destroy them and build the house of freedom. You shall be able to baptize your children in freedom with the water of life. And until the Lord calls you through His messengers and His signs, be watchful and prepare in spirit for the battle, saying this prayer and teaching it to your children: "Lord, destroy the rods of our oppressors and let Thy kingdom come unto us, the kingdom of justice. Amen".[121]

The final lines of the *Manifesto*—'Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!'[122]—comprise, of course, concise and incisive slogans but arguably lack the personalised, more visceral appeal of the *Messenger*'s finale.

The debate over the intended readership of the *Manifesto* aired by Mayer—educated narrow clique or politically immature mass movement—is echoed in 1840s' perceptions and projections of communism. Engels wrote on 20 January 1848, just 10 days or so before Marx submitted the *Manifesto* for printing, 'we can chuckle over the haughty looks which the bourgeois deign to bestow (especially in Germany) upon the apparently tiny band of democrats and Communists'.[123] Marx appeared to join in this

[120] David Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1930), 316.
[121] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 178–9.
[122] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.
[123] *The Movements of 1847. MECW 6*, 528.

apparent self-mockery by referring in the *Manifesto* to the 'Spectre of Communism' as a 'nursery tale' (this is the rendering in the 1888 Engels/Moore authorised translation of the German word 'Märchen'; 'fairy-tale' perhaps conveys a more clearly fictitious flavour). But Marx at least appeared to regard it as no such thing. Moments earlier, he had written: 'All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies. … Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power.' In similar vein, Marx closed the *Manifesto* by proclaiming 'Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution'.[124]

Frederic Bender remarks, of the notion of communism as 'a Power': 'This, of course, is an exaggeration'. Michael Harrington, in his essay in Bender's critical edition, suggests, of stalking spectres, 'the opening sentence … was wrong. … Marx and Engels pictured reality as much more radical than it was.'[125] Historian Oscar Hammen writes, of the 'spectre of communism', 'the threat unquestionably was exaggerated'.[126]

Ryazanov and Draper both come to Marx's defence. Ryazanov opens his 'explanatory notes' on the *Manifesto*, by saying:

> Pope Pius IX looked upon himself as a "liberal". Yet in his attitude towards socialism he proved to be no less hostile than the tsar, Nicholas I … Metternich … was at this time in specially close relationship with Guizot … the irreconcilable foe of the proletariat … the French radicals … waged polemic warfare … against the socialists and communists … the German police not only gave the communists no peace in Germany, they likewise harassed them abroad.[127]

Draper makes similar points.[128] If this suggests that in the 1840s, the authorities appeared to be wielding an overwhelming, pan-European sledgehammer to smash a rather modest communist nut, Hammen (among others) posits a rationale: 'there existed widespread fears of, or hopes for, an uprising of the masses, presumably ending in a thorough reorganisation of human society'.[129]

[124] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 481, 519.

[125] Bender ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, 60, 105.

[126] Oscar Hammen, "The Spectre of Communism in the 1840s" in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14, no. 3 (June 1953): 407.

[127] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 69.

[128] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 205.

[129] Hammen, *Spectre of Communism*, 418.

Fanning these fears in particular, in the earlier part of the 1840s, was an 1843 report by Zürich state prosecutor Johann Bluntschli, 'The Communists in Switzerland, according to Papers discovered with Weitling'—he being Christian Utopian communist (and tailor) Wilhelm Weitling arrested and charged with high treason and conspiracy, but after his trial, sentenced only to six months' imprisonment and eternal banishment from Switzerland. Engels has some fun with both the report and its author: 'The report was drawn up by Dr. Bluntschli, a man of aristocratic and fanatically Christian opinions. … Communism is denounced as a doctrine dangerous in the extreme, subversive of all existing order, and destroying all the sacred bonds of society. The pious doctor is at a loss for words sufficiently strong to express his feelings.'[130]

Passages within the 130-page report are certainly blood-curdling enough: 'He [Weitling] declares war on property as a matter of life and death. … And what will come in the place of this wicked destruction of the status quo? A stateless workers' society without the church, without individual property, without class distinctions, without nationality, without Fatherland, a society in which everyone is held to exactly the same labour, and to exactly the same reward. This unnatural and inorganic co-existence of humans he calls harmony.'

Curiously, though, Bluntschli progressively reveals something of a soft-spot for the targets of his report—'there's no disputing that the communists who correspond most frequently with Weitling in no way give the impression of being unthinking fanatics. Weitling himself has in his speech, for all the bias and depravity of his tendency, something rational, clear, intuitive … something practical. Also the Paris correspondent Geiler, A(ugust) Becker,[131] S(imon) Schmidt, who belong to the league and work especially diligently for it, are by no means without talent.'[132]

While Stedman Jones suggests (with his important 'unreasoning' qualification) that 'Bluntschli's report added considerably to an unreasoning fear of the communist threat which prevailed in Germany through to 1848',[133] Bluntschli's communists in general emerge as a collection of

[130] *Progress of Social Reform on the Continent*. *MECW 3*, 403.

[131] August Becker was arrested in 1835 for his involvement with the *Hessian Country Messenger* and spent four years in prison, before being pardoned in 1839. In 1839–1840, he founded an Artisans' Educational Association in Zürich.

[132] Johann Bluntschli, *Die Kommunisten in der Schweiz: nach den bei Weitling vorgefunden Papieren* (Druck von Orell: Füßli, 1843), 5, 11–12, 55.

[133] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx*: *Greatness and Illusion*, 140.

well-meaning amateurs incapable of mounting any action that would genuinely worry the state. 'Weitling had suggested … the idea of a large uprising by the workers. To be sure, these plans also had a very impractical side and objections were raised, even by his friends.'

Bluntschli himself worried that his report might well prove counterproductive: 'It is possible that precisely thereby, the communist affiliations attain a greater importance than they would otherwise have had. It is not impossible that the principle of communism, as wicked and untrue as it may well be, nevertheless attracts new followers through such dissemination.'[134] The communists certainly agreed. Gottfried Keller, Swiss writer but then radical, regarded the report as 'thoroughly ambivalent … it had on the one hand an unintended publicity value',[135] while Hess wrote an *Address to Dr Bluntschli* for the *Kölnische Zeitung* (Cologne Newspaper) of 5 September 1843: 'the text has rendered great service … the public persecution of the [communist] principle has only made propaganda for the very same'.[136]

What communism genuinely existed in a late 1840s' German context—a follow-through from Elberfeld in 1845—was being propounded largely by intellectuals, as Ryazanov describes:

> From Engels's letters to Marx we learn how communist groups came into being in certain towns. There was … no widely read journal which might have kept them in touch one with the other. The groups had a purely working-class membership, without a sprinkling of "bourgeois intellectuals". They were scattered about Germany; in Westphalia, in the Rhine provinces, in Silesia, and in Berlin. "Men of Letters", on the other hand, "intellectuals" with socialist and communist sympathies, had various literary journals at their command, and there they carried on communist propaganda … the intellectuals were content to write disquisitions on socialist themes, to appeal exclusively to the "cultured" classes, to eschew all political activity.'[137] In Stedman Jones's view, 'So far as "communism" emerged *within* Germany before 1848, it was almost wholly confined to the drawing-room conversation of the more adventurous of bourgeois youth'.[138] Communism in Trier, Elberfeld and Cologne, Sperber suggests, was 'not a

[134] Bluntschli, *Die Kommunisten in der Schweiz*, 99, 123.
[135] Schieder, *Kommunismus*, 480.
[136] Hess, *Schriften*, 249.
[137] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 16.
[138] Stedman Jones, *Introduction to The Communist Manifesto*, 37.

popular doctrine', being narrowly espoused by 'small circles of bourgeois intellectuals and army officers'.[139]

If 'communists on the ground' were collectively a paper tiger, communism as a concept nonetheless constituted a substantive threat, one of which Engels and Marx were consistently, if initially defensively, conscious. In the gentle, refined atmosphere of Elberfeld in February 1845, and accepting this was early days, Engels felt moved to stress, to his bourgeois audience, the reasonable and gradual nature of property confiscation, 'it is not intended to introduce common ownership overnight and against the will of the nation … it is only a matter of establishing the aim and the ways and means of advancing towards it'.[140] By the time of the *Manifesto*, Marx was happy to bring the threat to the bourgeois out into the open, 'you are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths.'[141]

Given its title, there is surprisingly little about communism in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The *Manifesto* has a preface and four sections, with a total word count (in the English *Collected Works* version, and treating hyphenated words as single ones) of ca. 11,250 words.

In the first section, *Bourgeois and Proletarians* (with far more on the former than the latter), the bourgeoisie being 'the exploiting and ruling class',[142] there is not a single reference to communism.

Then there is the second biggest section (ca. 28% of the total pamphlet), Section III, *Socialist and Communist Literature*, whose purpose is to critique the ideological opposition, be it Feudal Socialism; Petty-Bourgeois Socialism; German, or 'True', Socialism; Conservative or Bourgeois, Socialism; Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism. These pen sketches of rival socialist factions of the period have an undoubted value for the latter-day political historian, perhaps a less obvious one for a campaigning contemporary Communist League member.

Together, the first and third sections account for two-thirds of the total *Manifesto*. Of the remainder, the *Preface* provides the rhetorical flourish of

[139] Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 126.
[140] *Speeches in Elberfeld*. *MECW 4*, 255.
[141] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. *MECW 6*, 500.
[142] Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888. *MECW 26*, 517.

the 'spectre of Communism', and then the two contentious claims for communism itself: 'Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power', and the notion that there was a meaningful communist *party*. Section IV summarises, over a rather breathless two pages, where communists stand in their respective European countries, before concluding with the rallying-cry to 'working men of all countries'.

Section II is the critical portion of the *Manifesto*. There are some false moments, bearing in mind what is shortly to come in Section III's *Socialist and Communist Literature*:

> The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.[143]

These lines, though, precede a couple of pages, which lucidly summarise what communism is about, and why, as Marx sees it at the time of the *Manifesto*, 'The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property'. But Marx draws an important distinction (one Büchner was forced to accept too):

> The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property … Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that.

This was an important qualification. Although Marx only brings the petty bourgeois and peasants into his net in the 17 *Demands*, this is a clever appeal to a broader constituency (which he has despised up till now), which set great store by its smallholding.

And why is bourgeois property to be abolished? Marx explains: 'But does wage-labour create any property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, *i.e.,* that kind of property which exploits wage-labour. … Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage-labour. … To be a capitalist is to have not only a purely personal, but a social *status* in production.' By this italicised word, Marx means that

[143] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 497.

when the wage-labourer is essentially toiling for the capitalist, this gives the capitalist 'social power'. When 'capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property'.

Marx then unravels the same equation from the wage-labourer's perspective: 'The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, *i.e.*, [what] is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer'. Marx doesn't want to abolish the idea of wage-labour per se: 'we by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the reproduction of human life', rather: 'all that we want to do away with is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the labourer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it'.

These sentences sound very much like ideas the average League member could get his teeth into (the average member not being She), very much a simple Them and Us, capitalists and wage-labourers. But for the rest of this important Section II, Marx stops addressing wage-labourers, 'you' becomes the Bourgeois, with their specific attacks on communists, and 'we' becomes primarily the communists (and, most obviously, Marx plus close followers), rebutting these attacks. Working men become a more distant 'them' ('the working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got').[144]

If a remedy for having 'no country' is to be able to live in a communist state, Marx gives working men, and communists for that matter, little idea in the *Manifesto* of what this might be like. Sperber suggests the sole description is the closing passage of Section II, 'in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the free development of all'.[145]

This sounds more small-scale commune than large-scale communist state. Valentin concludes, 'nothing was said about the form of the future State'.[146] Robert Payne suggests 'What is clear is that Marx had not thought out the nature of the communist state in any considerable

[144] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 500–2.

[145] Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, 209; *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 506.

[146] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, v1, 287.

detail'.[147] Joseph Schumpeter thinks necessary organisation is implied by an ambition aired earlier in Section II, 'to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State … and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible', but this is not one of the 10 measures in the *Manifesto* (there is in the seventh measure merely a much more gradualist goal, 'extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State').[148]

The absence of any detailed delineation in the *Manifesto* of the nature of a communist state is especially odd, given, it's frequently agreed,[149] that the *Manifesto* closely follows the structure and content of the *Principles*, where Engels spells out (in the course of over 900 words, in the 'Answer' to 'Question 20') the 'communist organisation of society'. This will see an end to economic 'crises', and 'once liberated from the pressure of private ownership, large-scale industry will develop on a scale that will make its present level of development seem … paltry'. Agriculture will become more efficient, and 'the antagonism between town and country will … disappear'. 'The division of labour making one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stockjobber, which has already been undermined by machines, will completely disappear.' No longer will the 'the needs of some [be] satisfied at the expense of others'.[150]

In a sense, a preoccupation with the nature of a 'communist state' is unfair to Marx, since it presupposes that 'communist state' is the relevant end destination for societal reorganisation, rather than Section II's 'association'. If the latter inference is the case, though, he also gives little clue as to what association means here, particularly for League members without any prior knowledge of debates in the 1840s around Robert Owen, Charles Fourier and Saint-Simon. The wording on 'association' in Marx's 1847 *Poverty of Philosophy* is similar, but more helpfully expansive: for Marx, 'association will exclude classes' and—this seems the nub for him—'there will be no more political power … since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society'.[151] It becomes clearer

[147] Robert Payne, *Marx* (London: W.H. Allen, 1968), 173.

[148] Joseph Schumpeter, "The Communist Manifesto in Sociology and Economics", in *Journal of Political Economy* 57, no. 3 (June 1949): 202; *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 504–5.

[149] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 23; Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, 240.

[150] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6*, 352–4.

[151] *The Poverty of Philosophy. MECW 6*, 212.

still, belatedly, in his March 1852 letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, where he identifies a three-stage progression. 'The existence of classes is merely bound up with certain historical phases' (thus, in part, the *Manifesto*'s 'history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'). Next, 'class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat' (the *Manifesto*'s 'the proletariat organised as the ruling class' somewhat foreshadowing Weydemeyer's own 1852 coining[152] of this concept). Thirdly, 'that this dictatorship itself constitutes no more than a transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society' (and thus the *Manifesto*'s 'association').[153]

Engels elsewhere in the *Principles* offers prescriptions on classes similar to those of Marx. As Engels explains, 'the various classes will necessarily disappear … the communist organisation of society is incompatible with the existence of classes … the general association of all members of society for the common and planned exploitation of the productive forces … the complete annihilation of classes and their antagonisms … are [among] the main results of the abolition of private property'.[154]

But Engels also offers a vision of association concerned less with political power and more with disinterested, communal living. This can verge into the ethereal, as in his 1844 *Condition of England: The Eighteenth Century*, which anticipates first 'the disintegration of mankind into a mass of isolated, mutually repelling atoms', then 'the destruction of all corporate, natural and indeed of any particular interests … the last necessary step towards the free and spontaneous association of men'.[155]

He appears to struggle with the utopian aspects of this vision. Concatenating shoemakers and factory workers with stockjobbers, for instance, seems a little far-fetched. In his 1844 survey of 'recently founded communist colonies', meanwhile, he argues that 'most of the colonies … in this article had their origins in all kinds of religious sects most of which have quite absurd and irrational views'.

Beginning this 1844 piece, Engels laments that 'when one talks to people about socialism or communism, one very frequently finds that they entirely agree with one regarding the substance of the matter and declare

[152] Joseph Weydemeyer, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat" in *Turn-Zeitung*, New York, 1 January 1852.

[153] *Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 5 March 1852. MECW 39*, 64–5.

[154] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6*, 354.

[155] *Condition of England: The Eighteenth Century. MECW 3*, 476.

communism to be a very fine thing; "but", they then say, "it is impossible ever to put such things into practice in real life"'.[156] The *Manifesto*, of course, gives short shrift to the advocates of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism, with their 'experimental … social Utopias … these castles in the air'.[157]

Born offered a more grounded interpretation of association, a halfway house, with his concept for replacing a 'method of production dependent on capital and wage labour' with 'free work in association',[158] which in practice meant self-help producer- and consumer-co-operatives.

The emergence of communism, as a concept and a threat, and of association as communism's potential organisational successor, spanned getting on for a decade in the lives of Marx and Engels. The next chapter focuses on one critical month for the *Manifesto*, January 1848.

[156] *Description of Recently Founded Communist Colonies Still in Existence. MECW 4,* 215, 214.

[157] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 516.

[158] Franziska Rogger, *Wir helfen uns selbst!: Die kollektive Selbsthilfe der Arbeiterverbrüderung 1848/49 und die individuelle Selbsthilfe Stephan Borns* (Erlanger: Palm & Enke, 1986), 132.

CHAPTER 2

Solo Marx, the *NRZ* as Emerging 1848–1849 Focus

Why did Engels let Marx write the *Manifesto* alone in January 1848? Alternatively, why was Marx so sure he should—or, for practical purposes, could—be its sole writer? Whether these were conscious decisions or not, they had material consequences for the publication date of the *Manifesto*, and hence its impact on the 1848 European Revolutions, its geographic targeting, its delineation of communism and its accessibility.

One needs, though, to make a critical distinction here, which this chapter will set out, between the creative evolution of the *Manifesto*, over time, on the one hand, and the physical writing of the pamphlet in January 1848, on the other hand. Engels had much the more important role in the former, but, as far as can be demonstrated on the available evidence, no concrete role in the latter.

That the *Manifesto* was written solely by Marx, at 42, Rue d'Orléans in Brussels, during January 1848 is not disputed. In Andréas's view, while the *Manifesto* is 'in equal measure the spiritual property of Marx and Engels … it is on the other hand certain that Marx is solely responsible for the definitive literary form'.[1] After spending December 1847 with Marx, initially in London, then in Brussels, Engels had returned at the end of

[1] Bert Andréas, *Le Manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels: Histoire et Bibliographie* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963), 1.

D. Ireland, *The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99464-8_2

that month to Paris,[2] somewhat inexplicably—he had had an extended stay in London the previous month and would not be gainfully employed in January 1848 in the French capital which could scarcely be called his 'home town'. He stayed in Paris until receiving an expulsion order on 29 January 1848, after which he re-joined Marx in Brussels.

Empirically, Engels's contributions to the *Manifesto* in 1847–1848, by way of drafts, organising activity and relevant articles, far outweigh those of Marx. The *Manifesto* owes a considerable structural debt to Engels's drafts.[3] The first, *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith* [*Draft*], was discussed at the First Congress of the Communist League, held from 2 to 9 June 1847 in London, which Engels attended but not Marx. Mayer suggests, 'Marx had no money, and could not make the journey'.[4] Marx does indeed tell Engels on 15 May, 'I cannot go to London, not having sufficient funds',[5] but he would personally pay all the printing costs of his *Poverty of Philosophy*, published in Paris and Brussels in early July 1847. He was also banned from Paris,[6] but not from London, to which he travelled from Ostend on 28 November 1847. At the First Congress, it was suggested by Friedrich Lessner to Max Nettlau, in 1905, Engels proposed the League's more muscular new slogan, 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!', replacing 'All Men are Brothers'.[7] On 22 October 1847, he tells Marx, Engels had manoeuvred Hess's rival *Manifesto* draft out of contention, with deft arguments to the League's members attending the Paris district meeting. Furthermore, in the same letter to Marx of 25 October 1847, Engels advises that '*Completely unopposed*, I got them to entrust me with

[2] Engels attended a German émigrés' event on New Year's Eve.

[3] Carver also highlights the debt owed by the two Engels's 1847 drafts, and by the first two sections of the *Manifesto* itself to earlier Engels's texts: the 1843 *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*, the 1844 *The Condition of England*, the 1844–1845 *Condition of the Working Class in England* and the 1845 *Speeches in Elberfeld*. Carver and Farr, *Companion to the Communist Manifesto*, 77.

[4] Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 82.

[5] *Marx to Engels, 15 May 1847. MECW 38*, 117.

[6] In February 1845, by the Guizot government, but as a result of representations from Prussia, over his involvement, along with Arnold Ruge and Karl Bernays, with the 1844 bi-weekly German émigré newspaper *Vorwärts!*

[7] Carver and Farr, *Companion to the Communist Manifesto*, 26. Stedman Jones supports the Engels coinage. Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 51. Sperber, among others, attributes the slogan instead to Schapper. Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, 196. Draper believes 'the question remains wide open'. Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 333.

the task of drafting a new one which will be discussed next Friday by the district and will be sent to London'.[8] Although Schapper and Joseph Moll had also been working on a draft, of the Marx-Engels pairing, it is Engels at this point who holds the (or, more precisely, 'a') League commission to produce a new draft. This second draft, Engels's *Principles of Communism* [*Principles*], implicitly written by 29 October 1847, completely revised the first six (Hess-inspired) points of the *Draft*, with new (5, 6, 10–14, 19, 20, 24–25) questions included. *Principles* is longer, more complex and far more detailed, notably as regards proposed measures and geographic emphasis. As Andréas's *Histoire et Bibliographie* summarises, 'in its structure, the *Manifesto* follows Engels's *Principles of Communism*; it develops them and presents them under a different form in four sections. The historical sections 1 and 2 correspond to points 1 to 23 of the *Principles*, while section 3 discusses point 24, and section 4 discusses point 25.' Andréas also identifies five passages of thematic overlap and how 10 of the *Principles*' 12 measures are interwoven (if not always word-for-word) with the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures.[9]

The *Manifesto* draft remained, though, a work in progress. On 23 November 1847, in a letter, Engels proposes to Marx amendments to *Principles*, namely that 'we would do best to abandon the catechetical form' and that we 'call the thing *Communist Manifesto*' (although its ultimate title would, of course, be *Manifesto of the Communist Party*).[10] As Mayer points out, this 'shows that he did not expect Marx to produce a version of his own'.[11] Both Marx and Engels then attended the Second Congress of the League, which ran in London from 29 November to 8 December 1847. In Grace Carlton's words, 'Marx dominated the meeting'.[12] Prior to the Congress, Marx does not seem to have been perceived so pre-eminently. A letter dated 18 October 1847, from the League's Central Authority in London to its Brussels district, implies that Marx deputised at the Congress for Wilhelm Wolff: 'since Wolff will be coming to London for good at the beginning of January, to assume

[8] *Engels to Marx, 25–26 October, 1847. MECW 38*, 138–9.
[9] Andréas, *Le Manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels: Histoire et Bibliographie*, 1–4.
[10] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 149.
[11] Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 85.
[12] Grace Carlton, *Friedrich Engels: The Shadow Prophet* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), 56.

editorship of our journal, we would be very glad if Marx were able to come to the Congress'.[13]

Engels in later life offered two versions of how in practice the *Manifesto* was composed. He claimed in the 1883 German *Preface* that 'the basic thought running through the *Manifesto* … belongs solely and exclusively to Marx'. The 1888 *Preface* repeated this attribution. In two letters written in the 1880s, Engels explained why he was happy to be deferential. First, he told Eduard Bernstein, on 25 October 1881, 'But there's no denying … Marx's genius … his incredible erudition place him so far above all the rest of us. … I simply cannot understand how anyone can be envious of genius; it's something so very special that we, who have not got it, know it to be unattainable right from the start.'[14] In a second letter, of 15 October 1884, to Johann Becker, Engels wrote, 'I have spent a lifetime doing what I was fitted for, namely playing second fiddle, and indeed I believe I acquitted myself reasonably well. And I was happy to have so splendid a first fiddle as Marx.'[15]

But there is a less self-abasing Engels too, one who stressed the collaborative nature of the *Manifesto*'s composition. In his letter to Marx of 23 November 1847 on his evolving draft, Engels says, 'THIS TIME WE SHALL HAVE IT ALL OUR OWN WAY'[16] (Engels's capitals; note 'we' and 'our'). In his 1885 history of the Communist League, Engels recounted the outcome to the second League Congress in London in December 1847: 'Marx and I were commissioned to draw up the *Manifesto*'.[17] The new German *Manifesto* edition of 1872 carried both men's names as authors. The 1888 *Preface* (author Engels first commenting rather oddly in the third person) states that 'Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party programme' and then reprised the 'sole attribution' line of 1883's *Preface*, as noted, but preceded it with the comment 'the *Manifesto* being our joint production'.[18]

For his part, Marx was equally happy to acknowledge not merely joint authorship, but also joint writing, of the *Manifesto*. In the last, November

[13] *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (hereafter *MEGA*²). *III/2*, 368. Wolff represented Brussels at the First Congress.

[14] *Engels to Bernstein, 25 October 1881. MECW 46*, 146–7.

[15] *Engels to Becker, 15 October 1884. MECW 47*, 202.

[16] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 146.

[17] *On the History of the Communist League. MECW 26*, 322.

[18] *Preface to the 1888 English Edition of the Manifesto. MECW 26*, 512, 517.

1850 issue of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-Ökonomische Revue*, in which Section III of the *Manifesto* is reproduced, an editorial note stated 'we give here an excerpt from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels'. *Herr Vogt*, written by Marx in 1860, similarly alludes to the '*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written by Engels and myself'.[19]

While Marx and Engels, in the course of their working lives, wrote many pieces on their own, the late 1840s and 1848 in particular were a time when the two men were very frequently co-writers. Chartist leader Julian Harney informs Engels on 30 March 1846 that he has heard of 'your very philosophical system of writing in couples till 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning'[20] while Engels, discussing articles from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (*NRZ*) with German social democrat and publisher Hermann Schlüter, in a letter dated 15 May 1885, observes, 'the things Marx and I wrote at that time are on the whole almost indistinguishable'.[21] Herres and François Melis list eight unsigned *NRZ* articles, just in the first three months of its existence, on which Marx and Engels reported 'partly jointly'. Herres and Melis provide one particularly vivid example of this collaboration—the second article dealing with the arrests of Gottschalk and Anneke written on 4 July 1848—where the manuscript text is in Engels's handwriting, with Marx adding an observation at the end in his hand. 'In February 1849', they add, with respect to one leading article, 'Marx and Engels confirmed their common authorship before a Cologne jury'.[22] The two men certainly worked together on the *Manifesto* in London in the first half, in Brussels in the second half, of December 1847, suggesting at that stage a continuation of this collaborative approach. It seems strange that in January 1848, the *Manifesto*, of all things, would not in its final version involve 'writing in couples'.

Several biographers believe that correspondence during January 1848 bears out that the writing of the *Manifesto* was in fact very much a joint performance. Payne writes of Marx that month, 'He wrote it slowly and apparently with great difficulty … some of the delay may have been due to the necessity of discussing each paragraph with Engels, who had returned

[19] *Herr Vogt*. *MECW 17*, 80.
[20] *MEGA*² *III/2*, 523.
[21] *Engels to Schlüter, 15 May 1885*. *MECW 47*, 287.
[22] *MEGA*² *I/7*, 893–4. Herres and Melis later discuss *NRZ* article authorship in detail. *MEGA*² *I/7*, 914–925.

to Paris. The letters they exchanged on the *Manifesto* have been lost or destroyed, and we do not know how much Engels contributed to the whole.'[23] According to Saul Padover, 'the writing of the *Manifesto* did not progress rapidly, probably because Marx kept on consulting Engels. … There is no evidence to indicate that the Communist League had included Engels in its authorisation to draft a manifesto. Marx, nevertheless, brought him in as his literary partner.'[24] Bender's *Manifesto* edition has it (inaccurately, as to correspondence per se) that 'Marx, who always had difficulty completing a manuscript, was trying to craft the *Manifesto* with an almost poetic care. Although no letters between Marx and Engels survive from the period, presumably Engels was consulted throughout.'[25] Mayer finally: 'Unfortunately, Marx's letters to Engels during these weeks are lost: they would have been illuminating'.[26]

There is, of course, no question that not all of the Marx-Engels correspondence over the years survived. The German *Collected Works* comment, in general, 'it has not been possible up to now to trace many letters, which are more or less exactly attested to', and of 1848–1849 in particular, 'only a very insignificant proportion of the correspondence of these years has been preserved'.[27]

Thus far, fair enough. But Draper, for one, having first dismissed Padover's 'constant consultation' thesis on the *Manifesto*—'this is purely imaginative conjecture, based on no factual indication whatever'—then imaginatively conjectures himself: Engels 'certainly discussed with Marx the contents of the projected document: orally, possibly also in nonextant letters. … During the 1848 revolution Engels, faced with possible arrest, destroyed a number of papers, including letters from Marx. The reference to "non-extant letters" is therefore not speculative.'[28] Draper himself doesn't elaborate as to when in 1848 Engels destroyed 'a number of papers'—though logically this would have been between the state of siege declared in Cologne on 26 September and the publication of a warrant for Engels's arrest on 3 October 1848 (Engels's flat in Cologne was certainly searched, though on 30 September)—or what kind of papers were

[23] Payne, *Marx*, 162.

[24] Saul Padover, *Karl Marx: An Intimate Biography* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), 246–7.

[25] Bender ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, 15.

[26] Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 85.

[27] *Preface*. *MEW 27*, X, XXI.

[28] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 9, 11.

destroyed, but this too is Draper very much speculating. Why, and this objection applies to all the 'lost letters' theorists, should Engels carefully destroy all January 1848 correspondence on the *Manifesto*, but leave intact Marx's letter of 7–12 March 1848, which named the entire Central Authority of the Communist League—thus, Marx, Schapper, Karl Wallau, Wilhelm Wolff, Moll, Heinrich Bauer and (elected in his absence from Paris then) Engels himself—or, again, Marx's letter of 16 March 1848 revealing that *DBZ* editor Adelbert von Bornstedt is to be expelled from the League.[29]

Was there, moreover, any legal need to destroy letters relating to the *Manifesto*? For most of 1848, no. After the granting of press freedom and freedom of speech in Prussia in March 1848, Marx and Engels could sign and publish the *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*, in the name of the Central Authority ('the Committee') of the Communist League, which de jure no longer had to be a secret organisation (as was the case when the *Manifesto* was being written). The *Manifesto* could also be distributed. While the *Manifesto*, of course, talks up an imminent revolution, there is plenty in the more immediately practical *Demands*—the call for 'a single and indivisible republic', redistribution of property, the introduction of 'steeply graduated taxes'—that would have unsettled the absolute monarchy. Engels faced arrest for taking part on 17 September 1848 in the mass meeting in Worringen, near Cologne, where he proposed that 'the German citizens here assembled … will be ready to sacrifice their lives and property on the side of Germany'.[30] This referred to the ratification of an armistice with Denmark on 16 September, whereby, as Engels himself wrote three days later, Schleswig-Holstein was 'sacrificed' and 'Germany's honour trampled underfoot'.[31] The *Deutsche Reichstags-Zeitung*, co-edited by Robert Blum, an FNA deputy strongly opposed to the armistice, proclaimed on 13 September that if the armistice was ratified by the FNA, 'before a week has passed, millions of brave hearts will back this loud call, and there'll be a price to pay … already, you can hear the distant rumble heralding a people's storm'. Such comments, inciting

[29] Since Bornstedt was additionally a Prussian spy, as well as editor of the *DBZ*, this would have been less revelatory.

[30] *Mass Meeting in Worringen*. *MECW 7*, 587. Those at Worringen did not then know that the armistice (signed on 26 August 1848) had been ratified by the FNA the day before. *MEGA*² *I/7*, 888.

[31] *Ratification of the Armistice*. *MECW 7*, 439.

an immediate revolt, seem a good deal more incendiary and direct than anything likely to have been covered in letters on the *Manifesto* draft.

A twist is that the Cologne authorities imposed a 'state of siege' on 26 September. The *NRZ*'s publisher, Hermann Korff, advised subscribers two days later that 'we hope … that the exceptional situation will continue only for a few days more',[32] a prognosis which proved accurate since protestations by Prussian National Assembly (PNA) deputies, and the public, and Prussian ministers' fears of greater escalation, led to the 'siege' being lifted on 2 October. While it lasted, 'all rights gained in March' were suppressed—the siege prohibited all associations that pursued 'political and social aims', cancelled all meetings and suspended several newspapers. In an untypical 'most respectful and expeditious' hand-written submission to Minister of the Interior Eichmann, set in motion on 24 September, and submitted the following morning, Cologne Public Prosecutor Hecker identified the grounds for the indictment of high treason against Engels as a 'plot to overthrow' the government, based on his very visible presence and statements at Worringen a few days before,[33] rather than any wide-ranging communist commentary many months earlier. If the short-lived 'siege' genuinely unnerved Engels, he presumably should have destroyed any documentation referring to the League, even though it, just like the *Manifesto*, had been publicly communicable since March.

The facts of his movements after 26 September 1848 do not support a narrative of Engels carefully and cautiously concealing his traces. He certainly left Cologne in a hurry, but according to the English *Collected Works*, 'for a time … lived in hiding in Barmen'.[34] This was a return to the Engels family home, just 35 miles away, and well known to locals, while his parents were away, but so secretive were Engels's precautions that, Mayer reports, 'his father got wind of his coming, and there was a painful meeting'.[35] With Ernst Dronke, Engels moved on to Brussels, but the Belgian authorities cottoned on to his arrival equally quickly (both because they had been tipped off, and because the pair were 'imprudent enough to give their names')[36] and packed him off to France. The tone of Engels as fugitive of Prussian justice is captured by the letter from his mother Elise,

[32] *Announcement of the Responsible Publishers of the NRZ. MECW 7*, 590.

[33] Gerhard Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1963), *1848–1849*, 134.

[34] *Footnote 233. MECW 38*, 598.

[35] Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 98.

[36] *Black List. MECW 7*, 594.

who, immediately after reading in the *Kölnische Zeitung* about the arrest warrant, lamented that 'I can think of nothing else but you and then I often see you as a little boy still, playing near me'.[37] Her follow-up letter of 5 December 1848 discusses whether she should have sent him socks.[38]

Büchner's movements, after the arrest in Giessen (in present-day Hesse) of a calamitously casual distributor of the *Hessian Country Messenger*, Karl Minnigerode, on 1 August 1834, were altogether more purposeful and pressured. Büchner left Giessen half an hour after Minnigerode's arrest, then covered 85 miles in four days, mainly on foot, tipping off the co-conspirators and printer of the *Messenger*, managing on his return to ward off his own immediate arrest. Minnigerode was subsequently physically and psychologically tortured at the hands of the alcoholic Chief Proctor Konrad Georgi, to the extent that he was incapable of participating in a meticulously organised rescue attempt in November 1834.

More definitively, as regards direct collaboration in the writing of the *Manifesto*, the intra-textual evidence of the only two January 1848 letters commonly acknowledged to be extant, both from Engels to Marx, strongly suggests that Engels did not hear from Marx at any point in that month. The first, of 14 January 1848, opens, 'Dear Marx, If I haven't written to you it was because I have as yet still not been able to get hold of that accursed Louis Blanc'. The wording implies that Engels had so far not communicated in January. This letter then primarily passes on gossip about Hess (Engels's affair with Hess's eventual wife, Sibylle Pesch), Heine (at death's door) and Georg Herwegh (he had flu), and adds that 'things are going wretchedly with the League' in Paris.[39]

It is only then—some 775 words into this first, 14 January letter, an oddity in itself—that Engels makes two, gently pitched references to Marx's progress, or lack of results thereof, with writing the *Manifesto*, 'I hope that the London papers[40] will arrive soon and help to liven things up somewhat again; then I shall strike while the iron is hot. Not yet having seen any results from the [Second] Congress, the fellows are naturally

[37] *Elise to Friedrich Engels, after 4 October 1848. MECW 38*, 541.

[38] *Elise to Friedrich Engels, 5 December 1848. MECW 38*, 545.

[39] *Engels to Marx, 14 January 1848. MECW 38*, 152–4.

[40] Andréas takes these to be documents from the League's two London Congresses, including Engels's *Principles of Communism*. They may also have included Hess's latest alternative *Manifesto*, his revised *Communist Confession in Questions and Answers*, which has not survived. Draper suggests also the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*.

growing completely supine.'[41] He then closes with minutiae on the financing of the *DBZ* and a further swipe at Hess.

The second letter, dated 21 January, which does not refer to the *Manifesto*, is preoccupied with the by then long-running saga of Engels's fruitless efforts to have Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* reviewed in the Parisian paper *La Réforme*. Engels reveals that Blanc, the French socialist and journalist he has been counting on to review *Poverty*, only receives visitors on Thursday afternoons, thus explaining the difficulty in seeing him, to which Engels had referred a week earlier. Engels also criticises Marx for asking Bornstedt to have the Marx speech on free trade to the Brussels Democratic Association (Association Démocratique, BDA) on 9 January written up, only in brief and inaccurately, in *La Réforme* on 19 January.[42] Engels suggests he could have the speech more fully reported, but the chronology points to a breakdown in, or absence of communication, certainly on this subject, between 9 and 19 January. Engels's closing line in the 21 January letter starts 'Otherwise nothing new'. He sounds rather bored, as if it has been an uneventful month.

Engels's final two words in his second letter are very telling. He says simply 'Write soon'.[43] Engels patently had received no reply to his letter of the week before and to his *Manifesto*-related observations in particular.

In the week between the two Engels letters, there is one eminently reasonable explanation for Marx's lack of responsiveness. In its session of 27 December 1847, the BDA 'received news of the formation of a branch in Ghent'. For its following meeting, on 17 January 1848, which discussed Marx's speech on free trade on 9 January, vice-president Marx was absent because he was part of the delegation away in Ghent (36 miles away) formally establishing the Ghent branch.[44] In its 13 February report to the Fraternal Democrats, the BDA's committee, with Marx one of the signatories, noted that at the second Ghent meeting, 'more than three thousand citizens were present, and, we are happy to say, they mostly

[41] 'Supine' ('spineless' would be an alternative rendering of the German word 'schlapp' here) is possibly a rather non-sequitur adjective in this sentence, given how it starts, but supportive of any lack of urgency on Marx's part. *Engels to Marx, 14 January 1848. MECW 38*, 154.

[42] A report and detailed summary appeared in the *DBZ* of 16 January 1848.

[43] *Engels to Marx, 21 January 1848. MECW 38*, 155–7.

[44] The *DBZ* reported on this delegation on 20 January 1848. Francis Wheen suggests Marx's visit to Ghent lasted from 17 to 23 January 1848. Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), 118.

consisted of working men. We consider the ground gained at Ghent as the most important progress of our cause in this country. Ghent is the chief manufacturing town of Belgium, numbering above a hundred thousand inhabitants, and being in a great measure the centre of attraction for the whole labouring population of Flanders. The position taken by Ghent is decisive for all working-class movement of the country.'[45] The Ghent mission seems worthwhile, then, although as to the BDA overall, as Walter Haenisch reports, at a subsequent 22 February meeting, 'a controversy developed between Marx and [BDA chairman Lucien-Léopold] Jottrand, as a result of which Marx resigned from the vice-presidency. Three days later, Jottrand sent him a conciliatory letter, whereupon Marx withdrew his resignation … the Revolution in Paris sounded the end of the Democratic Association.'[46] While Marx, on 17 January, could scarcely have been expected to have anticipated the outbreak of revolution in Paris on 22 February, it is perhaps indicative of the primacy and urgency he attached to the *Manifesto* in January 1848 that he should see fit to spend a day or two, or longer, away to get 'the good news from Ghent' (as Robert Browning's 1845 poem concluded). Mehring speculates, of the League's Central Committee members back in London, 'perhaps the Londoners grew impatient when they heard that Marx was zealously continuing his propaganda in Brussels'.[47]

If Marx had really been consulting him on 'each paragraph' of the *Manifesto*, would there not have been frequent references, counter-suggestions, in both of Engels's January letters? It might be reading too much into the closing two words, 'write soon', but Engels almost sounds irritated that Marx has been keeping him in the dark. In the latter weeks of 1847, this had been an intensely collaborative project, both by letter and face-to-face, one for which the preparatory footwork had been almost wholly carried out by Engels. Perhaps, when he said 'the basic thought running through the *Manifesto* … belongs solely and exclusively to Marx', it had nothing to do with his own humility, genuine or otherwise, and far more to do with Marx not countenancing any alternative.

[45] *The Association Démocratique of Brussels to the Fraternal Democrats Assembling in London*. *MECW 6*, 641.

[46] Walter Haenisch, "Karl Marx and the Democratic Association of 1847" in *Science & Society* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1937): 92, 93, 100, 102.

[47] Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life*, 143.

Carlton puts it down to Marx's 'indifference to the courtesies of correspondence'[48] but this is an implausible explanation. They were otherwise diligent correspondents,[49] and during 1848 as a whole (as regards published letters), Engels wrote to Marx seven times, and Marx to Engels, six times.

They were also unusually close during 1848. Hermann Ewerbeck (Paris correspondent for the *NRZ* from June 1848) told Hess on 14 November 1848, 'Marx gushes over Engels, whom he describes as outstanding "intellectually, morally and from the point of view of character". The said Engels is in Switzerland for *the good cause*, says Marx.'[50] Engels's character does not appear to have been quite so exemplary, when he deputised as editor-in-chief, while Marx was away partially trying to fund-raise for the newspaper, in Berlin and Vienna (23 August–11 September 1848). Marx returned to find considerable friction in the editorial office, which required all his diplomatic skills to diffuse.

After his flight at the end of September from Cologne, to which he did not return until mid-January 1849, Engels's mother Elise also attempted to drive a wedge between her son and Marx, as a means of returning Friedrich to the straight and narrow, suggesting in a series of letters in October 1848 that Engels was now persona non grata at the *NRZ*. On 25 October, she wrote, 'now I must tell you in addition that we have heard from a reliable source that the editors of the *NRZ* have declared that were you to return, they would not accept you back as a co-editor … you see now how it is with your friends, and what you can expect from them'. And again on 30 October, 'your good friends, Marx etc, all sit in peace and quiet in Cologne and compose the *NRZ*, they've said they would no longer accept you back as a collaborator'. Engels's responses to his mother's outpourings (she writes on 25 October, 'you have no feelings for us anymore, but I will not stop loving you')[51] were patchy, but he clearly felt moved to squash the Marx rumour since Elise's last letter in the sequence,

[48] Carlton, *Friedrich Engels*, 60.

[49] 'Their great friendship meant that they kept in constant touch with each other; it is therefore not surprising that they wrote almost daily when they happened to be separated, as they were in the 1850s and the 1860s for example'. *Preface. MECW 38*, XX.

[50] The *Collected Works* offer 'very enthusiastic' but 'gushes over' perhaps more appositely captures the sarcastic tone of the rest of Ewerbeck's letter, and since he is simultaneously having to correct *NRZ* proofs at 1.30 a.m., his then attitude towards Engels's 'exile'. *Hermann Ewerbeck to Moses Hess, 14 November 1848. MECW 38*, 542.

[51] *MEGA*^{2} *III/2*. 488, 494, 488.

on 5–6 December, accepts defeat, 'I do not wish to say anything further about Marx; if he acted in the way you describe, and I do not doubt this for one moment, he did what he could and in my heart I thank him for it.'[52]

Engels's loyalty to Marx was very much reciprocated. In the first half of November 1848 (after Engels had queried why, for once, his own plea for funds from Marx had gone unanswered), Marx told Engels, 'To suppose that I could leave you in the lurch for even a moment is sheer fantasy. You will always remain my friend and confidant as I hope to remain yours.'[53]

Engels was expelled from France on 29 January 1848, returning to Brussels two days later. Did this give him an opportunity to review Marx's presumably by now completed *Manifesto* manuscript? Draper is sceptical, arguing that there is no information on this point, no reference by either man to any last minute collaboration, and—though this would at least obliquely challenge his thesis that 'non-extant letters' from Marx were written in January 1848—'no evidence that Engels ever took part in revising Marx's draft at any point'.[54] The London Central Authority of the League had now grown impatient and written tersely to Marx on 25 January 1848, setting him a deadline for the *Manifesto* manuscript to arrive 'in London by Tuesday, February 1'. This missive, though, reached Marx no earlier than 28 January 1848 (and may in any event not have unduly accelerated his final progress), but if Engels didn't re-join Marx in Brussels until 31 January, just one day before the *Manifesto* was supposedly to be in London, the Draper logic ruling out 11th-hour collaboration between the two men seems entirely credible. Lessner was commissioned to take the *Manifesto* manuscript to its London printer, from whom he then passed on proof-sheets to Schapper to revise. But revising proofs is not the same as revising a draft manuscript. Although it is not a universal view, Taylor believes that 'the Londoners' did not venture to make any corrections to the *Manifesto*.[55] Draper agrees, arguing that while a provision for the London Central Authority, or some other element of the Communist League, signing off on Marx's manuscript when it arrived in

[52] Given Ewerbeck's apparent resentment that Engels is not pulling his weight at the *NRZ*, Elise may well have picked up some accurate gossip as to the rest of the *NRZ* editorial team, while clearly being wrong on Marx. *Elise Engels to Friedrich Engels, 5 December 1848. MECW 38*, 544.

[53] *Marx to Engels, first half of November 1848. MECW 38*, 179.

[54] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 11.

[55] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 23.

London might have been logical, to give it a League seal of approval, no such provision seems to have been in place.[56]

However it came about, Marx's solo writing and Engels's lack of involvement, in January 1848, had meaningful consequences. The claim that the *Manifesto* was 'overtaken by events' is often advanced. The *Manifesto* first appeared just after the outbreak of revolution in France on 22 February 1848, but before the start of the revolution in the German states, which began with the Mannheim Rally on 27 February 1848. For Cowling, it arrives 'just in time for the revolutions which swept Europe in that year',[57] for Stedman Jones, it appeared 'within days of a general European revolution stretching from the Baltic to the Balkans'[58] while Hobsbawm comments that 'by good luck it hit the streets only a week or two before the outbreak of the revolutions of 1848'.[59] McLellan remarks that 'no sooner was it off the press than the European-wide revolutions of 1848 began'.[60]

So far, so good, one would think. But the revolutionary backdrop rapidly turns out to be a hindrance not a help to the *Manifesto*. According to Stedman Jones, 'despite, or perhaps because of, this accident of timing, its immediate impact was muffled',[61] while Lindsey German argues 'the *Manifesto* had little direct impact on the revolutions themselves in 1848. They had already effectively broken out when the book was published.'[62]

It is a curious piece of cognitive dissonance that commentators can, on the one hand, champion the lasting significance of the *Manifesto* right up to the present day and, on the other hand, argue for its immediate insignificance in 1848 because it was published a few days after revolution broke out in France in February that year. This would, in part, be to argue that the first days of the 1848–1849 revolutions across Europe were all that mattered. While the most eventful months of the 1848–1849 revolutions may well have been their opening ones, there were, in the German states, multiple campaigns in mid-1849 to defend the Imperial Constitution. These started in Saxony in early May 1849 and continued in

[56] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 12.
[57] Mark Cowling, ed., *Communist Manifesto*, 2.
[58] Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 14.
[59] Hobsbawm, *Manifesto Introduction*, 4.
[60] McLellan, *Manifesto Introduction*, xvi.
[61] Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 14.
[62] Lindsey German, "Reflections on the Communist Manifesto" in *International Socialism*, Issue 79, Summer 1998.

the Rhineland later that month. Prussian royal troops only suppressed revolutionary regimes in the Palatinate in June 1849, and in Baden, in July 1849. Engels himself was a combatant in Elberfeld (in the Rhineland) in May 1849 and took part in four engagements in the Baden-Palatinate campaigns. The Hungarian revolution of 1849 ran from April until August of that year.

It seems inconceivable that if Engels had been a co-writer, the *Manifesto* would not have appeared before the start of any revolution. As Mehring sums it up, 'it is hardly possible to discover what caused the delay … perhaps it was the separation from Engels'.[63]

It's not as if Marx's procrastination was not well known. Arnold Ruge complained as early as 1843 of Marx that 'he never finishes anything; he is always breaking off, and then plunges again into an endless sea of books … he may well have been born to be a scholar and a writer, but as a journalist he is a complete failure'.[64] In February 1849, Born visited the offices of the *NRZ*, where Engels complained 'most bitterly' of Marx, 'He is no journalist and never will be. He crouches for a whole day over a leading article, that any other would write in a couple of hours, as if it involved the unravelling of a deep philosophical problem; he changes and polishes, and changes again what he's just changed, and because of his unrelenting thoroughness, can never be ready at the right time.'[65]

Engels may have admitted to Marx on 23 November 1847 that his *Principles* (undeniably a shorter and less onerous project than the *Manifesto*) was 'wretchedly worded, in a tearing hurry',[66] but he had been given a deadline of a week by the Paris district of the League, and he kept to it. As Marx acknowledged to Adolf Cluss on 18 October 1853, 'Engels really has too much work, but being a veritable walking encyclopaedia, he's capable, drunk or sober, of working at any hour of the day or night, is a fast writer and devilish quick in the uptake'.[67]

Andréas commented on what Marx borrowed from Engels for the *Manifesto*, but it's pertinent to reflect on what he didn't borrow, for which Engels as a co-writer would surely have made a case. For Marx, in the

[63] Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life*, 143.

[64] Paul Nerrlich, ed., *Arnold Ruges Briefwechsel und Tagebuchblätter aus den Jahren 1825–1880* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1886), 343.

[65] Stephan Born, *Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers* (Leipzig: Georg Meyer, 1898), 198–9.

[66] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 149.

[67] *Marx to Adolf Cluss, 18 October 1853. MECW 39*, 391.

Manifesto, 'the Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution … but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution'.[68] In *The Movements of 1847*, published in the *DBZ* (which Brussels-based Marx would, of course, have seen) on 23 January 1848, just days before Marx finished writing the *Manifesto*, Engels initially appears to go along with the opening thrust of Marx's *Manifesto* comment above. Engels looks to 'the final preparations for the bourgeois revolution in Prussia. We can therefore await the advent of this Prussian revolution with the utmost calm.' But Engels then adds an important rider: 'the United Diet will have to be convened in 1849 whether the king [Friedrich Wilhelm IV] wants it or not. We will give his Majesty a breathing space till then, but not a moment longer.'[69] This stance on timing is echoed when Engels writes to Marx on 8 March 1848—days after the publication of the *Manifesto*, but more importantly, on the back of substantial 'proletarian' revolutionary stirrings within several German states—'if only Friedrich Wilhelm IV digs his heels in! Then all will be won and in a few months' time, we'll have the German Revolution.'[70]

It seems that far from seeing Prussia (if taken as an advanced proxy for 'Germany') 'on the eve of a bourgeois revolution' in January 1848 as did Marx, Engels had not changed his view of three months earlier, in *Principles*, that 'in Germany, the decisive struggle between the bourgeoisie and the absolute monarchy is still to come'. His 8 March letter, equally, implies little faith in any 'immediately following' proletarian revolution.

The more Anglo-centric Engels, again writing in *Principles*, also made it clear to which country he thought the 'communists should chiefly turn their attention': a communist revolution 'will therefore be slowest and most difficult to carry out in Germany, quickest and easiest in England'.[71] In the very same *Manifesto* paragraph of Section IV in which he had voiced a primarily German call-to-arms, Marx contrasts the 'much more developed' German proletariat of 1848 with that implicitly pertaining in England in 1642–1660 (although the allusion is not spelt out in any detail). As regards other England references in the *Manifesto*, Marx alludes fleetingly to the English Ten Hours' Bill (passed in 1847), 'Young

[68] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.
[69] *The Movements of 1847. MECW 6*, 522.
[70] *Engels to Marx, 8 March 1848. MECW 38*, 159–60.
[71] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6*, 352.

England' (a short-lived anti-bourgeois English literary movement between 1841 and 1848) and the Owenites (as being in opposition to Chartists). The cumulative impression provided by all these references in Marx's *Manifesto* is that England was inconsequential, an impression certainly not left by Engels in *Principles*.

The respective perceptions of Marx and Engels in late 1847 and early 1848 of a potential revolution in 'Germany', both as to when it might take place and the prospects for its success vis-à-vis England, seem quite at odds. While he relied substantially on Engels for his source material, it appears that when it came to the solo writing of the *Manifesto*, Marx was quite happy, when so moved, to draw his own conclusions (the observations on family being a lesser example) and to be his own editorial master.

Engels also provided proletarian readers in the *Principles* with a blueprint of over 900 words of what a future communist state looks like; Marx in the *Manifesto*, a brief discussion of an 'association' offering 'free development of all'.[72]

Lastly, there is the relative accessibility of the two pamphlets. In Mayer's view, as noted earlier, in *Principles*, 'Engels had been compelled to respect the journeymen in Paris whom he represented' and could 'presuppose no historical or economic background in its readers', whereas the *Manifesto* was intended 'for advanced readers'.[73] As Carlton wryly concluded, 'it is, perhaps ironically, fortunate that Karl Marx was an armchair demagogue and Friedrich Engels, the man of action, entirely under his direction. A shorter manifesto, less "clever" and eschewing historico-economico-philosophical systemisation, might indeed have provoked the sort of revolution its authors wanted.'[74]

The seeming lack of collaboration between Marx and Engels in January 1848 is not the only way in which the launch of the *Manifesto* was not optimised.

The *Manifesto* could have been more extensively disseminated and on a variety of counts. The availability of translations is one such count. On its opening page, Marx confidently proclaimed that the *Manifesto* is 'to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish

[72] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 506.
[73] Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 85.
[74] Carlton, *Friedrich Engels*, 64.

languages'.[75] Bar the initial German versions, and one in Swedish,[76] none materialised in 1848.

The non-appearance of English and French translations in 1848 is a decisive factor affecting the *Manifesto*'s impact that year.[77] These were significant missed opportunities, given the scale of populations of England and France, and their far more advanced industrialisation, bringing in its train a larger proletariat (relative to the German states), especially in England. The eighteenth question of the *Principles of Communism* asks 'what will be the course of this revolution?', to which Engels replies:

> In the first place it will inaugurate a democratic constitution and thereby, directly or indirectly, the political rule of the proletariat. Directly in England, where the proletariat already constitutes the majority of the people.[78] Indirectly in France and in Germany, where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians but also of small peasants and urban petty bourgeois, who are only now being proletarianised.[79]

On 25 April 1848, Engels writes to Marx, 'I am working on the English translation, which presents more difficulties than I thought. However, I'm over halfway through, and before long the whole thing will be finished.'[80] It wasn't.

Engels, in the *Preface to the English Edition* of 1888, claimed that 'a French translation was brought out in Paris, shortly before the insurrection of June, 1848'.[81] It wasn't. The introduction to the first actual English

[75] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 481.

[76] The Swedish version appeared under a different title, *The Voice of Communism. Declaration of the Communist Party.* The closing phrase 'working men of all countries, unite' was replaced by 'The voice of the people is the voice of God', not a change of emphasis of which Marx and Engels would have approved. Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 25.

[77] 'Obviously, from the CL's [Communist League's] standpoint, the most important translations would be in English and French'. Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 24.

[78] This is a rather sweeping claim by Engels, although the 1851 England and Wales Census did reveal that 48.8% of the population was 'primarily [in] manufacturing'.

[79] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6*, 350.

[80] *Engels to Marx, 25 April 1848. MECW 38*, 173.

[81] *Preface to the 1888 English Edition of the Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 26*, 512.

translation,[82] by Helen Macfarlane, which appeared in November 1850, pointed the finger at 'the outbreak of the Revolution of February': 'The turmoil consequent upon that great event made it impossible to carry out, at that time, the intention of translating it into all the languages of civilised Europe'.[83]

The *NRZ* was by far the biggest time commitment for Marx and Engels of the revolutionary period, occupying them for two-thirds of its 18-month duration. Before and after the 1848–1849 revolutions, Marx took a jaundiced view of journalism.[84] On the suppression of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in early 1843, he told Arnold Ruge, 'it is a bad thing to have to perform menial duties even for the sake of freedom. … I have become tired of hypocrisy, stupidity, gross arbitrariness, and of our bowing and scraping, dodging, and hair-splitting over words.'[85] In 1853, he complained to Adolf Cluss, 'I find perpetual hackwork for the newspapers tiresome. It is time-consuming, distracting and, in the end, amounts to very little.'[86] But such jaundiced verdicts could not have been uttered of 1848, and weren't. Poet and eventual *NRZ* Feuilleton editor Georg Weerth[87] excitedly remarked on 11 March 1848: 'Please read the newspapers very carefully—now they are worth reading. … This Revolution will change the shape of the earth.' Engels commented of the *NRZ* era: 'those were revolutionary times, and in such times it is anyway a pleasure to work for the daily press. You see the effect of every word before your eyes, you see how the articles literally hit the target, as though they were shells, and how they explode.'[88]

[82] Significantly, for the emphasis of this book, titled *German Communism. Manifesto of the German Communist Party.*

[83] *The Red Republican and the Friend of the People* (London: Merlin Press, 1966), v1, 162.

[84] Notwithstanding the prodigious journalistic output of Marx and Engels over their lifetimes: meaningfully, for over 25 newspapers (over half of which they both wrote for, 7 of which as de facto if not de jure editors), in Germany, France, England, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, America and South Africa, amounting to some 2000 articles, filling over 15 volumes or ca. 40% of the English *Marx Engels Collected Works*, ex-correspondence (author's calculations).

[85] *Marx to Arnold Ruge, 25 January 1843. MECW 1*, 397. 'Drudgery' is perhaps a more apposite if less literal English rendering of the German 'Knechtsdienst' than 'menial duties'.

[86] *Marx to Cluss, 15 September 1853. MECW 39*, 367.

[87] Weerth was also responsible for Belgian and British coverage, and, until the arrival of Hermann Ewerbeck in June 1848, and Ferdinand Wolff in July 1848, French reports. *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 922.

[88] This comment was made in late September 1890. *Farewell Letter to the Readers of the Sozialdemokrat. MECW 27*, 76.

Addressing the jury at the first trial of the *NRZ* on 7 February 1849, Marx too cited this uplifting, campaigning role for the press, 'it is by profession the public watchdog, the tireless denouncer of those in power, the omnipresent eye, the omnipresent mouthpiece of the people's spirit that jealously guards its freedom'.[89]

The *NRZ* attracted 6000 subscribers at peak, very creditable relative to the 17,400 for the far-longer established Cologne rival, the *Kölnische Zeitung*[90] (the 'police cesspool' as the *NRZ* called it) or the weekly 9000 circulation of the *Manchester Guardian* (in existence since 1821). The *NRZ*'s achievement was despite constant funding pressure, frequent harassment by the authorities, a trial and acquittal (with a second trial after its demise), a suspension and, ultimately, a ban on 19 May 1849.

All this ought to have made the *NRZ* a powerful promotional platform for the *Manifesto*. While the *Manifesto* was unavoidably an anonymous pamphlet when first published in February 1848, Bertram Wolfe observes that Marx 'made no reference to and used no formulation from the *Communist Manifesto*' in the pages of the *NRZ* during its near 12- month life. Herres makes the same point: 'even its author, Karl Marx, avoided any allusion to this communist text in the *NRZ* … in order not to endanger his political objectives'.[91] While all seven of the *NRZ*'s editorial board on 1 June 1848 (thus, Marx, Engels, Bürgers, Dronke, Weerth, Ferdinand Wolff and Wilhelm Wolff) were members of the Communist League, 'of communism there was no word'.[92]

Boris Nicolaevsky poses some pertinent questions on the promotion not only of the 17 *Demands* but more particularly of the *Manifesto* where it was easiest for Marx and Engels to do it: 'Why weren't the *Demands* reprinted in the *NRZ*? Why doesn't the paper even mention them? Why didn't it carry the *Communist Manifesto* and why doesn't it mention it either? Also, why wasn't the *Manifesto* republished in Germany at all at that time? Certainly it was possible to publish it during the revolutionary months.'[93] These are not fanciful questions. Draper adds, 'the spread of uprising to Berlin on 18 March meant a demand for more copies, not only because of the radicalisation of the situation but also because distribution

[89] *The First Trial of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, 7 February 1849. MECW 8*, 314.

[90] Formally founded in 1802.

[91] Jürgen Herres, *Sozialismus und Kommunismus.*

[92] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 254.

[93] Boris Nicolaevsky, "Who is Distorting History?" in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 105, no. 2 (April 1961), 231.

could now be legal'.[94] As Engels himself said in his 1885 history of the *NRZ*, 'on the Rhine we had unconditional freedom of the press—and we used it to the last drop'.[95] An abridged version of the 17 *Demands* (though with deletions, if only minor) was published in Leipzig, in the state of Saxony, at the end of 1848 or the beginning of 1849.[96] It's instructive, also, to bear in mind Marx's address to the jury at the first trial against the *NRZ*, which took place as relatively late in the lifespan of the German states' revolution as 7 February 1849. Marx suggests (having just alluded to the demise of the PNA the previous December) that press freedom is down but not yet out: 'if the Prussian counter-revolution is not smashed soon by a Prussian people's revolution, freedom of association and freedom of the press will be completely destroyed in Prussia as well. They have already been partially done away with by the states of siege. In Düsseldorf and in some Silesian regions the authorities have even dared to reintroduce censorship.'[97]

If the months from early March 1848 onwards were an unusually propitious time for disseminating German political propaganda, the writers and distributors of the *Hessian Country Messenger* of 1834, by comparison, lived in far more dangerous times, being subject to arrest and lengthy imprisonment without trial, if suspected of involvement with the pamphlet, whose first, July 1834 edition was nonetheless distributed that year to 1300 people (with a further 200 copies confiscated or prudently destroyed).[98] Georg Büchner's co-author, Weidig, was arrested on 24 April 1835, imprisoned and persistently put in chains for days on end. On 23 February 1837, four days after the death of Büchner, Weidig was found in his cell, apparently having slashed an artery in his neck, but still breathing. There is a delay of two-and-a-half hours—enforced by Georgi (state prosecutor as well as university Chief Proctor)—before a doctor is procured. In his own blood, on the wall of his cell, Weidig had written the following message: 'since the enemy refuses my every attempt at

[94] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 22.

[95] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 26*, 123.

[96] The publisher being E.O. Weller. *Footnote 1. MECW 7*, 602.

[97] *First Trial of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, 7 February 1849. MECW 8*, 315.

[98] Thomas Michael Mayer, "Die Verbreitung und Wirkung des Hessischen Landboten" in *Georg Büchner Jahrbuch 1* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1981), 81. Fellow Büchner commentator Hauschild puts the July 1834 print-run at 1200–1500 copies but distribution at 1150.

vindication, I have taken an ignominious way out … freedom in death'.[99] For the 30 *Messenger* co-conspirators sentenced between 5 November and 8 December 1838, who had already spent three to four years on remand, there were jail sentences of up to 10 years. Schulz was imprisoned twice, in 1823 and 1834, for his political activity. Shelley's 'indictment' of the (Lord) Liverpool ministry in *An Address* would very likely have triggered a prosecution for seditious libel, notwithstanding which his publisher Charles Ollier was willing to contemplate, at least initially, a wide distribution.[100]

From Day 1 on its masthead, the *NRZ* proclaimed itself as an 'Organ of Democracy'. Engels in 1850 (in its short-lived successor, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue*, or *NRZ.PÖR*) claimed that the *NRZ* 'provided the German proletariat with the sole organ in which it was championed not only in terms of fine words or good will, but according to its true interests',[101] while in 1884, in *Der Sozialdemokrat*, he claimed that 'no German newspaper, before or since, has ever had the same power and influence or been able to electrify the proletarian masses as effectively as the *NRZ*'.[102] Engels was not alone in reaching such judgments. Lenin (in 1914) labelled it 'to this very day … the best and unsurpassed organ of the revolutionary proletariat',[103] Werner Blumenberg called it 'not only the best newspaper of that revolutionary year; it has remained the best German socialist newspaper.'[104]

These claims belie the day-to-day realities of the *NRZ* in 1848–1849. The *NRZ* lent no formal support in 1848 to a far more obvious defender of workers' rights, Born, and it made no mention of the *Manifesto*, with its closing pitch to 'Working men of all countries'. The *NRZ* offered its middle-class audience a lofty tone, regular stock market reports from the most important European capitals,[105] along with Weerth's *Humorous*

[99] Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Georg Büchner, Ludwig Weidig: Der Hessische Landbote* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Insel Verlag, 1974), 154.

[100] Holmes, *Shelley*, 386, 388.

[101] *The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution. MECW 10*, 156.

[102] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 26*, 128.

[103] Cited by Allen Hutt, "Karl Marx as a Journalist", Marx Memorial Lecture, London, 14 March 1966, reproduced in *Marxism Today*, May 1966, 152.

[104] Werner Blumenberg, *Karl Marx: An Illustrated History* (London: Verso, 2000), 80.

[105] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 256; *MEGA*². *I/7*, 889.

Sketches from German Business Life[106] (until mid-July 1848), verbal circumlocutions and a string of literary allusions. Sperber suggests that the *NRZ* 'was written in a complex intellectual style, very difficult for most people to understand'.[107] The CWA's first house newspaper, the *Zeitung des Arbeiter-Vereins zu Köln* (hereafter *ZAV*), asked on 23 July 1848 (surprisingly, since Moll was now CWA president), 'And the [*Neue*] *Rheinische Zeitung*? At your service, gentlemen! But the music in it is so high-pitched, we can barely whistle it. The *Neue Rheinische* needs a translator.'[108]

In practice, in the spring and early summer of 1848, the measures of the *Manifesto*, such as centralised economic planning or nationalisation of transport and large industry, 'were seldom found in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, with its heavily bourgeois readership; rather, they were reserved for lectures on political economy at meetings of the Cologne Workers' Association—some given by Marx and Engels personally.'[109]

If the *Manifesto* went unreported, what the *NRZ* did provide, extensively but also perplexingly, was parliamentary coverage. As Herres and Melis comment, 'the *NRZ* continuously prosecuted and evaluated Prussian governmental and parliamentary politics'.[110] The English *Collected Works*' selection of *NRZ* pieces may not be totally comprehensive, but it is certainly representative. Across the three *MECW* volumes (7–9) charting the life of the *NRZ*, no less than 68 of its 301 issues (thus 23%) carry articles on or references to the FNA. Including the PNA, in Berlin, but ignoring issues of the paper where coverage of the two parliaments overlaps, adds a further 39 'parliamentary numbers' (and one shouldn't forget that the PNA was dissolved on 5 December 1848). Together, then, no less than 107 issues of the *NRZ*—36% of its total output—deal with the FNA and the PNA, making this parliamentary coverage a major *NRZ* preoccupation.

Engels takes delight in the *NRZ*'s scorn for 'the new idols that had appeared on the scene through the revolution: the March ministers, the Frankfurt and Berlin Assemblies, both the Rights and the Lefts in them. The very first number began with an article which mocked at the inanity

[106] Of these, Hutt writes, 'these droll stories of the adventures of Herr Preiss … as recounted in colloquies with his servile, red-nosed book-keeper, proved one of the most popular features of the *Neue Rheinische*'. Hutt, *Karl Marx as a Journalist*, 150.

[107] Sperber, *The European Revolutions of 1848–1851*, 162.

[108] *Zeitung des Arbeiter-Vereins zu Köln*, 23 July 1848.

[109] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 273.

[110] *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 896.

of the Frankfurt parliament, the pointlessness of its long-winded speeches, the superfluity of its cowardly resolutions.' The Berlin Assembly gets somewhat longer shrift, since 'it confronted a real power, it did not debate and pass resolutions in the air, in a Frankfurt cloud-cuckoo land' but its 'idols of the Lefts … were just as sharply attacked as those in Frankfurt; their indecisiveness, hesitancy and pettiness were mercilessly exposed, and it was proved how step by step they compromised themselves into betraying the revolution'.

Engels states further, 'the Frankfurt parliament was not even a debating club; hardly any debates took place there, but for the most part only academic dissertations prepared beforehand were ground out and resolutions adopted which were intended to inspire the German philistines but of which no one else took any notice.'[111] Why, then, did the *NRZ*, when it could otherwise have fulfilled its ostensible proletarian remit?

The limited availability of the *Manifesto* has also been advanced to explain its negligible imprint on 1848, raising the question of whether Marx and Engels could have tried harder to distribute more copies of the *Manifesto*, thereby extending its influence. As Tristram Hunt puts it, 'it was neither widely on sale nor obviously influential at the time'.[112]

Restricting the potential dissemination of its ideas was certainly not regarded as a *Manifesto* intention, at least not in theory. Draper suggests that since the *Manifesto*'s indisputable sponsor, the Communist League, was not mentioned in its pages, this means that 'in other words, Marx viewed the document as expounding a point of view, not as laying down the organisational programme of a sect'.[113] The intended audience for the *Manifesto* may have been the League, but Carver and Farr also argue that while its authors certainly wanted League members to sign up to their message in the first instance, they also had an expectation that these members would then use their international reach to garner further support for the message.[114]

The initial print-run, far in excess of the League's overall membership, bears this out. According to Susan Reed, the German curator of the British Library (which holds one of the few surviving original copies of the *Manifesto*), 'it has been reckoned to be at least 2000, so they would have

[111] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–49). MECW* 26, 124–6.
[112] Tristram Hunt, *The Frock-Coated Communist* (London: Penguin, 2010), 152.
[113] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 204.
[114] Carver and Farr, *Companion to the Communist Manifesto*, 69, 2.

been circulated not only to members of the league but they would have tried to pass them on. … We know that a thousand copies were sent to Paris after the outbreak of revolution and that others were sent to other European countries.'[115] This Parisian point is confirmed in a P.S.—'on Saturday [18 March 1848] 1000 *Manifestos* were despatched'—to a 22 March 1848 letter from the London district of the League to the Central Authority in Paris.[116] Draper meanwhile mentions 100 copies going to Amsterdam, with the *Manifesto* discussed on 24 April at a rally there,[117] which, though, 'degenerated into plundering' … with 'no chance for political statements'.[118] Carver talks of 'several thousand copies of the *Manifesto*' being shipped in stages to Germany, initially fulfilling demand from interested supporters, but then also generating attention in the press.[119] Draper suggests three or four thousand were supplied to German émigré workers returning to their German heartlands.[120] Serialisation in the *Deutsche-Londoner-Zeitung* (German London Newspaper) in the spring and summer of 1848 presumably reached a reading audience beyond the League's 84 members in London (or those few that remained there).

By general pamphleteering standards, the 'several thousand copies … shipped … to Germany' (Carver) was not an insignificant amount, well above the 1300 copies of the first, July 1834 *Hessian Country Messenger* distributed, on a rough par with the 3500 copies of Schulz's *Question and Answer Booklet*, but not in the same league as the massive sales of Paine's *Rights of Man*, or of Cobbett's *Address to the Journeymen and Labourers.*

But 1848 was a golden year for publishing in the German states. On 3 March, just days after the 24 February publication of the *Manifesto*, the Bundestag (Federal Diet) abolished the controls on freedom of speech which had applied not just to newspapers but to all printed matter, such as books, or, pertinently, pamphlets, since the imposition of the Carlsbad Decrees in 1819.

The Basic Rights formulated by a 30-strong Constitutional Committee of the FNA, and first formally submitted in draft form on 3 July 1848,

[115] Neil MacGregor, *Germany: Memories of a Nation* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 273–4.
[116] *MEGA*^{2} *III/2*, 406.
[117] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto,* 22.
[118] Dieter Dowe et al., eds., *Europe in 1848: Revolution and Reform* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 269.
[119] Carver and Farr, *Companion to the Communist Manifesto,* 69.
[120] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 22.

now decreed that 'every German has the right to express his opinion freely in words, writing, print, and pictorial representation. Under no circumstances and in no way may freedom of the press be restricted, suspended or abolished through preventative measures, namely censorship.'[121]

In theory, this was a major change from the situation pertaining in the 'Vormärz' ('Pre-March', thus 1830—March 1848) period, as Marx gloomily told Werner von Weltheim on 29 September 1847: 'You know the present state of affairs in Germany respecting the press. The censorship makes virtually every rational undertaking impossible.'[122]

In practice, even the Vormärz regime may have been, depending on local circumstances, rather less draconian than Marx makes out. Trier's newspaper, the *Trier'sche Zeitung*, whose politics between 1840 and 1851 ran the full gamut from liberalism, via True Socialism (Marx and Engels adversary Grün being a notable correspondent), to anarchism,[123] had endless run-ins with the censor. It became a war of attrition with the Trier district government, which had no less than seven different censors in just a five-year period. Of the 307 reasons for censorship, recorded in July–October 1846, and all of 1847, only 46, or 15%, involved 'advocating communism, inciting the poor against the rich'.[124]

Similarly, and of relevance to the *Manifesto*'s distribution, the resolutions of the Offenburg Meeting on 12 September 1847 had appeared in printed form under the title, *The Demands of thePeople*. These appeared in the moderately liberal but scarcely radical *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* on 19 September 1847[125] (thus well before the formal lifting of restrictions on the press the following March), but also as a pamphlet, thousands of copies of which were distributed to the population of Hesse. These *Demands of the People* included press freedom (or perhaps its formalisation), freedom of conscience, personal freedom and suffrage. 'As the resigned Prussian envoy in Darmstadt remarked: "Given the ease with which the means of communication can be created and duplicated, we are

[121] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 110.

[122] *Marx to Werner von Veltheim, 29 September 1847. MECW 38*, 131.

[123] Dieter Dowe, "Die erste sozialistische Tageszeitung in Deutschland. Der Weg der Trierschen Zeitung vom Liberalismus über den wahren Sozialismus zum Anarchismus" in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 12 (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1972), 55.

[124] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 124–5.

[125] Walter Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849* (Berlin: SED-Dietz Verlag, 1973), 46.

deluding ourselves if we think that bans … can work".'[126] Siemann concludes, 'of course, censorship had ceased to be particularly effective in the years preceding the revolution'.[127]

The 3 March 1848 edict was perhaps a case of 'Press Freedom—Official', triggering an explosion in the number of political newspapers recorded by the Berlin Press Office, up from 118 in 1847 to 184 in 1850. The number of newspapers, *Intelligenzblätter* (Advertisers)—no longer distinct from political newspapers—and *Volksblätter* (People's Presses) in individual German states rose by 46% from 942 in 1847 to 1376 in 1849.[128] On a more localised basis, Sperber records that 34 of the 70 dailies and weeklies appearing in 1848 in the three districts of Aachen, Düsseldorf and Koblenz (all in the Prussian Rhine Province) had started publishing that year, after the lifting of censorship.[129]

A wrong, if isolated, note is sounded by the arrest on 3 July 1848 of Gottschalk and Anneke (along with Christian Esser,[130] the following day). The pretext for the arrests was a recent article in the CWA's *ZAV*, expressing sympathy with the June uprising in Paris. On his arrest, Gottschalk responded, 'I was, so it seems, under the pleasant illusion that freedom of the press, or at least freedom of speech exists', but the real motivation of the authorities was to flex their muscles after the crushing of the Paris uprising with a decapitation strike against the CWA's leadership.[131] Sperber suggests this was a political move on the part of the authorities, rather than a generic attack on the press.[132]

In general, then, this ought to have been a highly propitious time for Marx and Engels to be promoting—and circulating as many copies of—the *Manifesto* and its successor document, 17 *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*, written between 21 and 24 March, thus three weeks after the liberalising of German freedom of speech.

The *Marx Engels Collected Works* contend, of the 17 *Demands*, that 'Marx and Engels … did their best along with their followers to popularise this programme document during the revolution', but this seems a claim more valid in respect of the followers than of Marx and Engels themselves.

[126] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution, 1848–1849*, v1, 177.
[127] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 110.
[128] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 113.
[129] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 210.
[130] Publisher of the 1849 reincarnation of *Freiheit, Brüderlichkeit, Arbeit.*
[131] Gerhard Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 85–7.
[132] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 263–4.

Witness, for example, Engels's line on the 17 *Demands*, passed on to Marx on 25 April 1848 (Engels then being in his Rhineland birthplace of Barmen), 'if even a single copy of our 17 points were to circulate here, all would be lost for us. The mood of the bourgeoisie is really ugly.'[133] This is rather feeble on Engels's part, though clearly melodramatic, but it hardly implies any serious personal determination to disseminate the *Demands* and is also quite out of character with his genuine bravery, while he was fighting in the Imperial Constitution campaigns in 1849 (he wryly notes, 'the *NRZ*, too, was represented at the Elberfeld barricades'[134] and 'the whistle of bullets is really quite a trivial matter').[135]

Herres and Melis argue that 'the *Demands* were decidedly a greater publishing success than the *Manifesto*. In April and May 1848, they were reproduced, in whole or in part, in at least 12 German newspapers, usually with their originators being named.'[136] The *Collected Works* talk more narrowly of publication in several democratic newspaper (*Berliner-Zeitungs-Halle, Düsseldorfer Zeitung, Mannheimer Abendzeitung, Trier'sche Zeitung, Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung and Zeitung für das deutsche Volk*) between 5 and 9 April 1848.[137] Carver suggests that the 17 *Demands* were 'widely circulated in Germany, and in the German press, reaching an audience from London to the lower Danube'.[138] Schmidt et al. also suggest that awareness of the *Demands* was 'in a few days, widespread'.[139] In contrast to his promised 1848 translations of the *Manifesto* into Italian and Spanish, which came to nothing, Ewerbeck in April 1848 translated the 17 *Demands* into French.[140]

This obviously adds up to a much more concerted and comprehensive promotional push, though Schraepler counters that given that censorship had been lifted by the time the *Demands* appeared, 'the number of publications is not great'.[141]

[133] *Engels to Marx, 25 April, 1848. MECW 38*, 173.
[134] *Elberfeld. MECW 9*, 447.
[135] *Engels to Jenny Marx, 25 July 1849. MECW 38,* 203.
[136] *MEGA*^{2} I/7, 874, 996.
[137] *Footnote 1. MECW 7*, 601.
[138] Terrell Carver, "Engels and Democracy", in *Engels Today: A Centenary Appreciation*, ed. Christopher Arthur (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 21.
[139] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 98.
[140] *Engels to Marx, 25 April 1848. MECW 38*, 173; *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 996.
[141] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeiterverein*, 235.

What of other solo Marx activity, in the run-up to the appearance of the *Manifesto* in early 1848? From January to April 1847,[142] Marx was engaged in writing *The Poverty of Philosophy*, his riposte to the *Philosophy of Poverty* (Philosophie de la Misère) penned by French anarchist, economist, sociologist and writer Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. This *Contre-Proudhon* would be Marx's major preoccupation in 1847.

Marx thought highly of his own work. Singling out, in 1859, as his most distinctive pieces of the late 1840s, the *Manifesto* and his *Speech on the Question of Free Trade* (first delivered on 9 January 1848 to a select audience of the Brussels BDA), Marx added 'the salient points of our conception were first outlined in an academic, although polemical, form in my *Poverty of Philosophy*'.[143] Looking back in late March or early April 1880, Marx elevated his own perception of *Poverty of Philosophy* further, 'reading the *Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* … might serve as an introduction to the study of *Capital*'.[144]

This is not the forum to dwell on what is an excessively ad hominem attack on Proudhon or on the no less robust counter-contentions of both Proudhon and later anarchists. Rather, how far does Marx's *Poverty* contribute to the *Manifesto*? Several commentators are in no doubt. According to Andréas, in respect of the first two sections of the *Manifesto*, 'Marx relied in part upon *The Poverty of Philosophy* and his notes on wage labour'.[145] Stedman Jones comments that 'Karl drew heavily upon his own writings, particularly the unpublished Paris manuscripts of 1844 and the *Poverty of Philosophy*'.[146]

There are, undoubtedly, thematic connections to the *Manifesto*. Inter alia, Marx's contention in *Poverty* that 'the natural price of labour is no other than the minimum wage … to keep the worker alive and in a condition to propagate his race' hints at the *Manifesto* notion that the 'proletarian is without property', thus no properly engaging stake in the means of production. *Poverty*'s 'The very moment civilisation begins, production begins to be founded on the antagonism of orders, estates, classes' foreshadows the *Manifesto*'s 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'. *Poverty*'s closing section, 'the working class, in

[142] Marx added a 110-word foreword on 15 June 1847.
[143] *Preface to a Contribution to A Critique of Political Economy. MECW 29*, 264.
[144] *Notes on the Poverty of Philosophy. MECW 24*, 326.
[145] Andréas, *Le Manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels: Histoire et Bibliographie*, 2.
[146] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, 240.

the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism', clearly anticipates the *Manifesto*'s finale to Section II, 'in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association'. *Poverty* highlights the 'first big division of labour, the separation of the town from the country', the *Manifesto* (far more prescriptively) has a goal of 'the gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country'.[147] Both texts detail the history of capitalism and the antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

There are also some less straightforward references. Ernest Mandel advises that 'neither *The Poverty of Philosophy* nor the *Communist Manifesto*, nor *Wage Labour and Capital* contain the idea of surplus-value'.[148] Engels argues to the contrary, in the 1885 *Preface* to *Poverty*, retrospectively spelling out what Marx was getting at in *Poverty* in quoting Proudhon's line, '*wages*, the official name for the "value of labour", form the integral price of all things'.[149] Marx was making an important distinction, as

Engels notes: The above application of the Ricardian theory that the entire social product belongs to the workers as *their* product, because they are the sole producers, leads directly to communism. But, as Marx indeed indicates in the above-quoted [Proudhon] passage, it is incorrect in formal economic terms, for it is simply an application of morality to economics. According to the laws of bourgeois economics, the greatest part of the product does *not* belong to the workers who have produced it. If we say: that is unjust, that ought not to be so, that has nothing immediately to do with economics. We are merely saying that this economic fact is in contradiction to our sense of morality. Marx, therefore, never based his communist demands upon this, but upon the inevitable collapse of the capitalist mode of production.'[150]

Poverty's view on combinations broadly tallies with that expressed in the *Manifesto*, but not with Engels's. *Poverty* says, 'The socialists say to the workers: Do not combine, because what will you gain by it anyway?' (Engels adds an 1885 footnote to identify these 1847 'socialists' as Owen and Fourier), but adds 'permanent combinations have been formed, *trades*

[147] *The Poverty of Philosophy. MECW 6*, 125, 132, 212, 179; *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 494, 482, 506, 505.

[148] Ernest Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx: 1843 to Capital* (London: New Left Books, 1971), 81.

[149] *The Poverty of Philosophy. MECW 6,* 129.

[150] *Marx and Rodbertus. MECW 26*, 281–2.

unions, which serve as bulwarks for the workers in their struggles with the employers'. This chimes with the *Manifesto*'s 'the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) … now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies … in the ever-expanding union of the workers.' Engels's letter to Marx on 25 April 1848, in contrast, asserts, 'the workers are beginning to bestir themselves a little, still in a very rough way, but as a mass. They at once formed coalitions. But to *us*, that can only be a hindrance.'[151]

There also seem some miscues in *Poverty*. Marx's 'machinery is merely a productive force' sits oddly in terms of significance and emphasis with Engels's near contemporaneous depiction in *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith* of an industrial proletariat, with its steam engine, spinning-machine and power loom. Marx also suggests that 'the tax on consumption was a means of exploiting the frivolous, gay, prodigal wealth of the fine lords who did nothing but consume';[152] the 15th of the 17 *Demands*, calling for the 'abolition of taxes on articles of consumption', recognises that regressive indirect taxes were exploiting the working class.

Poverty provided Marx's biggest theoretical contribution to the *Manifesto*; its messages in general are unquestionably important. Can the same be said of a lengthy polemic against Proudhon in 1847, a year in which Engels, for one, was extensively engaged in trying to influence the sponsoring Communist League and in shaping a usable *Manifesto*? Samuel Bernstein argues that when the revolution broke out in France in 1848, utopian socialist Victor Considérant was better known among the lower classes than Proudhon, with Blanc in turn far more popular with this class than either man. Proudhon, moreover, had a relatively small following among either literary men or philosophers.[153]

Poverty preoccupied Marx for the first four months of 1847. The next chapter discusses the revolutionary measures that started to emerge in the German states from September 1847 and compares those emanating from Marx and Engels with those of other contemporary but also earlier nineteenth-century campaigners and pamphleteers, both in the German states and in England.

[151] *The Poverty of Philosophy. MECW 6*, 209–10; *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 493; *Engels to Marx, 25 April 1848. MECW 38*, 173.

[152] *The Poverty of Philosophy. MECW 6*, 183, 196.

[153] Samuel Bernstein, "Marx in Paris, 1848: A Neglected Chapter", in *Science & Society*, no. 3, Summer 1939: 329, 333.

CHAPTER 3

Actual Measures and Missing Levers

'Give the people what they want' is not axiomatic in politics, but for a movement to progress, to grow to critical mass, its programme has to engage and excite potential voters or unenfranchised supporters in a nineteenth-century context.

Marx could have had himself hailed as the pioneer of revolutionary reforms in the German states. In *The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter*, an article written for the *DBZ*, on 5 September 1847[1]—before any other revolutionary campaigners formally surfaced—Marx anticipated five of the seven most popular German revolutionary demands of 1847–1848: 'true representation' (elsewhere in the article, 'a constitution'), 'a universal franchise', 'freedom of association', 'freedom of the press' and 'trial by jury'. He also proposed 'the abolition of the corvée system', one of the most resented burdens on peasants. He further mentions the iniquity of the then prevailing regressive Class Tax (a quasi-income tax). These are demands[2] which 'could count on the strongest support from the proletariat', or, as he later says, could be extorted

[1] In response to a piece dated 25 July 1847 in the *Rheinischer Beobachter*, probably written by Hermann Wagener, whose Christian Socialism Marx criticised in the *Manifesto*. *Footnote 96*. *MECW 6*, 676.

[2] If made, Marx suggests, by the United Diet, a Prussian assembly convened in April 1847 as the maximum constitutional concession to liberals by the Prussian king.

D. Ireland, *The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99464-8_3

from his Majesty (Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia) by 'the real people', which he defines as 'the proletarians, the small peasants and the plebs'. Not quite the 17 *Demands*' targeted triple alliance of 'the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants'—though Leon Trotsky, for one, saw 'petty bourgeois' and 'plebeian' as potentially synonymous[3]—and by no means the same overall policy mix of the 17 *Demands*, but in 'The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter',[4] Marx showed he fully appreciated what constituted popular demands, and what kind of audience should be targeted. The irony of this notional 'programme', if it can be portrayed as such (it clearly wasn't one in any formal sense), is that it was scarcely reflected in the *Manifesto*, whose 10 measures barely overlapped with those of revolutionary campaigners in 1847–1848. Marx clearly could have 'given the people what they wanted', or at least those living in the German states, in 1848, but, in the *Manifesto*, opted not to.

Not that Marx in September 1847 was totally in tune with the soon-to-be popular mood. In his *DBZ* article, Marx condemned income tax, 'in which', he claims, 'the proletariat is not all … interested'. Income tax was a progressive, direct tax and would, under a law announced in September 1849, partly replace in Prussia the highly regressive (and deeply unpopular), indirect Milling & Slaughter tax. By the time of the *Manifesto*, written only four months later, he had changed his tune, 'a heavy progressive or graduated income tax'[5] being the second of its 10 measures and now seen by Marx as a good.

Although the programme of the *Manifesto* was by no means restricted to its 10 'measures', they seem a reasonable point of departure—it was a 'manifesto' after all. A forerunner manifesto such as François-Noël ('Gracchus') Babeuf's *Manifesto of the Plebeians* of 1795 ('we have stated that perfect equality is a primitive right'), for instance, also contained a list of prescriptive measures ('all disabled citizens, the elderly, destitute orphans will be housed, fed and clothed at the expense of the rich' and so on).

Marx's *Manifesto* measures matter because Marxism is not supposed to be just a talking shop. As Terry Eagleton put it, 'Marxist theory itself is

[3] Leon Trotsky, "Bourgeoisie, Petty Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" in *The Militant* V, no. 36 (September 3 1932): 1, 4.

[4] *The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter*. *MECW 6*, 227–29, 233.

[5] German editions refer merely to 'heavy progressive tax'.

not just a commentary on the world, but an instrument for changing it',[6] or, to quote Marx's over-quoted 11th thesis on Feuerbach from 1845, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.'[7] Specifically on the *Manifesto*, Garry Runciman commented: 'The *Communist Manifesto* is very much what it says it is: a manifesto. It is not a treatise so much as a call to arms.'[8]

The 10 measures of the *Manifesto* are to be found towards the end of Section II (*Proletarians and Communists*):

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated (income) tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of wastelands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc.[9]

Hess and Engels vied with each other during 1847 to provide the *Manifesto* draft of choice. The opening sections of Engels's June 1847 *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith* are a final sop to the Hess camp,

[6] Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 142.

[7] *Theses on Feuerbach. MECW 5*, 5.

[8] Garry Runcimann, *Great Books, Bad Arguments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 7.

[9] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 505.

or, as the English *Collected Works* editors have it, 'Engels had to take into account that the members of the League had not yet freed themselves from the influence of Utopian ideas and this was reflected in the formulation of the first six questions and answers'.[10]

Thereafter, it's supposedly openly hostile rivalry between Engels and Hess. Hess regarded Engels's *Draft* as very much in need of improvement, as August Cornu and Wolfgang Mönke, the editors of the Hess *Philosophical and Socialist Writings*, put it[11] and came up with a revised version—as a basis for a rival *Manifesto*—of his own *Communist Confession in Questions and Answers*, first issued in 1844. This revised *Communist Confession* is sarcastically described in turn by Engels as 'delightfully amended'.[12] Hess's *Writings*' editors remark that Engels found the Hess revision 'completely unusable'.[13]

Engels confesses to Marx in a letter dated 25 October 1847 that he has played an 'infernal trick' on Hess by clandestinely ensuring with some fast talking in committee that Hess's revised *Communist Confession* will not be adopted by the Communist League, the *Manifesto*'s eventual sponsor. This is, says Engels, 'strictly between ourselves … naturally not a soul must know about this, otherwise we shall all be unseated and there'll be a deuce of a row'.[14] Engels in turn decides an improved new draft of his own is required (which will now be titled *Principles of Communism* and which is the final precursor to the *Manifesto*).

Hess didn't give up. It is striking that some 10 contentions in Hess's *The Consequences of a Revolution of the Proletariat* and Engels's *Principles of Communism*—both essentially composed around the end of October 1847[15]—overlap, while, more significantly for this book, six of the 10 prescriptive measures in Marx's *Manifesto* share an inspiration with Hess's 'measures' in the *Consequences*, which were published (as his second

[10] *Footnote 69. MECW 6*, 671.

[11] Hess, *Schriften*, LXV–LVVI.

[12] *Engels to Marx, 25 October 1847. MECW 38*, 138.

[13] In their own words, not directly attributable to Engels. Hess, *Schriften*, LXII.

[14] *Engels to Marx, 25 October 1847. MECW 38*, 138–9. In his 1885 history of the League, Engels implausibly noted, 'The organisation itself was thoroughly democratic, with elective and removable authorities. This alone barred all hankering after conspiracy, which requires dictatorship.' *On the History of the Communist League. MECW 26*, 321–2.

[15] Three of the overlapping Hess contentions appear in the article written on 10 October 1847, six in the article written on 25 October 1847 and one in the article written on 4 November 1847.

'*Consequences*' piece) in the *DBZ* on 31 October 1847. Hess's measures appeared, of course, in a Brussels-based paper, but for a German-speaking audience. It is striking that the Hess measures anticipated Marx's *Manifesto* on 'abolition of property … to public purposes', on 'progressive tax', on 'complete abolition of inheritance', on 'extension … of instruments of production', on 'combination of agriculture with manufacturing industry' and on 'free education for all children … combination of education with industrial production'.[16]

Hess may simply have been trying to ingratiate himself with both men, but the commonality is curious nonetheless.[17] There is much general leftist policy of the era echoed in the measures outlined by both Hess and Marx, but the narrower point here is not so much that Marx borrows more than the opening phrase of the *Manifesto* from Hess, but rather, that Engels's moan to Marx on 23 November 1847 about 'Moses's tittle-tattle' in the *Consequences* scarcely seems justified by the respective policy proposals. They might reasonably have belittled Hess, at least ideologically, less at the time.

Given the *Manifesto*'s geographic focus on the German states, this chapter will discuss the *Manifesto*'s measures primarily in the context of German revolutionary events of the time.

The German states fell within the German Confederation, a Babel of sovereign structures dominated by the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia (both, geographically, linguistically and religiously, highly diverse), with a 'Third Germany' of 37 Ruritanian entities of diminishing influence and importance, taking in three further kingdoms, Grand Duchies, an Electorate, Duchies, Free Cities, Principalities (including Reuss Younger and Elder Lines) and, for final good measure, a Landgraviate.

[16] Hess, *Schriften*, 436.

[17] 'The views of Hess coincided in many respects with those of Marx.' Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 210. Engels had a long-running affair (September 1846–late 1847) with Hess's wife-to-be, and alleged prostitute, Sibylle Pesch, perhaps anticipating Marx's *Manifesto* contention that 'our bourgeois, not content with … common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives'. *MECW 6*, 502. When the affair came to light, Hess threatened Engels with a duel, which Engels laughed off. Hess's doggedness was undimmed: on 18 March 1848, Engels wrote to Marx that 'Moses, by the way, is friendlier than ever—just try to understand the fellow!'. *MECW 38*, 164. Marx and Engels moved swiftly in mid-April 1848 to thwart an attempt by Hess and Anneke (tipped off by Gottschalk) to lead a re-launch of the old *Rheinische Zeitung*, soon to become the Marx-edited *NRZ*. By the spring of 1848, the rift between Marx and Engels, and Hess, was permanent.

Three foreign kings (of Denmark, the Netherlands and Britain) controlled five Confederation members between them.

Third Germany initiated the German revolution in 1848, but Austria and Prussia dictated its outcomes. Austria withstood Klemens von Metternich's early resignation, and uprisings in March, May and October, and the revolt of its satellite, Hungary, in 1849 (ultimately suppressed by Russian troops). Prussia dissolved its own parliament in December 1848, and its King, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, dismissively declined (formally) to be Emperor of the Germans the following April. Early concessions were made, even by Austria and Prussia, while opposition leaders of varying degrees of liberalism came to power in March 1848 in Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria, Darmstadt, Nassau, Saxony and Hanover. But these liberal gains could not be sustained, and gradually from the summer of 1848 and beyond, reaction staged a counter-revolution. The FNA, in the Frankfurt Paulskirche, debated interminably but could not force through an Imperial Constitution, of which Austria would not be part, and which Prussia would not preside over.

For their part, Marx and Engels, in theory, took a top-down view on how power must be wrested. Where Heinzen, as Marx argued in November 1847, 'actually understands only the connection between the rule of the princes in Germany and the distress and misery in Germany … the ill-gotten gains of the princes … the source of its misery',[18] he and Engels preferred to concentrate on the need for the major powers in the Confederation to be toppled. Constitutionalism would be scarcely even an interim phase. This is spelt out in a brisk *NRZ* response in June 1848 to the exalted expectations in 'the professorial newspaper'[19] for the FNA: 'we want the unification of Germany. Only as a result of the disintegration of the large German monarchies, however, can the elements of this unity crystallise. They will be welded together only by the stress of war and revolution. Constitutionalism, however, will disappear of itself as soon as the *watchword of the time* is: *Autocracy or Republic*.'[20]

In practice, notwithstanding the *NRZ*'s frequent engagements with Prussian and international politics, the *Manifesto* had to win 1848 hearts and minds in a more bottom-up fashion. Its measures joined a

[18] *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality. MECW 6*, 328.

[19] Marx's coinage for the constitutionalist, only nominally liberal *Deutsche Zeitung*, edited by George Gervinus, and first published on 1 July 1847.

[20] *Threat of the Gervinus Zeitung. MECW 7*, 115–116.

campaigning stage in the German states in 1847–1848 otherwise crowded with demands. While the publication of the *Manifesto* around 24 February 1848, and of the 17 *Demands* around 25 March, book-ended both the critical German events of what are known as the 'March Days' and the presentation of the majority of demands in German towns and cities,[21] demands were first raised in September 1847, and were still—in the sense of having relevance to the German states' revolutions of 1848–1849—being proclaimed in August and September 1848.

These demands, aired across the German states over this 12-month period, stemmed from a very broad political base. Radical democrats were first to emerge at a gathering in Offenburg (in the then southern German Grand Duchy of Baden) on 12 September 1847, followed by the bourgeois liberal 'constitutionalist' opposition at Heppenheim (in the Grand Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt[22]) on 10 October 1847. One of the Heppenheim participants, MP Friedrich Federer, reiterated some of the Heppenheim demands at a mass rally in Stuttgart, in the then Kingdom of Württemberg, on 17 January 1848. The Heppenheim/Stuttgart perspective was aired on an ongoing basis through the columns of the *Deutsche Zeitung*. A blended version of these two standpoints (thus, Offenburg/Heppenheim) emerged at the Mannheim rally (also in the Grand Duchy of Baden) on 27 February 1848—an event that arguably marked the beginning of the 1848 revolution in the German states—and in the Kingdom of Saxony (to the east, south of Berlin) on 16 March. More aggressive if still recognisably democratic proposals were made in Hanau (in the Electorate of Hesse) in late February and early March 1848, and, on 7 March 1848, in Berlin (in the Province of Brandenburg). A distinctly peasant-biased framework was advocated in North Baden and the Duchy of Nassau in early March while the Communist League member Gottschalk led demands in Cologne (in Prussia) on 3 March. The Austrian Empire, a major member of the German Confederation, and Hungary were other significant revolutionary flashpoints in 1848–1849.

As the German states' revolution ebbed during the late spring and summer, demands still continued to appear—notably those from Born's

[21] For instance, in Mannheim, Karlsruhe (both in modern Baden-Württemberg), Cologne (now in North-Rhine Westphalia), Munich (Bavaria), Nassau (Rhineland-Palatinate), Wiesbaden, Hanau (both Hesse), Braunschweig, Oldenburg, Dresden and Leipzig (all in Saxony, to the south of Berlin) and Berlin.

[22] Colloquial name for the Grand Duchy of Hesse.

Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverbrüderung (General German Workers' Fraternity). His first newspaper, *Das Volk* (The People), outlined a programme on 10 June; the follow-up *Die Verbrüderung* (The Brotherhood) put proposals to the FNA on 2 September 1848. In Silesia, in East Prussia, the *Rustikalverein* (Rustic Alliance) was only formed on 27 August 1848 but had 200,000 registered members by October 1848. Its most important demands were peasant-related. Even the Rustic Alliance was dwarfed in size terms by the *Zentral-Märzverein* (Central March Association, CMA).[23] The CMA was founded in November 1848 by left-wing deputies in the FNA and brought together 500,000 members of 950 people's clubs. Langewiesche and fellow German historian, Werner Boldt, believe the CMA constituted a national political party, although Siemann describes it as more of a 'loose umbrella organisation'. Rhenish democrats were unsupportive, finding it too moderate. The CMA's main preoccupations were the application of the Prussian constitution, proclaiming the Basic Rights formally announced by the FNA on 27 December 1848 and, in particular, trying to effect the Imperial Constitution of 28 March 1849.[24] Rival, if smaller, umbrella organisations existed. And, of course, there was the *Manifesto* and the 17 *Demands*.

This broad political base was, importantly, also a two-way process. As Sperber points out, democrats reached out to a wide range of social groups—not only urban workers and artisans, but also peasants, soldiers and women—but did not get simply to impose their message; the Rhenish common people, for instance, 'had strong ideas about their long-standing social grievances, which they had vociferously expressed in March–April 1848'.[25]

The demands that emerged across the German states from September 1847 onwards from so diverse a group of factions were wide-ranging (and sometimes expressed the same sentiment, but not in the same words). The grievances of the peasants were parochial—for instance, viticulture, the freedom to cut wood in forests and use of village common land[26]—but no less vital to them. A study of all the various proposals over this yearlong

[23] Engels attacked the CMA for being led by the petty bourgeoisie in his lengthy essay, *The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution*. *MECW 10*, 150, 662.

[24] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 192; Donald Mattheisen, "History as Current Events: Recent Works on the German Revolution of 1848" in *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 5 (Dec 1983): 1231–2; Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 98.

[25] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 223.

[26] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 135, 155–7, 239–40.

period does, though, generate a core group of demands for which, by their sheer geographical and 'cross-party' range, there appeared to be considerable popular support. The demands most in demand were:

1. Free education, certainly for children, if not for all
2. Suffrage, if not for all, for Germans aged 21 and over (occasionally 24)
3. A people's militia, or 'arming of the people'
4. Freedom of the press and of speech
5. Freedom of assembly and movement
6. Trial by jury (thus, 'people's courts')
7. Representation of the people in the administration of the state

Some (a people's militia, press freedom, trial by jury and an emphasis on common civic rights) but not all of these items coalesced around what became known as the national, rather than purely regional, 'Märzforderungen' (March Demands).

How well were these core demands—arguably, 'what the people wanted'—reflected in the 10 measures of the *Manifesto*? Barely at all, the only one of its measures attracting cross-factional support (thus, from the Offenburg democrats, Hess, Born and his General German Workers' Fraternity, and the Cologne communists) was free education for children, an ambition aired by Engels in front of his then communist devotees at Elberfeld as long ago as February 1845. There is ambivalence, though, in the stances of Marx, in particular, and of Engels on education or, rather, state-sponsored education. In *Wages*, composed and delivered in the form of lectures in late December 1847,[27] Marx says of this demand, 'Another suggestion, very popular with the bourgeoisie, is education … by moral education the bourgeois understands indoctrination with bourgeois principles, and finally, the bourgeois class neither has the means, nor if it had them would it use them, to offer the people a real education'.[28] He then posits the more particular (and subsidiary) notion that comprehensive industrial education would allow an individual to work in as many industries as possible, making him more employable, but with a consequently depressive effect on overall wages.

[27] Only published, piecemeal, in the *NRZ* as *Wage-Labour and Capital* in April 1849.
[28] *Wages*. *MECW 6*, 427.

Engels argues, in *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, of the proposal for compulsory school attendance that 'the manufacturing bourgeoisie opposed the measure with all its might, though the working-class was outspokenly in favour'. He then added (anticipating Marx's point two years later) that 'the working class has demanded of Parliament a system of strictly secular public education',[29] to prevent different religious sects from brainwashing the children in 'their' schools. In both the 1847 *Manifesto* drafts, Engels switches back to focusing on schools' funding. He claimed in *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith* that 'the subsistence of the proletariat' will be in part guaranteed 'by educating all children at the expense of the state'. In *Principles*, he looks for 'education of all children … in national institutions and at the expense of the nation' but also—this would seem to encourage Marx's concern—'education combined with production'.[30] John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* had a more nuanced (if still not ideal) set of proposals. He contended that education should be mandatory, but with the State not 'taking upon itself to direct that education', and with schooling financed by parents but with the State providing a welfare safety net by 'helping to pay the school fees of the poorer classes of children, and defraying the entire school expenses of those who have no one else to pay for them'.[31]

The Basic Rights enshrined some of the 'demands most in demand' (thus free education, freedom of the press and of speech, freedom of assembly and movement, and people's courts), denied populist others (suffrage, a people's militia, representation of the people in state administration) while offering additional personal freedoms (to German citizenship, 'classless' law, property, religious belief and conscience). Other than free education, there was, again, no overlap with *Manifesto* measures.

'These basic rights', concluded Golo Mann, But, as he neatly summarised:

> The difficulty was that whenever the Assembly wanted to achieve something real, its own unreality became apparent. Although the "basic rights" were published in the *Reichsgesetzblatt* (Imperial Law Bulletin), not one of the great German states, neither Prussia nor Bavaria, not to mention Austria, adopted them. The Frankfurt deputies must really have thought highly of

[29] *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*. *MECW 4*, 407–8.

[30] *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith*. *MECW 6,* 102; *Principles of Communism*. *MECW 6*, 351.

[31] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: Walter Scott Publishing, 1901), 201.

themselves that in such circumstances they successfully avoided for so long the painful suspicion of living in cloud-cuckoo-land.'[32]

Engels and Marx denounced the Basic Rights in the *NRZ* in 1848 for their failure to defend freedoms in the real world, such as the right of public association and the entitlement to German citizenship, or for allowing them to be undermined, as when the police suppressed clubs, estate privileges went unchecked or martial law was summarily imposed.[33] Ironically, Schapper attempted to resist his expulsion from Cologne in August 1848 by invoking 'Paragraph 2, Article 1' of the proposed Basic Rights, entitling 'every German' to live 'in every German state'.[34]

There is, though, in the context of popular demands, one democratic avenue which puts the FNA in a more positive light, but which Marx or Engels neither instinctively nor practically supported, namely petitions. An *Address of Workers* in mid-March 1848 called on King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to set up a Ministry for Workers to 'provide prompt relief for the great current need and unemployment of all workers and for the securing of their future'.[35] Siemann records that the political enthusiasm aroused in March 1848 (and not satisfied by suffrage) found an especial expression in petitions which were a means of giving a political dimension to mass actions, and thereby hope that such actions might bear tangible fruit. Some 17,000 petitions were submitted to the FNA (30% on economic and social problems, 28% on the relationship between state and church, 20% on the restructuring of Germany, a reasonable 18% on the Basic Rights), while the PNA in Berlin received 13,451. These petitions were taken seriously: the FNA's Economics Committee, for example, was presented by peasants with an unprecedentedly detailed catalogue on why feudal obligations should be eliminated, which was turned into a comprehensive report for a plenary debate.[36] Petitions were hardly an idea confined to the German states: Cobbett, for instance, far preferred his rural workers to petition (through him) peacefully for reform, rather than violently otherwise.

[32] Golo Mann, *The History of Germany Since 1789* (London: Penguin, 1987), 185–6.

[33] *The Suppression of the Clubs in Stuttgart and Heidelberg; The Dissolution of the Democratic Associations in Baden; The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question; The German Citizenship and the Prussian Police; The Uprising in Frankfurt. MECW 7*, 249, 288, 368, 384, 443.

[34] *The Attempt to Expel Schapper. MECW 7*, 390–2.

[35] Schmidt et al., eds., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 156.

[36] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 177.

Some of the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures, such as 'Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels', were anachronistic. Both Draper and Ryazanov readily identify the implied allusion here to the French Revolution and to Babeuf ('the first revolutionary communist', whose 1795 *Manifesto of the Plebeians* was cited earlier), and there is no denying the influence of Babouvism on 1840s' early communism. But there are issues of context and phraseology here. Babeuf receives a brief direct mention in the *Manifesto*, oddly situated in the section covering Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism, which in general 'bears an inverse relation to historical development'. This seems to be the point. This fourth *Manifesto* demand antecedes all others and invokes the French Revolutionary tradition of confiscating the property of aristocrats who fought against the revolution.[37] As early as 1843, reviewing French communism, Engels wrote of Babeuf and his planned 1796 uprising, 'the Communist plot did not succeed because the then Communism was of a very rough and superficial kind'.[38]

Babouvism barely impinges on Marx and Engels after 1848. As to the phrasing of this measure, 'emigrants and rebels' seem odd terms (even with Engels's partially clarifying addition in the *Principles*, which Marx omits, of 'against the majority of the people'). While targeted specifically at peasants, the notion in the 17 *Demands* that 'princely and other feudal estates … shall become the property of the state' seems a much more meaningful elaboration of 'confiscation' for 1848.

'The improvement of the soil', an element of the seventh *Manifesto* demand, would no doubt have appealed to Frederick the Great (who wrote to Voltaire in the middle of the eighteenth century: 'whoever improves the soil … is making conquests from barbarism'),[39] or to the late eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century English agricultural reformer 'Coke of Norfolk',[40] but doesn't sound very revolutionary. In any event, it was an ambition on Marx's part that was not practically fulfilled. In their detailed statistical analysis of mid-nineteenth-century agricultural productivity in Prussia, with tables for 1865, Michael Kopsidis and Nikolaus Wolf

[37] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 275; Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 187.

[38] *Progress of Social Reform on the Continent. MECW 3*, 393–4.

[39] David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape and the Making of Modern Germany* (London: Cape, 2006), 41.

[40] First Earl of Leicester (though resident in North Norfolk), a prominent agricultural reformer.

conclude 'there is little if any empirical evidence for a reform-induced agricultural take-off'. In their view, 'differences in soil quality … and population density seem to be highly correlated to variation in productivity. … Some counties achieved only a quarter of the Prussian average GRE [productivity] whereas others exceeded it more than three times.'[41]

Others *Manifesto* measures sound oddly impractical, even utopian—not an adjective finding favour with Marx[42]—such as the 'establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture; combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country.' The idea of industrial armies, for instance, had certainly long featured on a leftist wish-list, having originated with Fourier, then been adopted by Weitling and Théodore Dézamy, and subsequently attracting widespread leftist support.[43] Its absence from the consensual list of German demands in 1847–1848, though, surely speaks to the contemporary gap between desirable leftist theorising and immediate practical populist demands.

The more obviously communist ideas in the *Manifesto*, thus, 'abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes', a nationalised State bank and transport system, extending state-ownership of factories and of instruments of production, again were hardly unknown in leftist circles. On land ownership, for example, Ryazanov sweeps through a selection of inspirations: Chartists such as Feargus O'Connor and Bronterre O'Brien—'the first measure was passionately discussed by the participators in the Chartist movement'—the land nationalisation veteran Thomas Spence and Marx's own 1847 *Poverty of Philosophy*, which cites economists James Mill, Antoine-Élisée Cherbuliez and Richard Hilditch.[44] But in any event, the German states' 1848 revolutionaries, who were by no means all cautious bourgeois—Friedrich Hecker, for

[41] Michael Kopsidis and Nikolaus Wolf, "Agricultural Productivity Across Prussia During the Industrial Revolution" in *The Journal of Economic History* 72, no. 3 (September 2012): 638, 645.

[42] Certainly in a *Manifesto* context, though there is a more ambivalent stance in general: see, for instance, David Leopold, *The Young Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 280–93.

[43] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 277–8.

[44] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 181; Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy*, *MECW 6*, 203. Much later, both Marx and Engels opposed Henry George's widely debated land-value tax proposal of 1879, precisely because, in George's words, 'it bear as lightly as possible upon production', thus the control of the means of production.

instance, demanded at Offenburg 'the levelling out of the unequal relationship between work and capital'—again were not drawn.

For all its leftist policy echoes, McLellan regarded the *Manifesto* as 'remarkable for its comparatively tentative and moderate nature'.[45] Draper is bemused that within a 10-point programme purporting to characterise a workers' state after a proletarian conquest of power, 'not a single point of the programme calls for a direct attack on the … ownership of the means of production'.[46] In Marx's defence here, quantifying the scale of capital ownership, certainly in German states, was not reliably possible at this time. David Hansemann (Prussian Minister of Finance in 1848) put Prussian national wealth in 1833 at 1.78 billion Thalers while Carl Dieterici (chief Prussian statistician in the late 1840s and beyond), drawing on Class Tax data, estimated Prussian national wealth in 1848 at 3.88 billion Thalers. The top 0.02% or 447 Prussian households were thought to account for 1.2% of Dieterici's total wealth estimate. But later statisticians roundly dismissed such estimates, Dieterici calling Hansemann's 'very unreliable', Obermann criticising Dieterici for both under- and overestimation, Hermann Losch calling Dieterici's 'no investigations at all'. Most sweepingly, Adolph Wagner in 1879 ruled 'all such estimates … on national wealth … thoroughly unsound'.

In the light of McLellan's and Draper's verdicts, it will be interesting, and telling, to note shortly which of the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures were deemed by Marx and Engels to be so 'tentative and moderate' that they could not be included in the indisputably much more mainstream, and less radical, 17 *Demands*. Lack of relevance, though, more obviously characterises the *Manifesto* in an 1848 context. To bear this out, one can consider the 5000-strong demonstration in Cologne (Marx's soon-to-be revolutionary base) on 3 March—at which pamphlets containing *Demands of the People* were circulated—led by Cologne Communist League member Gottschalk. Schmidt et al. argue that *Demands of the People* 'clearly differed from the bourgeois-liberal and moderate-democratic March Demands'.[47] But all of the Cologne proposals—people's representation in government; universal suffrage; freedom of speech and of the press; abolition of the standing army and mobilisation of the people; free right of

[45] McLellan, *Manifesto Introduction*, xiv.
[46] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 273, 276.
[47] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 80.

assembly; work safeguards; and, of course, free education for children—have a very familiar ring.

Born focused on the organisation of workers. The demands he outlined in the weekly newspaper *Das Volk*, on 10 June 1848, while in part echoing the 'March Demands' (free training and education, reduction of the voting age to 24, freedom of movement and restriction of officials' powers) also focused strongly on working-class economic rights (fixing wages and length of working hours, cessation of indirect taxes, tax-free status for those only on a living wage and occupation for the unemployed). Other than within its 10th measure—the provision of free education, and the narrower (but no less important) ambition of the 'abolition of children's factory labour in its present form'—the *Manifesto* draws no echoes from Born. In Taylor's view, the proletariat far more obviously wanted higher wages and better conditions than a revolution.[48]

As the English *Collected Works* put it, 'the editors of the *NRZ* did not approve of the general stand taken by Born, but they refrained from criticising his views in the press, bearing in mind the progressive nature of the endeavour to unite workers' associations'.[49] Thus the *NRZ* reported on Born's Workers' Congress, but without approval. In the lengthy criticism of Born in the 1885 *History of the Communist League*, Engels explained their stance, 'in particular, strikes, trade unions and producers' co-operatives were set going and it was forgotten that above all it was a question of first conquering, by means of political victories, the field in which alone such things could be realised on a lasting basis'.[50]

McLellan writes of 'a certain standing apart from the efforts of workers' associations for self-improvement' in the *NRZ*'s programme, which inspired Marx's criticism of Gottschalk's running of the CWA, and his, and the paper's, lukewarm stance towards Born's Verbrüderung movement. This programme, McLellan concludes, 'was so carefully carried out in the *NRZ* that, with one exception … neither Marx nor Engels published anything during 1848 that dealt with the situation or interests of the working class as such'.[51]

Mehring echoes McLellan's sentiments: 'One thing is missing at first glance in the columns of the *NRZ*, something which one would expect to

[48] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 20.
[49] *Footnote 178. MECW 7*, 626.
[50] *On the History of the Communist League. MECW 26*, 325.
[51] McLellan, *Karl Marx: A Biography*, 187.

find there above all, namely a detailed account of the activities of the German workers at the time. This movement was by no means insignificant.'[52]

Within the wider Marx circle, Born was not alone in his reasoning and his targeting. Schapper, 'highly class-conscious, defiantly hostile to the middle class',[53] had told a London public meeting back in 1845, 'one thing the people might be sure of, they would never get their rights either by relying on the middle class, or merely talking about liberty. The middle classes had always used the people as instruments, and then flung them away. … Let the working men trust to nobody but themselves, and look to themselves for their own regeneration.'[54] Weitling, too, inferred the middle-class/talking shop pairing, at the Brussels Correspondence Committee meeting on 30 March 1846. After Marx had demanded of Weitling, 'on what grounds do you justify your activity?' (thus, his 'preaching', in Marx's eyes), Weitling replied that 'modest spade-work was perhaps of greater weight for the common cause than criticism and armchair analysis of doctrines far from the world of the suffering and afflicted people'. This charge infuriated an angry Marx who retorted, 'ignorance never helped anybody!'[55]

Gottschalk provides the most outspoken attack on Marx's apparent lack of interest in workers, and certainly the most pusillanimous, using the 25 February 1849 issue of his own newspaper, *Freiheit, Arbeit*, and an anonymous open letter, addressed to 'Karl Marx, Editor of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*':

> You have never been serious about the freedom of the oppressed. The misery of the worker, the hunger of the poor, are for you only of scientific, doctrinaire interest. You soar above such miseries. As a learned sun god, you illuminate only political factions. You are not stirred by what moves men's hearts. You do not believe in the cause you pretend to represent. Yes, despite the fact that every day you shape the German revolution as if it were a case of fait accompli, yes, in spite of your *Communist Confession of Faith*, you do not believe in the revolt of the working people, whose rising tide already

[52] Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life*, 184.

[53] Henry Weisser, "Chartist Internationalism, 1845–1848", *The Historical Journal* 14, no. 1 (March 1971), 54.

[54] *Northern Star, 15 November 1845*, 7.

[55] *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), 270.

> threatens the destruction of capital, you do not believe in the permanence of revolution, you do not even believe in the capacity for revolution.[56]

Taylor concurs, 'But not even the few extreme radicals such as Marx, who called themselves Socialists, had any real concern for the masses or any contact with them'.[57]

If the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures had little overlap with the demands being proclaimed in towns all over the German states, and if the later *NRZ* was firmly middle class in its posture, it's by no means true to suggest that at no point during the revolution in the German states did Marx, in print, capture the popular mood.

Just one month after the publication of the *Manifesto*, *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany* was published as a pamphlet in Paris. Although signed (off) by the Committee of the Central Authority of the League (thus Schapper, Bauer, Moll and Wilhelm Wolff, in addition to Marx and Engels), it was rapidly written just by Marx and Engels, between 21 March (when Engels arrived in Paris) and 24 March, and appeared a day or so later. Marx paid for the printing of the *Demands* out of his own pocket.

Why did Marx and Engels feel it was incumbent on them—for it appears to have been their decision—to produce a follow-up pamphlet so soon after the appearance of the *Manifesto*? The English *Collected Works* suggest that 'in the *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany* the general propositions just announced in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* were … expressed in concrete terms adapted to the specific situation in one country and the particular conditions of the German revolution of 1848–1849'.[58] A footnote further describes the *Demands* as 'the political programme of the Communist League in the revolution that broke out in Germany'.[59] This would seem a perfectly valid description of the *Manifesto*. Were the *Demands* an implicit acceptance that the *Manifesto* was not fit for the immediate purpose of promoting revolution in the German states?

Marx and Engels themselves explicitly acknowledged some weaknesses in the *Manifesto*. The *Preface to the German Edition of 1872*, as noted, offers a confident enough overview, 'however much the state of things

[56] *Freiheit, Arbeit*, 25 February, 1849.
[57] Taylor, *German History*, 74.
[58] *Preface*. *MECW 7*, XVII.
[59] *Footnote 1*. *MECW 7*, 601.

may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct today as ever', but there is some backtracking elsewhere in this *Preface*.

Marx and Engels continue, 'Here and there some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend, as the *Manifesto* itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II.'

This, though, was not what it said in the *Manifesto* back in 1848. While it did suggest 'these measures will of course be different in different countries', this caveat was immediately followed with the assertion that 'nevertheless in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable'. It sounds as if Marx himself was happy to regard his 10 measures as 'generally applicable'.[60] And there's the significant emphasis on 'Germany' later on: 'The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany'. With that geographic focus, it would seem odd if the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures were not intended at the very least to be 'applicable' in the German states.

In a literal sense, no new version of the *Manifesto* ever appeared—hence another of the 1872 *Preface*'s oft-quoted contentions, 'the *Manifesto* has become a historical document which we have no longer any right to alter'. But the *Demands* reveal both several substantial changes of direction and a clear expression of how extensively 'here and there some detail might be improved' in the *Manifesto*.

In Marx's and Engels's new pamphlet, written for the same German-speaking activists, and for the same (nominal) sponsor, the Communist League, half of the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures were now abandoned, with only two measures surviving totally unchanged.

The 17 *Demands* also have a new and quite different target audience. In the *Manifesto*'s final section, on the relative position of communists, Marx is clear that 'in Germany they fight … against the petty bourgeoisie … the bourgeois revolution will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution'. The final, focused battle cry—'Working men of all countries, unite'[61]—couldn't be clearer.

[60] Ryazanov, surely perversely, inverts the relative emphasis of these two sentences, arguing that the individual country variability overrides the measures' general applicability. Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 191.

[61] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.

Turn to the *Demands*, and it's all change. 'It is to the interest of the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants to support these demands with all possible energy. Only by the realisation of these demands will the millions in Germany, who have hitherto been exploited by a handful of persons … attain to that power to which they are entitled as the producers of all wealth.'[62] Marx had firmly rejected this triple alliance in the *Manifesto*, but now had to accept it in the *Demands*.

The suggestion that the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants were the allies the proletariat could now turn to in the pending battle with the bourgeoisie is hard to reconcile set alongside Engels's own very recent convictions. Although he had on a single occasion not long before, in October 1847 (one of seven articles in the *DBZ* by Engels and Marx attacking Heinzen) anticipated the *Demands*' new target audience, seeing 'the people' as constituting 'the proletarians, the small peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie',[63] Engels otherwise had little time for either petty bourgeoisie or peasants.

The Constitutional Question in Germany (written in March–April 1847) was Engels's big pre-revolutionary sweep through the German class system. In it, he wrote, 'The petty bourgeoisie was already in a weak position in relation to the nobility; still less can it hold out against the bourgeoisie. Next to the peasants, it is the most pathetic class that has ever meddled with history … the petty bourgeoisie is therefore just as little able as the nobility to raise itself to be the ruling class in Germany; on the contrary, it places itself every day more and more under the command of the bourgeoisie.'[64]

Peasants didn't fare any better. Again in his anti-Heinzen piece of October 1847, Engels described small peasants as 'that class which in our day and age is least of all capable of seizing a revolutionary initiative'.[65] As noted, on 23 January 1848 (thus, just two months before Marx and Engels write the *Demands*), Engels's article on *The Movements of 1847* appeared in the *DBZ*. In the piece, Engels wrote, 'it is true that a time will come when the fleeced and impoverished section of the peasantry will unite with the proletariat … and will declare war on the bourgeoisie—but

[62] *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany. MECW 7*, 4, 7.

[63] *The Communists and Karl Heinzen, MECW 6,* 294; Draper expounds on the composition of the petty bourgeoisie. Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 236–7.

[64] *The Constitutional Question in Germany. MECW 6*, 82–3.

[65] *The Communists and Karl Heinzen. MECW 6*, 295.

that does not concern us here'. For good measure, 'with the bourgeoisie, the peasantry can achieve much; against the bourgeoisie, nothing'.[66]

Lest there be any doubt, Engels summed up (in *The Constitutional Question*) the general uselessness of the two classes together in a single sentence, 'The peasants form a similarly helpless class as do the petty bourgeoisie, from whom, however, they differ to their advantage through their greater courage. But they are similarly incapable of all historical initiative.'[67]

Now to the 17 *Demands* themselves:

1. The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic.
2. Every German, having reached the age of 21, shall have the right to vote and to be elected, provided he has not been convicted of a criminal offence.
3. Representatives of the people shall receive payment so that workers, too, shall be able to become members of the German parliament.
4. Universal arming of the people. In future the armies shall be simultaneously labour armies, so that troops shall not, as formerly, merely consume, but shall produce more than is necessary for their upkeep. This will moreover be conducive to the organisation of labour.
5. Legal services will be free of charge.
6. All feudal obligations, dues, corvées, tithes, etc., which have hitherto weighed upon the rural population, shall be abolished without compensation.
7. Princely and other feudal estates, together with mines, pits, and so forth, shall become the property of the state. The estates shall be cultivated on a large scale and with the most up-to-date scientific devices in the interests of the whole of society.
8. Mortgages on peasant lands shall be declared the property of the state. Interest on such mortgages shall be paid by the peasants to the state.
9. In localities where the tenant system is developed, the land rent or the quit-rent shall be paid to the state as a tax.

[66] *The Movements of 1847. MECW 6*, 525.
[67] *The Constitutional Question in Germany. MECW 6*, 83.

10. A state bank, whose paper issues are legal tender, shall replace all private banks.
11. All the means of transport, railways, canals, steamships, roads, the posts, etc., shall be taken over by the state. They shall become the property of the state and shall be placed free at the disposal of the impecunious classes.
12. All civil servants shall receive the same salary, the only exception being that civil servants who have a *family* to support and who therefore have greater requirements, shall receive a higher salary.
13. Complete separation of Church and State. The clergy of every denomination shall be paid only by the voluntary contributions of their congregations.
14. The right of inheritance to be curtailed.
15. The introduction of steeply graduated taxes and the abolition of taxes on articles of consumption.
16. Inauguration of national workshops. The state guarantees a livelihood to all workers and provides for those who are incapacitated for work.
17. Universal and free education of the people.[68]

There are many striking features here. Only two of the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures were carried over totally unchanged: a state bank and nationalisation of transport. Three others were retained, but with significant tweaks. There would still be heavy graduated taxes, but the 17 *Demands* also called for the 'abolition of taxes on articles of consumption'. The 'abolition of all right of inheritance' in the *Manifesto* became the watered-down 'The right of inheritance to be curtailed' in the 17 *Demands*—so, not the whole right, and not totally abolished. Lastly, 'free education for all children' was extended to 'free education of the people'.

Five *Manifesto* measures were thus dropped altogether. Three of these were communist society-levellers—the general nationalisation of land, the gradual nationalisation of factories and of instruments of production, the equal liability of all to labour and the establishment of industrial armies.[69] These three omissions surely challenge the notion that Marx's *Manifesto* was not radical enough: the conclusion here, rather, would be that it was

[68] *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany. MECW 7*, 3–4.

[69] 'Jobs for all', in Draper's paraphrase. Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 277.

Marx's target audience that was not radical enough, although there is equally a presumably involuntary nod by both Marx and Engels to the necessity of more obviously playing to the 1848 audience. The other two measures not to make the cut—and indicating no straightforward connecting chain linking the exclusions—were the anachronistic Jacobin idea of confiscating the property of rebellious emigrants, and the utopian combinations of agriculture with manufacturing, of town with country.

The 17 *Demands* have a good deal in common with the demands of all those other German groups discussed earlier. Indeed, several of the 17 *Demands*—votes for every German over 21, arming the people and scaling back the standing army, religious freedom, and support for the unemployed and disabled—were to be found on the programmes of at least three and sometimes five or six other German groups in the revolutionary period.

And then there is what is clearly within the 17 *Demands* a new special interest group: peasants. 'Corvée' is not a common concept (it's unpaid labour a vassal had to do for his feudal lord) but it, and all the other feudal obligations listed in the sixth *Demand*, were a major issue for German peasants. Peasants had a particular grievance in a period of bad harvests—thus, pre-revolution, in 1845 and 1846—because they were still obliged to pay 'entrenched charges, rent obligations, ground rent and feudal dues', but without the income they normally enjoyed.[70] These various dues were far from being insignificant. Stadelmann records that they collectively added up to fully one-third of a Silesian peasant's 'paltry ready income'.[71] At the same time, the smallholdings of peasants in general were precious to them.

Marx's response? The only property still to be nationalised would now be that of princes and other big feudal landowners. Mortgage interest and rents would still have to be paid by peasants, but instead to an (implicitly) more benign landlord in the shape of the state. It was patently a bid to win over peasants to the (German) communist cause, or as Marx and Engels phrased it, 'the measures specified in Nos 6, 7, 8, 9 are … to reduce the communal and other burdens hitherto imposed upon the peasants and

[70] Rainer Koch, "Die Agrarrevolution in Deutschland 1848" in *Die Deutsche Revolution von 1848/49,* edited by Dieter Langewiesche (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 367.

[71] Rudolf Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848* (Munich: Münchner Verlag, 1948), 18.

small tenant farmers without curtailing the means available for defraying state expenses and without imperilling production'. And just to clarify that not all private property was equal, 'the landowner in the strict sense, who is neither a peasant nor a tenant farmer, has no share in production. Consumption on his part is, therefore, nothing but abuse.'[72]

While the shifting stance in the 17 *Demands* towards peasants most obviously catches the eye, it was by no means the only significant policy swerve. Universal suffrage—a key consensual platform of 1847–1848 German campaigners—emerges as the second Marx-Engels *Demand*.

As a significant footnote to these more consensual 17 *Demands*, Schapper, in presentations to the CWA through the summer of 1848, introduced a more hard-line, politicised and certainly less sympathetic codicil to the 16th Demand. 'National workshops' were no longer some idealised, unspecified catch-all but were to be obtained through confiscation of factories and machines from hitherto proprietors. On the other side of this coin, 'unnecessary or useless' work for the unemployed would also not be on offer—'the workshy type who doesn't want to work will get nothing. Workshys, if they can, can live off fresh air.'[73]

In McLellan's view, 'the [17] *Demands* were a plan for a bourgeois (and not socialist) revolution; they were designed to appeal to the petty bourgeoisie and peasants as well as to the workers, and were very similar to programmes proposed by radical republicans.'[74] 'A significantly watered-down version of the *Communist Manifesto*'[75] is Valentin's tarter verdict.

Or as German Communist League member Louis Heilberg described them (curiously enough, to Hess) on 17 April 1848: 'A pretty complete independent policy programme, and indeed the programme, which alone is strong, far-sighted and comprehensive enough, to put Germany in a vigorous, flourishing position and thereby pave the way for a generation after us for the transition to a communist re-arranging of society'.[76] 'A generation after us' seems an odd, and unjustified, verdict on a pamphlet that had a good deal of practical immediacy.

If the 17 *Demands* frequently met other 1848 campaigners on common ground, it is striking how with the *Manifesto*, Marx chose to ignore

[72] *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany. MECW 7*, 4.
[73] Gerhard Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 98.
[74] McLellan, *Karl Marx: A Biography*, 194.
[75] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, v1, 533.
[76] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, 101.

several key thematic levers that our comparators identified as especially pertinent. There is one notable exception to this general conclusion: the first but most glaring sin of omission is one also committed by other revolutionary campaigners in 1848. An overall feature of the 1848 revolution in the German states is that, tax reform aside, the *Manifesto* or the 17 *Demands* of Marx and Engels, but also the demands of many others, were essentially calling for a social (or societal) revolution, not an economic one. But as Sperber suggests, 'it was quite clear to contemporaries that the economic crisis of the years 1845–1847 was the precursor to and the precondition for the revolution of 1848'.[77]

In the run-up to the 1848 revolutions, it was very much economic factors that triggered popular discontent, very weak harvests in 1845 and 1846 being accompanied by a chain of linked events: potato blight, rising food prices, exploited by profiteers and then, on a wider basis, a significant economic downturn first in Britain then in continental Europe.

Actual unrest followed during 1847 in German states. In February 1847, groups armed with cudgels raided manor houses for their potatoes. On 21 April, fights broke out in Berlin between potato merchants and the populace, with market stalls and shops plundered, while at the beginning of May there were food riots in Ulm, Stuttgart and Tübingen.[78] Stadelmann records that 'in the Polish region of the east Prussian province of Silesia, 80,000 fell ill from hunger-typhus, from which 16,000 perished'.[79] In other areas, the *DBZ* later reported, organised bands of 30–100 men marched from village to village and demanded 'in the name of Christian brotherly love, about which the schoolmaster and priest had said such wonderful things, bread, grain, flour or money … and they got it as a rule, without gainsayers, for their savages' huge cudgels proved far more effective than their Christian phraseology'.[80] In September 1847, Wilhelm Wolff, in the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, juxtaposes the course of 'the famine year 1847' across the wider German states with the comfortable living

[77] Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, 109. See also Jürgen Bergmann, "Ökonomische Voraussetzungen der Revolution von 1848: Zur Krise von 1845 bis 1848 in Deutschland" in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*. Sonderheft Band 2 (1976): 254–287; Helge Berger and Mark Spoerer, "Economic Crises and the European Revolutions of 1848" in *The Journal of Economic History* 61, no. 2 (June 2001), 293–326.

[78] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 43–4; Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 40–2.

[79] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 18.

[80] *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, 30 May 1847.

of the common enemy: 'whereas thousands of proletarians in the Rhine province, in Westphalia, in Silesia, Posen, and East Prussia were succumbing to starvation and famine fever, the "Most Christian German" monarchy and its minions were giving themselves up to orgies such as are ever at the command of luxury and idleness'.[81]

Marx and Engels were hardly unaware of the trigger events of these pre-revolution years. Engels in October 1847 wrote a lengthy piece for *La Réforme*, in which he touched on 'the commercial crisis to which England finds itself exposed' and the 'alarming' situation in Lancashire, before concluding, 'In the meantime starving Ireland is writhing in the most terrible convulsions. … It looks as though the Irish will not die of hunger as calmly next winter as they did last winter.'[82] But Engels didn't put revolutionary cause and effect together here, preferring to highlight Irish emigration to England as the consequence of famine. This is all the more curious, because Engels had in the past, albeit back in 1842 and in an English context, made the connection: 'there cannot fail to be a general lack of food among the workers before long, and then fear of death from starvation will be stronger than fear of the law. This revolution is inevitable for England.'[83]

Marx did understand the economic trigger to revolution, but essentially only in hindsight. In his 1850 *Class Struggles in France*, his post mortem on the recent French Revolution, Marx set the pre-revolutionary scene:

> 'The eruption of the general discontent was finally accelerated and the mood for revolt ripened by *two economic world events* [Marx's italics]. The potato blight and the crop failures of 1845 and 1846 increased the general ferment among the people. The dearth of 1847 called forth bloody conflicts in France as well as on the rest of the Continent. … The second great economic event which hastened the outbreak of the revolution was a general commercial and industrial crisis in England … the crisis finally burst in the autumn of 1847 … with the bankruptcy of the London wholesale grocers, on the heels of which followed the insolvencies of the land banks and the closing of factories in the English industrial districts. The after-effect of this

[81] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 308–9.
[82] *The Commercial Crisis in England—The Chartist Movement—Ireland. MECW 6*, 307–9.
[83] *The Internal Crises. MECW 2*, 374.

> crisis on the Continent had not yet spent itself when the February Revolution broke out.'[84]

Towards the end of *The Class Struggles*, Marx comes to a conclusion, which could have put a very different cast on the *Manifesto*: 'A new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis. It is, however, just as certain as this crisis.'[85]

Marx's *Wage Labour and Capital*, published in a series of articles in the *NRZ* in April 1849, but based on lectures given in 1847, acknowledged at the outset: 'From various quarters, we have been reproached with not having presented the *economic relations* which constitute the material foundation of the present class struggles and national struggles'.[86] Marx is being rather harsh on himself here. Both Engels, in his *Principles*,[87] and Marx in the *Manifesto*[88] itself do propound an informal theory of recurring trade crises, triggered by over-production.[89] But these are trade crises in the abstract: what is missing here is the specific linking of economic factors to the outbreak of revolution in 1848.

In their interpretation, in 1848, the English *Collected Works* argue that Marx and Engels 'rejected the tactics' of Born 'who wanted to circumscribe the fight of the working class by setting it strictly occupational economic goals, which would in fact have diverted the proletariat from the general political tasks that confronted the German people'.[90] Material hardship was not, however, missed as a revolutionary driver by our

[84] *The Class Struggles in France. MECW 10*, 52. Engels's 1895 *Introduction* to the *Class Struggles* went so far as to suggest that Marx's 'conception' was to trace political events back to economic causes.

[85] *The Class Struggles in France. MECW 10*, 135.

[86] *Wage Labour and Capital. MECW* 9, 197.

[87] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6,* 347, 352.

[88] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 489–90, 509.

[89] In *Principles*, these crises were said to recur every five to seven years. In an appendix to the 1887 American edition of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels noted, 'This was the period apparently indicated by the course of events from 1825 to 1842. But the industrial history from 1842 to 1868 has shown that the real period is one of ten years.' *MECW 26*, 404. Hess asks in the second article in his *Consequences of a Proletarian Revolution* series (*DBZ*, 31 October 1847) 'from what do trade crises arise? From over-production'. Hess, *Schriften*, 433.

[90] *Preface. MECW 7*, XIX.

comparative pamphleteers.[91] With a glance back to the French Revolution, Büchner told Gutzkow in 1835: 'the relationship between the poor and the rich is the only revolutionary element in the world, hunger alone can be the goddess of freedom … fatten the peasants, and the revolution will die of apoplexy. Put a chicken in the pot of every peasant, and the Gallic cockerel will drop down dead.'[92] August Becker, testifying in 1837 to the Noellner Inquiry into Büchner's co-author Weidig, said of the 1834 *Messenger*, 'its purpose was to unite the material interests of the people with those of the revolution, as the sole possible way of bringing about the latter'.[93] Cobbett also frequently observes that a well-fed labourer was less likely to revolt than a starved one.

Taxation is an issue where a more supportive case can factually be made. Marx and Engels in general have an excellent track record on tax reform, with a string of prescriptive observations from the early 1840s right up until (in Engels's case) the early 1890s—covering progressive taxes, both on capital and income, a strong preference for direct over indirect taxation, inheritance tax and state finances. The demand for 'steeply graduated taxes', first seen in the *Manifesto*, and also sought by Hess in October 1847, and in *Die Verbrüderung* in September 1848, is now linked in the 17 *Demands* to a call for 'the abolition of taxes on articles of consumption' (echoed in *Die Verbrüderung*). The second idea would have had a particular resonance at the time—in Prussia in 1849, for instance, indirect taxes accounted for 40% of the overall tax take, against only 29% from direct taxes.

But in the overall 1847–1850 period, in contrast, there is a lot of ambiguity about Marx's real stance on tax. Marx's October 1847 *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality* is a particular case in point. As he turns to taxation, Marx starts by saying, 'The monarchy, like every other form of state, is a direct burden on the working class on the material side only in the form of *taxes*. Taxes are the existence of the state expressed in economic terms. Civil servants and priests, soldiers and ballet-dancers, schoolmasters and police constables … the common seed within which all these fabulous beings slumber … is *taxation*.'

He concludes (and since Cobbett's 1816 *Address* so frequently mentions 'taxes' and 'misery' in the same breath, it's clear which text Marx has

[91] In hindsight again, the *Class Struggles* captures a common juxtaposition on hardship: 'As against the shameless orgies of the finance aristocracy, the struggle of the people for the prime necessities of life!' *The Class Struggles in France. MECW 10*, 52.

[92] Büchner is alluding to Heine, writing on the 1830 revolution in France. Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 201.

[93] Noellner, *Actenmäßige Darlegung des Verfahrens gegen Friedrich Ludwig Weidig*, 422.

in mind),[94] 'and what reasoning citizen would not have referred the starving people to taxes, to the ill-gotten gains of the princes, as the source of its misery?'

This all seems sincere enough (if a little harsh on ballet-dancers), a powerful and moving pitch to the working-class poor whom Marx often struggles to relate to. But just two paragraphs later, Marx looks back on these tax thoughts mockingly: 'what inexhaustible material for speechifying saviours of mankind!'[95]

Nor is Marx any more sympathetic to the idea of princes as fiscal bogeymen, since they are presented in the intervening paragraph as further 'inexhaustible material', complete with many exclamation marks, 'the German princes and Germany's distress! In other words, taxes on which the princes gorge themselves and which the people pay with their sweat and blood!'[96] The peasants would have begged to differ with Marx's fresh sarcasm here, caring sufficiently to burn down the castle—and records of outstanding tithes—of Prince Hohenlohe-Bartenstein in Württemberg.[97]

Or turn to 1850. In *The Class Struggles in France*, Marx once again seems to strike the right popular note: 'when the French peasant paints the devil, he paints him in the guise of a tax-collector'.[98] Yet in April 1850, Marx could also write, in a broad attack on the tax proposals of Émile de Girardin,[99] that 'tax reform is the hobbyhorse of every radical bourgeois … the reduction of taxes, their more equitable distribution, etc. etc., is a banal *bourgeois reform*. The abolition of taxes is *bourgeois socialism*.'[100]

There is, of course, an explanatory context to everything, and in April 1850, Marx was feeling aggrieved that bourgeois socialists had betrayed the revolution. But, confusingly, these jaundiced comments are not wholly representative of Marx's attitude towards tax as a revolutionary driver in this period. From 11 November to 7 December 1848, Marx ran a series of

[94] Marx makes the allusion explicit in *Capital*: 'The great part that the public debt, and the fiscal system corresponding with it, has played in … the expropriation of the masses, has led many writers, like Cobbett, Doubleday and others, to seek in this, incorrectly, the fundamental cause of the misery of modern peoples'. *Capital. MECW 35*, 744. The contention maintained on this point is at odds with the general thrust of Marx and Engels on tax.

[95] *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality. MECW 6*, 328–9.

[96] *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality. MECW 6*, 328.

[97] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 59.

[98] *The Class Struggles in France. MECW 10*, 118.

[99] Where Engels had championed a tax on capital, at Elberfeld in February 1845, Marx opposes this idea, in its Girardin formulation.

[100] *Le Socialisme et L'Impôt* (*Socialism and Tax*). *MECW 10*, 330–1.

30 increasingly bold articles in the *NRZ* all under the umbrella of 'No More Taxes!!!' ('Keine Steuern Mehr!!!')[101] Marx in particular urged the rural poor to withhold taxes—was this all 'bourgeois socialism'? Or consider a further populist series of articles in the *NRZ*, written by Marx's and Engels's close associate Wilhelm Wolff. In 'Why the People Pay Taxes' (December 1848) and 'The Silesian Milliard' (March–April 1849), Wolff aggressively attacks the 1%-ers of the day, and in particular the Class Tax which was disproportionately paid by the very poor. More 'banal bourgeois reform'?

Sperber, at any rate, regards taxation issues in 1848 as empirically 'an extraordinarily powerful force for political mass mobilisation',[102] and this is very much the line on tax taken by our comparative pamphleteers.

Cobbett's contention that the fiscal cost of 'wars', 'standing armies', 'sinecures' and 'pensions' is the 'cause of our miseries' has already been noted, but elsewhere in his 1816 *Address*, he more broadly, and colourfully, catalogues his audience's financial burden, the 'elegant dresses, superb furniture, stately buildings, fine roads and canals, fleet-horses and carriages, numerous and stout ships' which 'are so many marks of national wealth and resources. But all these spring from labour. Without the journeyman and labourer none of them could exist.'[103]

Wilhelm Schulz's *Question and Answer Booklet on Everything that is Especially Wanting in the German Fatherland* appeared three years after Cobbett's pamphlet, in 1819, but similarly shows how the idle rich enjoy the benefits of a tax regime which deprives the citizen and peasant of the German states of both their own subsistence and their rights:

> For there are many noble, aristocratic, noses-in-the-air gentlemen, who strut around in their colourful finery, like prize livestock at the annual fair, with gold and silver in their coats, which the citizen and peasant would otherwise have in their purse … free is the person, whom no other can deprive of rights, life and property, through murder and robbery and unnecessary taxes and dues or any other act of violence.[104]

[101] The actual German phrase tops the *NRZ* front page from 19 November to 17 December 1848, oddly post-dating both the start and the end of the campaign.

[102] Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, 50.

[103] William Cobbett, "Address to the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland", *Political Register* 31, no. 18, November 2 1816, 435, 433.

[104] Ay, *Das Frag- und Antwortbüchlein von Wilhelm Schulz*, 762, 764.

Shelley takes general aim at the then British government, and 'the burdens of debt and taxation under which we groan'[105] but earlier, more specifically—in a very similar vein to Büchner/Weidig, Cobbett and Schulz—rails against the 'lavish expenditure of the public treasure, for maintaining the standing army, and the royal family, and the pensioners, and the placemen … an unequal distribution of the means of living … gives twice as many people the liberty of living in luxury and idleness, on the produce of the industrious and the poor'.[106]

If the attitude towards tax (though only in this 1847–1850 period) is rather equivocal, Marx displays a very consistent line towards universal suffrage in the German states, and in France, one which Engels shares, although the joint stance is quite different in the context of Chartism. In essence, England aside, Marx and Engels are wholly supportive of the idea in principle, but disillusioned by practice. The support does not extend to the *Manifesto* but the second of the 17 *Demands* states that 'every German, having reached the age of 21, shall have the right to vote'. With this second *Demand*, Marx and Engels very much capture the mood of March 1848, since suffrage was one of the seven most common demands of revolutionary campaigners in the German states. In one of its very first articles, the *NRZ*, on 6 June 1848, contrasts the preference of the radical-democratic, or extreme Left, faction in the FNA for representation '*without any property qualification* and *by direct elections*' with the Left's more watered-down '*free universal elections*', which 'exclude *property qualifications*, but by no means … the *indirect* method of election'.[107]

In this respect, Marx was being a little unreasonable since the 'indirect' or two-stage election process, whereby those entitled to vote first chose delegates, who then elected deputies in a second round to represent them, did not preclude 90–95% of Prussian males voting in May 1848. The requirement of economic independence, though, which eliminated rural and urban servants, and journeymen lodging with their master, reduced this proportion to nearer 75% in Saxony, Hanover and Baden. Gabriel draws an important distinction between eligibility—reaching the legal age

[105] Forman, ed., *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 110.

[106] Forman, ed., *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 108.

[107] *The Programmes of the Radical-Democratic Party and of the Left at Frankfurt. MECW 7*, 48. The Left wing of the FNA comprised two factions: the extreme Left, the 'radical-democratic party' (Arnold Ruge, Friedrich Schlöffel, Franz Zitz and others) and the Left (Robert Blum, Carl Vogt and others).

to vote—and the actual right to vote, which could be precluded by economic circumstances, the absence of a fixed address or religion.[108]

While citizens in the German states were still substantially eligible to vote, they could not similarly count on being represented by their own kind in parliament. Within the 'Professors' Parliament' at Frankfurt, as the FNA was dismissively labelled, manual workers, small farmers (there were a good number of large landowners) and the lower middle class were all very poorly represented.[109] Of the 812 deputies during the FNA's existence from 18 May 1848 to 18 June 1849 (a far smaller number sat at any one time), more than 600 had a university education, 491 had studied law and just four were craftsmen and three farmers. In Taylor's view, the 'lawyers and professors' believed 'nothing good could come of the intrusion of the masses into politics'.[110] Of a 'sitting' sample membership of 424 in December 1848, 47 belonged to the 'Donnersberg' Extreme Left faction, to which the *NRZ* referred in June 1848 and to which Wilhelm Wolff belonged. Although the FNA voted to abolish some feudal privileges, such as patrimonial justice and aristocratic hunting rights, moderates as well as conservatives voted to preserve many peasant obligations and feudal inequalities.[111] In France, in the 23 April 1848 election, 84% of those eligible to vote did so, but of the 876 deputies elected, fewer than 100 were radical or socialist, the great majority being moderate or conservative.[112]

It was to get worse. In Prussia, the PNA was forcibly dissolved on 5 December 1848, to be replaced by a bi-cameral parliament, under which the definition of independent status led to voting rights to the Second Chamber becoming very substantially skewed. The *Dreiklassenwahlrecht* (Three Class Franchise) divided eligible voters into three groups according to the proportion of direct taxes (Class Tax or Classified Income Tax, Land Tax and Profits Tax) paid. This resulted in the highest tax-paying group having up to 20 times the voting influence of the lowest. Alfred Krupp paid so much tax in Essen that he was the only member of the 'first class' of his ward; local noble estate owners were in the same position.

[108] Mary Gabriel, *Love and Capital* (New York: Little Brown, 2011), 145.

[109] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 80–1, 121–2.

[110] Taylor, *German History*, 82.

[111] Donald Mattheisen, "Liberal Constitutionalism in the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848" in Central European History 12, no. 2 (June 1979), 130, 141.

[112] Gabriel, *Love and Capital*, 143.

Marx was scathing on this new Berlin Second Chamber, 'after universal suffrage has been in operation twice in France, after what the Left calls universal suffrage has been in operation twice in Prussia … after this to be able to indulge in such fabulous fantasies about universal suffrage, one must have been an antediluvian Prussian Minister'.[113] Separately on this electoral system, he writes on 3 May 1849, 'it goes without saying that we are expecting nothing at all from this assembly composed of bourgeois elected on the basis of three classes according to the property qualification with the mass of the people debarred from voting'.[114] On the French experience, where universal male suffrage, enacted on 2 March 1848, meant every one of the country's nine million men, Marx also reached negative conclusions. In *The Class Struggles in France*, he argued that 'universal suffrage was not the miracle-working magic wand for which the republican worthies had taken it … universal suffrage had fulfilled its mission. The majority of the people had passed through the school of development, which is all that universal suffrage can serve for a revolutionary period. It had to be set aside by a revolution or by the reaction.'[115]

Stedman Jones, in this latter French context, contends that Marx's 'refusal to accord universal suffrage its full import imposed serious limitations upon his understanding of the sequence of events. It led him to underestimate the ways in which the suffrage issue pushed the revolution in directions different from anything encountered in 1789 or 1830.'[116] Perhaps it was more a case of Marx having witnessed what universal suffrage could, but failed to, achieve. Looking back in 1850 at the passing of the English Ten Hours Bill in 1847, which restricted working hours for women and children, Engels was still willing to champion universal suffrage, 'The working classes will have learned by experience that no lasting benefit whatever can be obtained for them by others, but that they must obtain it themselves by conquering, first of all, political power. They must see now that under no circumstances have they any guarantee for bettering their social position unless by Universal Suffrage, which would enable them to seat a Majority of Working Men in the House of Commons.'[117]

[113] *The Debate on the Address in Berlin*. *MECW 9*, 142.

[114] *The Congress of Rhenish Towns*. *MECW 9*, 392.

[115] *The Class Struggles in France*. *MECW 10*, 65, 137.

[116] Gareth Stedman Jones, "The Young Hegelians, Marx and Engels" in Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys, eds., *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 582.

[117] *The Ten Hours' Question*. *MECW 10*, 275.

Through Chartism, both Marx and Engels seemed to set aside any continental disillusionment with suffrage. Marx, at a November 1847 Polish uprising anniversary, said that 'the Chartists of England were the real Democrats, and that the moment they carried the six points of their Charter [one of which, of course, was universal (male) suffrage], the road to liberty would be opened to the whole world'.[118] Engels, similarly, commenting on O'Connor's New Year address to the Irish people in January 1848, the very month Marx was writing the *Manifesto*, wrote admiringly that 'O'Connor shows that the Irish people must fight with all their might and in close association with the English working classes and Chartists in order to win the six points of the People's Charter'.[119]

The common rights of all citizens and a narrower but primary emphasis on suffrage are the recurring feature of the Chartists' *Rotten House* pamphlet of 1836. Hetherington et al. pitch the appeal in varying but consistent phrases—'one great motive, that of making all the resources of our country tend to promote the happiness of all its inhabitants', 'every one of us pays taxes to the State, and every one of us in justice ought to have the elective franchise. To this end, fellow workmen, a FREE PRESS, GENERAL EDUCATION, UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, the Protection of the BALLOT, ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS, EQUAL REPRESENTATION, and no PROPERTY QUALIFICATION for members are wanted. To the attainment of these essentials, embracing the great object—EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS.'[120]

It is noteworthy, as evidence of what did resonate with the working class, both at different periods in the first half of the nineteenth century and across different countries, that among the seven demands of *Rotten House*, three—universal suffrage, annual parliaments and no property qualification—were features (somewhat through gritted teeth) of Cobbett's 1816 *Address*, while four measures—a free press, general education, universal suffrage and equal representation—are common features of demands by groups in the German states in 1848 (and 1849), appear selectively within Marx's and Engel's 17 *Demands* but, bar the call for free education, are wholly absent from the *Manifesto*.

Shelley, in his pamphlet, combines a call for economic reform, on taxation and the public debt, with the requirement—given that 'discontent

[118] *Northern Star*, 4 December 1847.
[119] *Feargus O'Connor and the Irish People*. *MECW 6*, 449.
[120] Hetherington et al., *Rotten House*, 1, 6.

and disaffection had prevailed for many years'—for political reform and specifically 'free representation'. However, indicative of a no more propitious climate than prevailed in the era of *Rotten House*, Shelley also outlines the trenchant response of the British government (and through spies, or informers, separately instrumental in the Pentridge Rising): 'so soon as the whole nation lifted up its voice for parliamentary reform, spies were sent forth'.[121]

Cobbett, almost exactly one year earlier than Shelley, also linked, in his *Address to the Journeymen and Labourers*, economic with political reform, although more ambiguously as to the detail: 'We have seen that the cause of our miseries is the *burden of taxes*, occasioned by wars, by standing armies, by sinecures, pensions etc. … The *remedy* is what we have now to look to, and that remedy consists wholly and solely of such a *reform* in the Commons' or People's House of Parliament, as shall give to every payer of *direct taxes* a vote at elections, and as shall cause the Members to be *elected annually*.' Cobbett is then immediately conscious that 'it may, and not without justice, be thought wrong to deprive those of the right of voting, who pay *indirect* taxes'. His rationale for not openly advocating universal suffrage is that 'a corrupt rich man might employ scores' of 'mere menial servants, vagrants, pickpockets and scamps' who 'might poll in several parishes or places, on one and the same day'. His less mealy-mouthed and certainly radical solution would be for 'a *reformed Parliament* … to take off the indirect taxes, and to put a small direct tax upon every master of a house'.[122]

Marx (and Engels) also reject one further means of reaching out to a working-class audience, which arguably had an important bearing on the *Manifesto*'s impact in 1848, namely tapping into working-class reverence for (and deference to) religion. Not that Marx was averse to using biblical references or quotations. Most famously, in *Capital*, the bible itself would become a tradable commodity, bought for £2 in return for 20 yards of linen to the same value.[123] But *Capital* would not be published till September 1867. In the 1840s, there is a sprinkling of biblical quotations, sometimes reprised. 'Neither moths nor rust' (drawn from Matthew 6, 'do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth') appears both in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and in an October 1848

[121] Forman, ed., *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 110, 109, 110.
[122] Cobbett, *Address to the Journeymen and Labourers*, 453–4.
[123] *Capital. MECW 35*, 114–5.

reflection on the uprising in Cologne the previous month.[124] Matthew 6's further aphorism 'for whoever hath, to him shall be given' is invoked on 26 July 1848 in *The Bill on the Compulsory Loan and its Motivation*, and, again in the *NRZ*, less than a fortnight later, on 6 August, by Engels in the *Debate about the Existing Redemption Legislation*.[125]

The more directly expressed stance on religion varies between the facetious—Marx apologises in 1842 that 'the kind reader will have to put up with theological matters for an instant' and then in 1844 discusses whether the bullet that narrowly missed assassinating King Friedrich Wilhelm IV could have been 'warded off directly by the hand of God'[126]—and the more prosaically hostile. In *On the Jewish Question* (1843), Marx argues that 'the domination of religion in the Christian-German state is the religion of domination', whereas 'the perfect Christian state is the atheistic state, the democratic state, the state which relegates religion to a place among the other elements of civil society'.[127]

Marx denounced both Christian Communists (with their working-class affiliation), such as Wilhelm Weitling in 1846—'tell us, Weitling, you who have made such a noise in Germany with your preaching'[128]—and, in 1847, Christian Socialism (with its 'bourgeois' affiliation),[129] here in an attack on Hermann Wagener in 1847, a leading exponent in the German states:

[124] *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. MECW 3*, 309. *The Revolution of Cologne. MECW 7*, 465.

[125] *The Bill on the Compulsory Loan and its Motivation, MECW 7*, 281; *Debate about the Existing Redemption Legislation, MECW 7*, 329.

[126] *Yet Another Word on Bruno Bauer. MECW 1*, 212; *Illustrations of the Latest Exercise in Cabinet Style of Frederick William IV. MECW 3*, 209.

[127] *On the Jewish Question. MECW 3*, 158, 156.

[128] Paul Lafargue, *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), 270; see also David McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 156–7. Weitling underwent a rapid fall from favour. In July 1844, Marx could write: 'I call to mind *Weitling's* brilliant writings. … Where among the bourgeoisie—including its philosophers and learned writers—is to be found a book about … *political* emancipation—similar to Weitling's work: *Garantien der Harmonien und Freiheit* (Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom)? It is enough to compare the petty, faint-hearted mediocrity of German political literature with this *vehement* and brilliant literary debut.' *Critical Margin Notes on the Article by a Prussian. MECW 3*, 201. For Engels, writing in the second half of 1845, Weitling was 'the only German who has *really* achieved something'. *A Fragment of Fourier's on Trade. MECW 4*, 614.

[129] *Preface to the German Edition of 1890. MECW 27*, 60.

The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, abasement, submissiveness, and humbleness, in short, all the qualities of the rabble, and the proletariat, which will not permit itself to be treated as rabble, needs its courage, its self-confidence, its pride, and its sense of independence, even more than its bread. The social principles of Christianity are sneaking and hypocritical, and the proletariat is revolutionary.[130]

In the *Manifesto* itself, Marx similarly adopts an antagonistic attitude to religion, both in the abstract—'the charges against Communism made from a religious … standpoint are not deserving of serious examination'[131]—and in a specific attack against 'clerical socialism':

> As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism. Nothing is easier than to give Christian ascetism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.[132]

But in the context of the *Manifesto*, religion is most closely associated with the recommendation of Engels, in a letter to Marx dated 23–24 November 1847, 'I think we would do best to abandon the catechetical form', and it is with this proposal that Marx and Engels eschew a campaigning medium prominently and subtly exploited by comparative pamphleteers.

Engels justified this move by arguing, because 'a certain amount of history has to be narrated in it, the form hitherto adopted is quite unsuitable'.[133] Marx agrees, thus freeing himself, in Weissert's phrasing, 'from the Enlightenment tradition of wrapping up secular subjects in religious forms'.[134]

Engels had used the catechism Q&A format for both the 1847 precursors to the *Manifesto*, thus *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith* (22 questions and answers) and *Principles of Communism* (25 Qs and As).

[130] *The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter. MECW 6*, 231.
[131] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 503.
[132] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 508.
[133] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 149.
[134] Weissert, *Der Hessische Landbote, Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, 15.

Other notable practitioners include the extravagantly named Constantin François de Chasseboeuf, Comte de Volney (the 1793 *Catéchisme du Citoyen Français*, or Catechism of the French Citizen), and Heinrich von Kleist, whose 1809 *Katechismus der Deutschen* (Catechism of the Germans) featured a son proudly telling his sceptical father, over 60 years before the creation of the German nation-state, 'I am a German'.

Why was the catechism format so useful? Karl Michel, author of a book on political catechisms, suggests 'it offers the possibility, of presenting a theme concisely and intelligibly'.[135] Laski adds that the contents would then be 'more easily capable of being memorised'.[136] It was also no bar to revolutionary thinking—both disguised within and effectively endorsed by the religious framework—and vivid writing.

Schulz's *Question and Answer Booklet* does not quite respect the conventional numbered question and answer structure, but marries a series of biblical quotes—thus an opening extract from St Paul's *Epistle to Timothy*, 'God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth'—with a string of radical prescriptions:

> Who then is a free man?
>
> Free is the person, whom no other can deprive of rights, life and property, through murder and robbery and unnecessary taxes.
>
> What would need to ensue, for the majority of our people to become truly capable and more alert?
>
> … it is further necessary, in order for all of us in the words of Christ to come to an understanding of the truth, that everyone is allowed to say and write everything … this is what is otherwise called press freedom and freedom of speech.
>
> What then would have to happen, for there to be an end to all this evil?
>
> Germany would have to be at one and united. The whole German people would have to have genuine, freely chosen representatives of the people.[137]

It is striking how closely this selection of Schulz's 'answers', composed in 1819, mirrors common demands of 1848.

Hess also used the catechism form, in his 1844 *Communist Confession of Faith*, of which the 'splendidly improved' (Engels's backhanded

[135] Karl Michel, *Politische Katechismen* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Sammlung Insel, 1966), 7.

[136] Harold Laski, *Communist Manifesto: Socialist Landmark* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959), 74.

[137] Ay, *Das Frag- und Antwortbüchlein*, 762, 764, 765, 768.

compliment) version emerged in late autumn 1847 (which hasn't survived), and, separately, in the 1849–1850 *Red Catechism for the German People* (which has). The last mentioned follows the standard Q and A format, but is succinctly and forcefully written, as in the 15th question, which expresses a core *Manifesto* (indeed Marxist) belief:

Q: Do poor people live off the rich, or do rich people live off the poor?
A: The rich live off the poor, who do the work and through whose work all wealth in the world is created.[138]

Engels's contention that the intended structure of the *Manifesto*, notably the discursive opening sections, did not lend itself to a catechism format seems reasonable enough, but Marx in the *Manifesto* as a whole threw the religious baby out with the catechistic bathwater.

As Sperber observes of pre-1848 Europe, 'often, the curriculum consisted primarily of learning the catechism, religious songs, and Bible stories, with reading, writing and arithmetic thrown in as an afterthought'. In 1844, more than half a million participants went on the pilgrimage to the Holy Shroud of Trier, a city, like Marx's 1848–1849 base, Cologne, in the heavily Catholic Rhine Province.[139]

From a pamphleteering perspective, Schulz in his *Question and Answer Booklet* and Büchner in his *Hessian Country Messenger* square the relevant circle here. After being arrested over the *Booklet*, Schulz is quoted in his legal defence in 1820 as saying, 'he had written the same … accompanied by biblical passages, because he knew that all truths would be more fervently grasped by the people, if they were grounded in the bible'.[140] Büchner gets the same point, albeit more cynically (here, in an 1836 letter to Gutzkow): 'And the masses themselves? For them there are only two levers: material poverty and *religious fanaticism*. Any party adept at applying these levers will carry the day. Our age needs weapons and bread—and then a *cross* or some such.'[141] Despite being a lifelong atheist (quite unlike Schulz), Büchner was 'of the opinion that … the pamphlets issuing

[138] Hess, *Schriften*, 448.
[139] Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, 33, 35.
[140] Ay, *Das Frag- und Antwortbüchlein von Wilhelm Schulz*, 749.
[141] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 204–5.

forth … must declare the sacred rights of men using the simple images and turns of phrases of the New Testament'.[142]

Gerhard Schaub suggests, of the *Messenger*, 'the biblical passages have the function of a lever, consciously and clearly intended to mobilise and revolutionise the Hessian peasants'.[143] And so the *Messenger* sets out to do, but, significantly, without also employing the catechism form. Just within its final 80-word paragraph, after the opening secular exhortation—'you have laboured all your life at digging the soil, now you shall dig your tyrants' grave'[144]—there are references to Revelation (22:17), Matthew (26:41), Isaiah (9:4), Matthew (6:10) and, in the very final line, to 'the Kingdom of Justice', a phrase recurring over 100 times in both Old and New Testaments.

While the goal of a German republic was not one of the 10 measures of the *Manifesto*, the very first of the 17 *Demands* stated, 'The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic'. In his 1884 *Der Sozialdemokrat* article, Engels claimed that 'the political programme of the *NRZ* consisted of two main points: A single, indivisible, democratic German republic, and war with Russia, including the restoration of Poland'.[145] Bruno Leipold (whose PhD dissertation is one of the few detailed assessments of Marx's republicanism) suggests 'the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* … focused nearly all of its energy on pushing the newly constituted Frankfurt National Assembly … to be as radical as possible and to declare Germany a single, indivisible republic'.[146] Herres and Melis counter that these *NRZ* goals were not pursued with the thoroughness and purposefulness implied by Engels, Marx and Engels choosing, for instance, not to reprint the 17 *Demands*, with their republican rallyingcry, in the *NRZ*.[147]

[142] "Bericht der Bundeszentralbehörde von 31 Januar 1842", *7* in *Protokolle der Deutschen Bundesversammlung vom Jahre 1842*, Sitzung 1–26, Frankfurt-am-Main. Most, but not all of the *Messenger*'s biblical references, are attributable to co-author and Lutheran pastor Weidig. Gerhard Schaub, *Georg Büchner: Der Hessische Landbote* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1976), 49–51. Schaub devotes 16 pages to the *Messenger*'s biblical passages.

[143] Schaub, *Der Hessische Landbote*, 51.

[144] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 178.

[145] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 7*, 123–4.

[146] Bruno Leipold, "Citizen Marx: The Relationship between Karl Marx and Republicanism" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2017), 87. There is a shorter essay: Jeffrey Isaac, "The Lion's Skin of Politics: Marx on Republicanism" in *Polity* 22, no. 3 (Spring 1990).

[147] *MEGA*^{2}, *I/7*, 905.

Actual evidence from the *NRZ* is conflicting too. In an unsigned discussion written on 6 June 1848, on the programmes of the Radical-Left Party and of the Left in Frankfurt, which anticipates the Engels's phraseology of 1884 word-for-word, a qualifying 'utopian' has already been attached to the goal of a republic. The *NRZ* comments, 'we do not make the utopian demand that at the outset a *united indivisible German republic* should be proclaimed, but we ask the so-called radical-democratic party not to confuse the starting point of the struggle and of the revolutionary movement with the goal. … German unity … can result only from a movement in which … the war with the East will play an equally decisive role'. As late as May 1849, though, in making his case for shutting down the *NRZ*, the Cologne Public Prosecutor hints at its ever greater advocacy of the social republic—'the tendency of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to provoke in its readers contempt for the present government, and incite them to violent revolutions and the setting up of a social republic has become stronger in its latest pieces'.[148] It is hard to find empirical evidence supporting the Prosecutor in the English *Collected Works*. Volume 7, for March–November 1848, includes fewer than 20 *NRZ* articles dealing with a republic, overwhelmingly in a French context[149] (republican coverage in the two remaining '*NRZ* volumes', 8 and 9, is even more sporadic).

What never seems to disappear is a wishful idealism about at least the possibility of a social or red republic. At the mass meeting in Worringen on 17 September 1848, attended by 6000–8000 supporters, 'the meeting declared unanimously, except for one vote, in favour of a republic, and in fact for a democratic social republic, a red republic'.[150] In the final piece of *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution* series, published on 31 December 1848, Marx acknowledged that a 'purely bourgeois revolution and the establishment of bourgeois rule … is impossible in Germany' but interestingly, the only remaining alternatives he sees are 'a feudal absolutist counter-revolution or a social republican revolution'.[151] This broadly repeats the only choice assumed on 25 June 1848—'Autocracy or

[148] *The Summary Suppression of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. *MECW 9*, 451.

[149] The emphasis on France is sustained after 1848–1849 in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary analyses, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848–50* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

[150] These terms are in contrast to a bourgeois republic. *Mass Meeting in Worringen*. *MECW 7*, 586.

[151] *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution*. *MECW 8*, 178.

Republic'.[152] At a banquet held in Cologne on 20 March 1849, there were many toasts and concluding 'unanimous cheers for the Red Republic'.[153]

If there's a sense that within the Marx circle, the issue of a republic was most obviously a talking shop, the 'men of action' in the republican debate, the Baden republicans Friedrich Hecker and the less popular Gustav von Struve, both lawyers, did not prove to be any more effectual. After they had failed to impose their will on the precursor to the FNA, the 'Vorparlament', which met in the same venue, the Paulskirche, from 31 March to 3 April 1848, Hecker used the pretext of the contrived 8 April arrest of Joseph Fickler[154]—accused of conspiring with the provisional French government—to mount an uprising. It incorporated several revolutionary portents. Although estimates of Hecker's support fluctuated widely (Hecker talked of 60,000 followers, Karlsruhe Prussian envoy, Siegmund von Arnim, of 20,000, the real fighting hard core, some armed only with scythes, being yet fewer again), Hecker was at least backed by a working-class (if far more agrarian than urban proletarian) collection of journeymen, workers, day labourers, peasants and students. The Heckerzug (Hecker Procession) uprising was quickly crushed at Kandern[155] on 20 April by a larger, more organised and far better equipped standing army drawing on elements from the states of Hesse and Baden. Struve, meanwhile, tried once more, issuing a pamphlet in June 1848 promising 'the revolutionization and republicanisation of Germany', and then, drawing false hope from the short-lived uprising in Frankfurt launched on 18 September, proclaiming a German republic from the Badenese town of Lörrach on 21 September. Struve's uprising, though better planned than Hecker's, was suppressed on 25 September, by regular Badenese army troops.

Marx's view, specifically of Hecker, was dismissive. The *NRZ* on 14 October 1848, as had other newspapers earlier, published Hecker's *A Word to the German People*, his swansong accompanying his exile to New York. In the case of the *NRZ*, the publication is portrayed as an oversight—it was carried 'in the feuilleton section, i.e. outside the political part of the newspaper'—but it had irksome consequences for editor Marx, since the public prosecutor Hecker (Marx enjoys the double name-play)

[152] *Threat of the Gervinus Zeitung*. *MECW 7*, 116.
[153] *Banquet in Gürzenich*. *MECW 9*, 491.
[154] Editor of the republican newspaper *Seeblätter*, based in Konstanz.
[155] In then Baden.

attributes the appeal not to the republican Hecker, but to the *NRZ*, which is promptly accused of high treason.

In his response in the *NRZ* of 29 October, Marx is mainly concerned with protecting the *NRZ*'s good name, but he takes trouble along the way to deride 'the laurels of the republican Hecker', 'the flight of the republican Hecker to New York' and 'the fantastic farewell address of the republican Hecker'.[156]

There is clearer-cut republicanism amongst the comparator pamphleteers. Schulz (though later a constitutional monarchist) argued in 1819 that it was not necessary to be ruled 'by an emperor, king or prince' and that government could be delegated to 'several men … as in the north American free state, where the people seem to fare pretty well as a result'.[157] Shelley's republicanism, drawing on Tom Paine, is frequently manifest, most notably in *Queen Mab*, whose third canto is a prolonged attack on monarchy ('Nature rejects the monarch, not the man … for kings and subjects, mutual foes'). According to his biographer Foot, 'Shelley's hatred for monarchy was not founded only on the waste of luxury in the middle of poverty. … Kings, he argued, had no right to govern. They were not chosen by the governed, and the governed had therefore no redress against their rulers.'[158]

Turning to Büchner, Investigating Justice Friedrich Noellner (in his report published in 1844) said 'the so-called *Hessian Country Messenger* is an indisputably revolutionary pamphlet … the product of the most brazen, unbridled republicanism'. August Becker, in the contributory 4 July 1837 Noellner hearing, described Büchner as a 'republican amongst the republicans' while political associate Adam Koch, in a separate 1842 hearing, recalled that Büchner considered a 'republican constitution to be the only one that would properly reflect the dignity of men, and therefore founded a group which over time would bring about a republic'.[159] Writing to his family on 20 November 1836, Büchner drew some striking contrasts between republican Switzerland—his exile had taken him to Zürich—and the German states, 'The streets here aren't full of soldiers, aspiring civil servants and idle state officials, and you don't run the risk of

[156] *Public Prosecutor "Hecker" and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung. MECW 7*, 485.

[157] Ay, *Das Frag- und Antwortbüchlein*, 765.

[158] Foot, *Red Shelley*, 53.

[159] Noellner, *Actenmäßige Darlegung des Verfarhrens gegen Friedrich Ludwig Weidig*, 114, 423; *Bericht der Bundeszentralbehörde von 31 Januar 1842, 7.*

being knocked down by an aristocrat's carriage; instead of that, everywhere you see a healthy, vigorous people, governed at little cost by a simple, good, truly *republican* government, maintained through a tax on *wealth*, a kind of tax that would be universally shouted down in Germany as the height of anarchy'.[160]

Taylor dismisses the republican uprisings of Hecker and Struve as 'not even damp squibs, merely bad theatre'[161] but the oddity about the issue of republicanism in 1848 is that for all the dissension and cynicism about its proper identity, its likelihood, it did seem to strike a portentous revolutionary chord. Although his comments are coloured by his own varying commitments to the federal system and constitutional monarchy, Gottschalk could remark to Hess on 26 March, 'the name "republic" is highly unpopular',[162] apparently frightening the bourgeoisie and on a par with 'robbery, murder and an invasion by Russia'. This didn't stop Gottschalk in June 1848 from calling for a workers' republic in the German states.[163] Separately, Weerth (in turn coloured by his recent return to Cologne and the tension aroused by the pending 'Herwegh Legion invasion'), told Marx on 25 March 1848, 'although everything that is accomplished here is quite democratic, people nevertheless shudder at the mention of the word republic'.[164] By way of official confirmation, if from the Right, Engels quotes PNA 'Deputy [Ludwig] Schneider' addressing the Assembly's Berlin Chamber in July 1848, 'At present, I would regard a republic as the greatest calamity, for it would be anarchy under the desecrated name of republic, despotism under the cloak of liberty'.[165] Engels's ironic, third-person account of his activity in Elberfeld in May 1849—'his presence evoked the utmost alarm of the Elberfeld bourgeoisie; they were afraid that at any moment he would proclaim a red republic'[166]—suggests that even at this point, the red flag was still an effective red rag.

As Peter Wende concluded, 'in 1848 only a minority of [a] minority, men such as Friedrick Hecker and Gustav Struve, called for direct action and tried to accelerate the revolutionary progress by not only proclaiming,

[160] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 206.
[161] Taylor, *German History*, 72.
[162] Edmund Silberner, ed., *Moses Hess: Briefwechsel* (The Hague: Mouton, 1959), 175.
[163] Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life,* 221; Stedman Jones, *Greatness and Illusion*, 261.
[164] *MEGA*^{2}, *III/2*, 414.
[165] *The Debate on Jacoby's Motion. MECW 7*, 234–5.
[166] *Elberfeld. MECW 9*, 448.

but taking up arms for, a German republic'.[167] Liberal essayist Karl von Ense tracked the deflating revolution in the German states in his diary, suggesting on 19 May 1848, 'Germany cannot be saved except by revolution on the double. Who knows—we might soon regret that Struve and Hecker failed.' By 12 August 1848, he could only gloomily acknowledge, 'it has become crystal clear that our revolution was not a proper one'.[168]

It is not accurate to depict violence as a missing lever in the *Manifesto*. In its closing lines, the *Manifesto* strikes a defiant note: 'The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.'[169] But this is an isolated instance in the *Manifesto*, and in general, the varying attitudes of Marx and Engels towards violence as a necessary feature of revolution are changeable, contradictory and certainly non-linear. Violence in 1847–1848 is most visible as an irresistible counter-revolutionary force. In his 1845 Elberfeld speeches (intended not to frighten any local bourgeois horses), Engels stresses the need to 'avoid a violent and bloody overthrow of the social conditions', which will require 'the peaceful introduction … of communism'.[170] Some 20 months later, he reports to the Brussels Correspondence Committee that on 18 October 1846, he had defined communism to a small gathering, saying it would entail 'democratic revolution by force'.[171] Just over a year later, in the *Principles of Communism*, Engels answers his own Question 16 by saying 'should the oppressed proletariat … be goaded into revolution, we Communists will then defend the cause of the proletarians by deed just as well as we do now by word'.[172]

Once the European Revolutions are underway, it becomes a more mixed, and down-to-earth, picture. Stedman Jones points to the Belgian archives to disprove Jenny Marx's later account of Marx being willing to pay to arm the Belgian workers[173]; her husband was certainly opposed to the April 1848 plan by Hecker and Struve to launch a violent coup d'état. On 6 November 1848, following the bloody suppression of October's

[167] Peter Wende, "1848: Reform or Revolution in Germany and Great Britain" in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 100 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 149.

[168] Cited in Wende, *1848: Reform or Revolution in Germany and Great Britain*, 154–5.

[169] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.

[170] *Speeches in Elberfeld. MECW 4*, 263.

[171] *Engels to Correspondence Committee, 23 October 1846. MECW 38*, 82.

[172] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6*, 349–50.

[173] Stedman Jones, *Greatness and Illusion*, 244.

Viennese uprising, Marx concludes there is only one means to bring about societal change: 'revolutionary terror'. The No More Taxes!!! November campaign brings together initial caution, and timidity, but once the PNA has stiffened its backbone and resolved that 'taxes are not to be paid', Marx in turn declares that 'their forcible collection must be resisted everywhere and in every way'. This is fighting talk, over which Ferdinand Lassalle poured cold water (albeit retrospectively, in 1862), recalling that 'the tax executor comes to me, I resist and throw him out of the door … the tax executor returns, reinforced by soldiers. I resist once more … the soldiers open fire, wounding and killing.'[174] In the first of his articles on *Wage and Labour*, published in the *NRZ* on 5 April 1849, Marx forcefully asserts that 'every revolutionary upheaval, however remote from the class struggle its goal may appear to be, must fail until the revolutionary working class is victorious, that every social reform remains a Utopia until the proletarian revolution and the feudalistic counter-revolution measure swords in a world war'.[175]

In the final month of the *NRZ*, on three occasions—first in a report of events in Berlin on 27 April 1849, and then in two warnings to Cologne residents on 4 and 6 May—Engels is keen that the people do not give the authorities 'the slightest excuse' for a violent crackdown on opposition. Shortly thereafter, Engels himself was a happy-go-lucky combatant in Elberfeld in May 1849, subsequently taking part in four engagements in the Baden-Palatinate campaigns. These campaigns were all suppressed by Prussian regular troops, with the German states' revolution separately coming to a formal and brutal end on 23 July 1849, with the surrender of 6000 revolutionaries in the fortress of Rastatt, 600 then being executed.

The next chapter considers how Marx and Engels varyingly targeted the key protagonist classes of the 1848 revolution—the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the peasantry—and the leading European countries, notably the German states and England.

[174] Ferdinand Lassalle, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften,* v2, (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1919), 92.

[175] *Wage Labour and Capital. MECW 9*, 197–8.

CHAPTER 4

Revolutionary Roles: Classes and 'Countries'

'The starting point of the *Manifesto* is quite different', writes Stedman Jones. 'It opens with a sustained tribute to its declared antagonist … the *Manifesto* will remain a classic, [for its] quite unsurpassed depiction of modern capitalism.'[1] This 'sustained tribute', in the opening section, to 'the giant, Modern Industry … industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois',[2] accounts for no less than 39% of the total pamphlet.

While counter-intuitive for a pamphlet promoting communism, this verdict, and its admiring tone, has become consensus amongst a diverse range of critics. For Schumpeter, 'the *Communist Manifesto* … is an account nothing short of glowing of the achievements of capitalism'.[3] Hannah Arendt described the opening pages of the *Communist Manifesto* as 'the greatest praise of capitalism you ever saw'.[4] Mandel wrote of Marx

[1] Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 11, 5.

[2] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 485. Engels writes in a note to the 1888 English edition of the *Manifesto*, 'by bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour'. *MECW 6*, 482; and in *The Constitutional Question in Germany*, 'the decisive section of the German bourgeoisie are the factory owners'. *MECW 6*, 86.

[3] Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1947), 7.

[4] Hannah Arendt, *The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvin Hill (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979), 334–5.

D. Ireland, *The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99464-8_4

and Engels: 'they sang a veritable hymn of praise to the glory of capitalism in their *Communist Manifesto*'.[5]

Not all commentators were impressed by the tribute. Heinzen, butt and source of much Marx and Engels criticism, in 1848 denounced Marx's preoccupation with the bourgeoisie, that he would not 'acknowledge that the 34 owners of Germany have already produced a shocking mass of negative material conditions', that revolution did not require 'a steam engine or some such factory instrument' to have been invented.[6]

While the *Manifesto*'s depiction of modern capitalism may be 'quite unsurpassed', Marx and, in this context, more particularly Engels arguably misread the roles of all the key protagonists in the 1848–1849 revolution as it affected the German states, be they bourgeois or 'modern capitalists', proletarians or peasants. There is, of course, no shortage of hindsight analysis as to why these protagonists failed to fulfil their intended revolutionary destinies; this chapter first evaluates what foresight led Engels and Marx to allot them their specific roles (or not) in the *Manifesto*, in advance.

The *Manifesto* is unequivocal on the decisive revolutionary function of the bourgeoisie. In his sweep through economic history, Marx states that 'The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations.' The *Manifesto* concludes, 'The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution'.[7]

This, though, is Marx merely setting the bourgeoisie, in isolation, against absolute monarchy. It is Engels, in *The Constitutional Question in Germany*, written in March–April 1847, who identifies how the bourgeoisie will inter-act with other social classes, and why these are relationships of mutual dependency. First, Engels takes one of the many swipes aimed by himself and Marx against the True Socialists, this time for their apparently entirely erroneous read-across from past French Communist experience to likely German Communist outcome:

> The true socialists … have learnt from the French Communists that the transition from the absolute monarchy to the modern representative state in

[5] Mandel, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx: 1843 to Capital*, 56.

[6] Karl Heinzen, *Die Helden des teutschen Kommunismus* (Bern: Verlag von Jenni, Sohn, 1848), 22.

[7] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 486, 519.

> no way abolishes the poverty of the great mass of the people, but only brings a new class, the bourgeoisie, to power. They have further learnt from the French Communists that it is precisely this bourgeoisie which, by means of its capital, presses most heavily upon the masses, and hence is the opponent par excellence of the Communists.

But the True Socialists, quite simply, had not done their homework:

> They have not taken the trouble to compare Germany's level of social and political development with that of France, nor to study the conditions actually existing in Germany upon which all further development depends; hastily and without long reflection they have transferred their hastily acquired knowledge to Germany.[8]

This at least is substantive ground for a confrontation with the True Socialists and its 'chief representative' (Engels's 1890 phrase), Karl Grün, one which too often descended into personal abuse, on both sides.[9] Marx's choice phrases in the *Manifesto* on 'German, or "True" Socialism', across two pages—'schoolboy task … German Philistines … foul and enervating literature'[10]—are characteristic. Both Marx and Engels went to enormous lengths to bring down Grün.[11] It is interesting, nonetheless, for the purposes of this immediate discussion, to see Marx elsewhere in this *Manifesto* section say that True Socialism had been offered the opportunity 'of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement. … To the absolute governments … it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie … this "True" Socialism thus served the governments as a weapon for fighting the German bourgeoisie, it, at the same time, directly represented a

[8] *The Constitutional Question in Germany. MECW 6*, 75–6.

[9] Stedman Jones regards the attack on True Socialism as both sectarian and quite disproportionate. Stedman Jones, *Manifesto Introduction*, 271.

[10] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 511–13.

[11] In the manuscripts now known as *The German Ideology*, Marx decided to add a second volume, completed by early June 1846 and running to some 30,000 words, specifically to attack True Socialism. Only Chapter IV of Volume II, *The Historiography of True Socialism*, was published around this time, in *Das Westphälische Dampfboot* in August and September 1847. Engels was despatched to Paris in mid-August 1846 to try and wrestle the initiative away from Grün, and from January to April 1847, he wrote his own lengthy essay on *The True Socialists*. Marx published his *Declaration Against Karl Grün* in April 1847.

reactionary interest.'[12] The point of note here is not the True Socialists' questionable allegiance to 'absolute governments' but their scepticism of 'this bourgeois movement'.

Engels in 1847 in any event took a different line on the merits and role of the 'German bourgeoisie'. In the second section of *The Constitutional Question*, he sets out in detail why 'Germany' is and will be different. Engels's conclusions represent a significant element of his influence on the positioning of the *Manifesto* and bear some exposition:

> *One* class must become strong enough to make the rise of the whole nation dependent upon its rise, to make the advancement of the interests of all other classes dependent upon the advancement and development of its interests. The interest of this one class must become for the time being the national interest. … Does this class, which can overthrow the status quo, exist now in Germany? It exists. … The bourgeoisie is the only class in Germany which at least gives a great part of the industrial landowners, petty bourgeoisie, peasants, workers and even a minority among the nobles a share in its interests, and has united these under its banner. The party of the bourgeoisie is the only one in Germany that definitely knows with what it must replace the status quo. … The party of the bourgeoisie is therefore the only one that at present has a chance of success. The only question then is: is the bourgeoisie compelled by necessity to conquer political rule for itself through the overthrow of the status quo, and is it strong enough, given its own power and the weakness of its opponents, to overthrow the status quo?[13]

Much closer to the start of European Revolutions, and the publication of the *Manifesto*—with 23 January 1848's *The Movements of 1847*—Engels maintained his faith in the bourgeoisie. The Prussian bourgeoisie had withheld funds from King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who had bypassed them by turning instead to the Russians. But, Engels nonetheless concluded, '1847 was politically a very good year for the Prussian bourgeoisie in spite of their temporary defeat'. He believed, 'we can therefore await the advent of this Prussian revolution with the utmost calm … the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie of the other German states have also noted this and shown the most heartfelt sympathy towards them. They know that the victory of the Prussian bourgeoisie is their own victory.'[14]

[12] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 511–12.
[13] *The Constitutional Question in Germany. MECW 6*, 85–6.
[14] *The Movements of 1847. MECW 6*, 522.

On the first Marx prediction in the *Manifesto* on 'Germany' then—the 'country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution'—Engels in this passage continues to come across as very much a believer in a successful bourgeois revolution in 'Germany' (where he parts company from Marx is on the notion that 'the country is on the eve' of one).[15] If there is disagreement between the two men on the timing of the German bourgeois revolution, there seems undoubted unanimity on the notion that when a proletarian revolution arises,[16] the bourgeoisie will be beholden to the proletariat.

In the second diatribe against Heinzen, *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality*, in a section written on 18 November 1847 (thus just weeks before the composition of the *Manifesto*), Marx wrote:

> The workers know very well that it is not just politically that the bourgeoisie will have to make broader concessions to them than the absolute monarchy, but that in serving the interests of its trade and industry it will create, willy-nilly, the conditions for the uniting of the working class, and the uniting of the workers is the first requirement for their victory. … They know that the revolutionary movement of the bourgeoisie against the feudal estates and the absolute monarchy can only accelerate their own revolutionary movement.[17]

In his 23 January 1848 *DBZ* piece, Engels writes (rounding off with a Heine quote), 'we are no friends of the bourgeoisie … in Germany in a very short time they will even have to ask for our help. … So just fight bravely on, most gracious masters of capital! … but do not forget that "The hangman stands at the door!"'[18] This very much anticipates Marx's line in the *Manifesto* proper, where he suggests that an embattled

[15] As noted in Chap. 2, this can be seen from Engels's qualifying comment that King Friedrick Wilhelm IV may have breathing space until 1849 when 'the United Diet will have to be convened … whether the king wants it or not', triggering his resignation. *The Movements of 1847. MECW 6*, 522.

[16] Engels again parts company on timing, suggesting 'in a few months' time', rather than 'immediately following', as Marx predicts. *Engels to Marx, 8 March 1848*. MECW 38, 160; *Manifesto of the Communist Party, MECW 6*, 519.

[17] *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality. MECW 6,* 332.

[18] *The Movements of 1847*. Engels contradicts his own suggestion of a proletarian revolution in Germany 'in a very short time' by also writing in this piece that the bourgeoisie 'will at most win a few years of troubled enjoyment'. *MECW 6*, 528–9.

bourgeoisie 'sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help'.[19]

This remains, nonetheless, a very trusting prediction. While there is no dispute that the German states were behind the times in terms of their economic and social development, it was still a leap of faith that the bourgeoisie would in due course act in the distinctively disinterested, indeed altruistic, manner that Engels assumes.

There were, moreover, pre-*Manifesto* warnings, issued even by Engels and Marx themselves. In a passage in *The Constitutional Question*, Engels observes 'in all countries … the bourgeois is revolutionary until he himself rules'.[20] There is similar acknowledgement by Marx in November 1847 of bourgeois self-awareness and self-interest:

> The bourgeois gentlemen would smile at such naivety. They know better where the shoe pinches. They are aware that in revolutions the rabble gets insolent and lays hands on things.[21]

It is not as if, moreover, there weren't pointers from more politically evolved countries, such as England, as to how the bourgeoisie-in-power might behave. After outlining the 'present contest now waging … between the agricultural and privileged classes on the one hand, and the monied and commercial classes on the other'—an English version of the absolute monarchy/feudal powers versus bourgeoisie contest—Hetherington et al. in the *Rotten House* spell out that the English bourgeoisie have scarcely offered any improvements for working men on the previous regime:

> And if the past struggles and contentions we have had with the latter to keep up our wages—our means of subsistence—if the infamous acts they have passed since they obtained power, form any criterion of their disposition to do *us* justice, little have we to expect from any accession to that power, any more than from the former tyrants we have had to contend against. There are persons among the monied class, who, to deceive their fellow men, have put on the cloak of reform; but they intend not that reform shall so extend as to deprive them or their party of their monopoly and corrupt advantages. Many boast of freedom, while they help to enslave us; and preach *justice*,

[19] *Manifesto of the Communist Party, MECW 6*, 493.
[20] *The Constitutional Question in Germany. MECW 6*, 79–80.
[21] *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality. MECW 6*, 333.

> while they assist the oppressor … to perpetuate the greatest injustice towards the working millions.[22]

In a section of the *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution, 1848/49* (Illustrated History of the German Revolution, 1848–1849) entitled 'the bourgeoisie does battle with the peasants', Helmut Bleiber (in fact citing Valentin) claims that the bourgeoisie broke its side of the bargain with the peasants—one wing of the new revolutionary triad, grouped with the 'German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie' in late March 1848's 17 *Demands*—as early as that very month. He reports that Heinrich von Gagern, 'March minister' in Hesse-Darmstadt, 'tore into the Counts Erbach for their renunciation of feudal privileges'.[23] One of the first acts of the Prussian Camphausen ministry on 30 March 1848 was to stress to the Lord Lieutenant for Silesia that 'should you in the quelling of public order disturbances in the province require military support … turn to the General-in-Command, Count von Brandenburg'. Bleiber suggests that the bourgeoisie employed two weapons against the revolutionary rural population: 'brutal military force' and 'giving hope to the peasants and rural workers that their demands would be taken into consideration through the forthcoming parliaments … the peasant movement's anti-feudal and anti-Junker activity could not be fully effective because the bourgeoisie betrayed the interests of the peasants … and positioned itself protectively in front of the Junkers'.[24]

When the revolution in the German states failed in 1848, Marx was happy not merely to deflect blame onto the shoulders of the culpable bourgeoisie but also to disown his, and in particular Engels's, vision of how events would unfold in the German states, which had driven the tactical thrust of the *Manifesto*.

There is a surprisingly early capitulation by Engels that their bourgeoisie thesis for the German states had not materialised, though not that it was wrong on their part—the 'big bourgeoisie' and 'the people' were very much to blame. In *The Berlin Debate on the Revolution* (thus, the sitting of the PNA on the resolution of Left-wing deputy Julius Berends in support of 'those who fought on March 18 and 19' in Berlin), Engels concluded, on 14 June 1848 (note the words 'all along'):

[22] Hetherington et al., *Rotten House*, 3.
[23] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution, 1848–1849*, v1, 355.
[24] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 113–14.

> In short, the revolution was not carried through to the end. The people let the big bourgeoisie form a Government and the big bourgeoisie promptly revealed its intentions by inviting the old Prussian nobility and the bureaucracy to enter into an alliance with it … the big bourgeoisie, which was all along anti-revolutionary, concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with the reactionary forces, because it was afraid of the people.

And yet. Engels could still not bring himself to give up their revolutionary thesis:

> We cannot here go into the question as to why and to what extent the present rule of the big bourgeoisie in Prussia is a necessary transitional stage towards democracy, and why, directly after its ascent to power, the big bourgeoisie joined the reactionary camp. For the present we merely report the fact.[25]

There are similarly disillusioned, if more wide-ranging pieces from Engels in the *NRZ* written between 17 and 24 July, first, *The Debate on Jacoby's Motion*, then *The Suppression of the Clubs in Stuttgart and Heidelberg* ('And that, upright German, has indeed been your fate once again. You believe you have made a revolution? Deception! You believe that you have overcome the police state? Deception!').[26]

From Marx, there is an initial broadside against the bourgeoisie within early November 1848's *The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna*, whose most telling lines (and Engels-echoing closing judgement) are, 'In February and March armed force was beaten everywhere. Why? Because it represented only the governments. After June it was everywhere victorious because the bourgeoisie everywhere had come to a secret understanding with it, while retaining official leadership of the revolutionary movement.'[27] We have to wait though until December 1848, in the *NRZ*, for Marx's full-length J'Accuse against the bourgeoisie: *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution*. He concludes, if far from to his friend's face, that Engels's 1847–1848 prognosis for the bourgeoisie in the German states was completely wrong. The bourgeoisie, far from giving 'a great part of the industrial landowners, petty bourgeoisie, peasants, workers and even a

[25] *The Berlin Debate on the Revolution*. *MECW 7*, 74.
[26] *The Suppression of the Clubs in Stuttgart and Heidelberg*. *MECW 7*, 248.
[27] *The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna*. *MECW 7*, 504.

minority among the nobles a share in its interests' as Engels had argued the year before, 'saw menacingly confronting it the proletariat and all sections of the middle class whose interests and ideas were related to those of the proletariat'. It was not 'a class speaking for the whole of modern society. … From the first it was inclined to betray the people and to compromise with the crowned representative of the old society, for it itself already belonged to the old society; it did not represent the interests of a new society against an old one, but renewed interests within an obsolete society.'[28]

With the benefit of nearly 40 years of hindsight, Engels, in his 1884 *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849)*, reflects on 1848, the bourgeoisie's impotence, its complicity with the ancien régime, and its inability to work with and for proletarians, who were not up the immediate revolutionary job:

> The German bourgeoisie, which had only just begun to establish its large-scale industry, had neither the strength nor the courage to win for itself unconditional domination in the state, nor was there any compelling necessity for it to do so. … Terrified not by what the German proletariat was, but by what it threatened to become and what the French proletariat already was, the bourgeoisie saw its sole salvation in some compromise, even the most cowardly, with the monarchy and nobility.[29]

What Marx failed to acknowledge in December 1848, and Engels in 1884, was the wisdom of the Marx pre-*Manifesto* prediction (in his second *Contra Karl Heinzen* piece) aired in November 1847, 'The bourgeois gentlemen therefore seek as far as possible to make the change from absolute to bourgeois monarchy without a revolution, in an amicable fashion'.[30] Many leading bourgeois politicians in the spring and summer of 1848 spelt out the limits of their revolutionary ardour. Friedrich ('Fritz') Harkort, liberal industrialist and leader of the Right Harkort in the PNA, responded to the March 1848 Berlin uprising by saying, 'We, revolution? We, in Prussia? That is quite impossible. We in Prussia want a peaceful, popular reform, and a liberal constitution but under no circumstances a

[28] *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution*. *MECW 8*, 162.
[29] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849)*. *MECW 26*, 122.
[30] *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality*. *MECW 6*, 333.

revolution.'[31] The more influential Right Centre liberal constitutionalist Friedrich Bassermann, who at the October 1847 Heppenheim gathering had called for a German nation-state, claimed in the spring of 1848 that with the appointment of the Committee of Fifty by the Frankfurt Vorparlament, 'the right to revolution had been lost and the duty to reform had begun'. On 19 June 1848, he told fellow FNA deputies, 'the essential thing is to reform, not revolutionise'.[32] In the 14–17 June 1848 *Berlin Debate on the Revolution*—the PNA voted down the mildly revolutionary proposition from deputy Berends—Right deputy Adolf Riedel summed up the bourgeois bargain, 'we all know: revolution is constitutional change taking place against the will of the ruling power whereas reform means change taking place with the assent of that power'.[33]

Wal Suchting suggests that 'what the *Manifesto* diagnosed as its death throes quickly proved to be, on the contrary, the travail attending the birth of a capitalism not only economically dominant … but now politically so as well; in particular, the prediction concerning Germany was quite off the mark (however, it must be added that Marx and Engels almost immediately saw their errors)'.[34]

Suchting captures capitalism's actual evolution perfectly here, but his final point seems overly generous. In the same 1884 review of the *NRZ*, straight after reprising the *Manifesto*'s 'The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution etc.', Engels confidently stated, 'Never has a tactical programme proved its worth as well as this one. Devised on the eve of a revolution, it stood the test of this revolution.'[35]

What of the role of the proletariat? Marx's closing rallying-cry in the *Manifesto* to the proletariat carries an air of more solid conviction. 'Workers of the world, unite!' has rung down through the ages, certainly far more

[31] Cited in Helga Grebing, *Der deutsche Sonderweg in Europa, 1806–1945* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986), 90.

[32] Franz Wigard, ed., *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituierenden Nationalversammlung* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Johann David Sauerländer, 1848), v1, 1417, 381.

[33] *Verhandlungen der Versammlung zur Vereinbarung der Preussischen Staats-Verfassung* (Berlin: Verlag der Deckerschen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei, 1848), v1, 166.

[34] Wal Suchting, "What is Living and What is Dead in the Communist Manifesto" in Cowling, ed., *Communist Manifesto*, 158.

[35] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 26*, 121.

so than the most frequently used translation of the *Manifesto*'s closing sentence, 'Working men of all countries, unite!'

But neither version is what Marx actually wrote. His German rendering, 'Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt Euch' literally translates as 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!'

Translating 'Proletarier' as 'proletarians' connects the *Manifesto*'s closing slogan with its earlier section headings, and class preoccupations, *Bourgeois and Proletarians*, and *Proletarians and Communists*, but drawing attention to the correct rendering is not mere translational pedantry. It matters because Marx's targeting of what was an unusually narrow social group—proletarians, and (as this book consistently contends) in the German states—is another important reason for the *Manifesto*'s lack of impact in 1848.

Several translators—for instance, Carver, Draper and the much-derided Macfarlane, whose 'frightful hobgoblin' (it was at least a variation on the hackneyed spectre) stalked 'throughout Europe' in her 1850 version of the *Manifesto*'s opening line—have invoked proletarians, not workers or working men. Many current English-language editions of the *Manifesto*, however—thus the *Collected Works*, and those introduced by Fernbach, Stedman Jones, Jeffrey Isaac, McLellan, Hobsbawm, Bender and Trotsky—follow Samuel Moore's 1888 English translation, endorsed by Engels, which supplies 'Working men of all countries, unite!'

Whether inspired by Engels or Schapper, the Communist League had initially adopted the slogan 'Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt Euch' at its First Congress in early June, and then placed it in the masthead of its one-off *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, published in London in September 1847, 'price 2 pence'. Marx also adopts it word-for-word. It's a rare direct link in the *Manifesto* with its sponsor (although the 75+ mentions earlier in the pamphlet to 'proletariat', in particular, 'proletarians' or 'proletarian' make it quite implausible that Marx invokes the finale slogan solely as some kind of token, one-off salute to the League).

The concept of the proletariat in the eyes of Marx and Engels was by no means always narrow, being expressed in the early 1840s in often very broad-brush terms, but progressively becoming ever more tightly defined.

The first reference to the proletariat by Marx appears in the *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, written between March and August 1843, and published in the single edition *Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Annals) in February 1844.

Marx looked for 'the formation of a class with *radical chains*, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, an estate which is the dissolution of all estates … a sphere which, in a word, is the *complete loss* of man and hence can win itself only through the *complete re-winning of man*. This dissolution of society as a particular estate is the proletariat.'[36]

Werner Conze doesn't especially demystify this first stab, 'The young Marx's first shot at "proletariat", then, has it as a historico-philosophical concept, which contained within itself a conviction-of-a-turning-point and an expectation of salvation'.[37]

Engels makes matters simpler (though not clearer) in the 15 March 1845 preface to *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (published in German), his excellent study of the English industrial revolution as it affected Manchester and its surrounding towns: 'similarly, I have continually used the expressions working-men (*Arbeiter*) and proletarians, working-class, propertyless class and proletariat as equivalents'.[38] A Conze footnote to the *Poverty of Philosophy*, written by Marx in the first months of 1847, makes a very similar point: 'when Marx here speaks of "workers" and not of "proletarians", this accords with his custom in expositions on political economy to prefer the word "worker" without thereby intending a conceptual difference with "proletarians"'.[39]

But alongside these all-things-to-all-people definitions, there emerged, also in 1847, a narrower view, in the joint perception of Marx and Engels, of what a proletarian is. The new definition, spelt out by Engels in both the 1847 drafts to the *Manifesto*, identifies the proletariat (in *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith*) as 'the class of the completely propertyless, who are compelled to sell their labour to … the bourgeois' and (in *Principles of Communism*) as 'the class of society which procures its means of livelihood entirely and solely from the sale of its labour and not from the profit derived from any capital'.[40] This is 'propertyless' particularly in the sense of having no stake in the means of production. Marx repeats the idea in the *Manifesto*: 'the proletarian is without property'.[41]

[36] *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. MECW 3*, 186.

[37] Werner Conze, "Proletariat, Pöbel, Pauperismus" in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004), v5, 2004, 53.

[38] *The Condition of the Working-Class in England. MECW 4*, 304.

[39] Conze, *Proletariat, Pöbel, Pauperismus*, 54, footnote 119.

[40] *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith. MECW 6*, 100; *Principles of Communism, MECW 6*, 341.

[41] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 494.

This is clearer, but still rather abstract, detached from actual workplaces or the changing historical context. As we get closer to the publication date of the *Manifesto*, a further precise refinement is emphasised. Marx had suggested even back in 1843 when writing on Hegel that 'the proletariat is coming into being in Germany only as a result of the rising industrial development'.[42] But this was a trend, not a specific. Engels is by 1847 much more particular, saying in the *Draft*, that 'the proletariat came into being as a result of the introduction of the machines which have been invented since the middle of the last century, and the most important of which are: the steam-engine, the spinning-machine and the power loom'.

But then Engels adds, 'we have gradually arrived at the position where almost *all* branches of labour are run on a factory basis'.[43] It's helpful here to identify what 'factory' actually meant at this time.

As Joel Mokyr points out, even in far more heavily industrialised Britain, 'it cannot be repeated often enough that the "factory", in our minds associated with a large … user-hostile mill employing many workers … was still not the typical employer in the British economy by the mid-nineteenth-century. … Much of the cotton industry consisted of perhaps 900 establishments, many of which were still little more than workshops, employing fewer than 20 hands … in engineering, of the 677 firms in 1851, no fewer than two-thirds employed fewer than 10 employees.'[44] Two straightforward distinctions can still be drawn: the 'factory' around mid-century was not on an enormous scale, but it did represent industrialisation as it then was, and it was quite different to working on the land.

A more industrialised workforce remained a revolutionary prerequisite, to fulfil the proletariat's *Manifesto* role. In a letter written to the Brussels Correspondence Committee on 16 September 1846, Engels mocks a review of a recent two-volume book by the anti-worker economist and journalist Theodore Fix, who writes 'Monsieur Marx is a cobbler. … Marx says it's necessary in Germany to create a universal proletariat (!!) in order to realise the philosophical doctrine of communism.'[45] Engels adds the two exclamation marks, and one can laugh along with the notion of Marx

[42] *Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. MECW 3*, 187.

[43] *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith. MECW 6*, 99.

[44] Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy, Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700–1850* (London: Penguin, 2009), 347. Eric Evans concurs, 'until at least 1850, large-scale factory production was very much the exception rather than the rule'. Eric Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783–c.1870* (London: Routledge, 2019), 145.

[45] *Engels to Correspondence Committee, 16 September 1846. MECW 38*, 66–7.

making shoes—perhaps Fix was merely invoking the proverb 'let the cobbler stick to his last'—but the ambition that Fix rightly or wrongly attributes to Marx is very much to the point.

Stadelmann suggests that 'there was in Germany before 1860 still no class-conscious industrial proletariat. The worker was not an independently acting factor in the March revolution.'[46] How fair is this view of the German industrial proletariat?

British statistician Michael Mulhall's 1892 *Dictionary of Statistics* provides the best retrospective snapshot of how industrialised the German states actually were in 1850, relative to the global benchmark, Britain.

Total cotton consumption in Britain in the 1840s was estimated at 2.3 million tons, compared to 610,000 tons in France and 410,000 tons in Germany. Coal production in Britain in 1850 was estimated at 49 million tons as opposed to 4.1 million tons in France and 6.6 million tons in Germany.[47] Iron consumption in 1850 was respectively 1.97 million tons, 600,000 tons and 420,000 tons. Steam power in 1850 was estimated at 1.29 million horsepower (hp) in Britain, 370,000 hp. in France and 260,000 hp. in Germany.[48] The respective populations of the three countries in 1851 (1852, for Germany) were 27.5 million in the United Kingdom (including Ireland), 35.8 million in France and 36.0 million in Germany.[49] In Schieder's summation, 'the industrialisation of Germany had in 1848 only just begun'. Until the middle of the century, there were in the German states neither mechanical propulsion in use on a meaningful scale nor 'large-scale factories' established with the further defining characteristic of employing wage labour.[50]

Prussia, accounting for around half of the overall German states' mid-nineteenth-century population, was much the most industrially advanced of those states. If we accept then chief Prussian statistician Dieterici's view

[46] Stadelmann, *Das Jahr 1848 und die deutsche Geschichte*, 28.

[47] Taylor adds that 'in 1846 London alone consumed more coal than Prussia raised'. Taylor, *German History*, 72.

[48] Paul Louis offers more ambitious estimates on French coal production, less ambitious ones on steam power. Paul Louis, *Histoire de la classe ouvrière en France de la revolution à nos jours* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1927), 55–6.

[49] Michael Mulhall, *The Dictionary of Statistics* (London: George Routledge, 1892), 121–2, 157, 333, 444–6, 545.

[50] Wolfgang Schieder, "Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution" in Dieter Langewiesche, ed., *Die Deutsche Revolution von 1848/49* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 328.

that 'small towns with 1000, 2000, and 3000 inhabitants had more the character of the open country than of real towns',[51] the 'true' proportion of the Prussian population that was rural in 1849 was 78%. It's obviously not a direct read-across to view this 78% as being solely dependent on the land for employment—Dieterici suggests, for example, that in the more agrarian southern districts of the Prussian province and further south in Rhein-Hessen and the Palatinate, 50–70% of the population were farmers, farm tenants, farm servants, farm labourers and their dependants[52]—but by comparison, the 1851 England & Wales Census had 24.3% of the population being 'primarily agricultural' and 48.8% 'primarily manufacturing'. Jean Sigmann adds, 'by 1850, the United Kingdom was the first State of the modern world to have an equal distribution between town and country'.[53]

Obermann, drawing on Berlin Statistical Bureau data issued in 1851, put 'factory workers', as a proportion of the total Prussian population, by occupation, at 4.1% in 1846.[54] This amounted to 557,730 individuals in 1846, rising only slightly, to 570,730 in 1849. Dieterici puts the 1846 number of Prussian factory workers at 553,542.[55] German social and economic historian Gerd Hardach, using this time German Customs Union data (again issued in 1851), initially also puts the number of Prussian factory workers at 4.1% in 1846 (albeit a higher 657,000 numerical figure) but then points out that the revised Prussian statistical calculation of 1861 sharply downgraded the 1846 proportion to 1.9% (310,000 individuals).[56] Stadelmann similarly starts by quoting an 1846 estimate for factory workers in Prussia of 550,000 but then argues that this is 'greatly exaggerated' given that this would equate to 3.3% of the then total population of 16 m, when the proportion in Berlin, 'the biggest industrial town in the state', is only 2.5%.[57] In broader brush fashion, McLellan in his introduction to the

[51] Obermann, *Zur Klassenstruktur und zur Sozialen Lage der Bevölkerung in Preussen*, 81–2.

[52] Cited in Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 14.

[53] Sigmann, *Eighteen-fortyeight*, 23.

[54] Obermann, *Zur Klassenstruktur und zur Sozialen Lage der Bevölkerung in Preussen*, 85.

[55] Carl Dieterici, ed., *Mittheilungen des statistischen Bureau's in Berlin* I, no. 5 (Berlin: Mittler, 1849), 75.

[56] Gerd Hardach, "Klassen und Schichten in Deutschland 1848–1970" in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 3, H4, 509–10.

[57] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 9, 199.

Manifesto says, 'in Germany at that time, the proletariat in fact comprised less than 5 per cent of the population'.[58]

Friedrich von Reden quotes factory workers in Cologne of 4102 in 1846,[59] out of a total population that year of 85,500,[60] although this 4.8% proportion would have been negatively impacted by the 1846–1848 financial crisis. As the *Deutsche Zeitung* observed on 17 June 1848, 'one factory after another was obliged to substantially cut back their output, and not just to reduce the number of workers they employ but also to depress the wages of those remaining'. The major Cologne banking house A. [Abraham] Schaafhausen, which had financed 170 local concerns in previous years, including Krupp, Hoesch and the Eschweiler mining consortium, was a notable 1848 casualty. Schaafhausen failed, pointedly (as an indicator of Cologne's then business emphasis), through getting overextended in property speculation and had to be rescued by the Prussian government.

In a nutshell, the German states in the late 1840s were not heavily industrialised—that was very much to come in the second half of the century—nor did they remotely have the 'universal proletariat', 'to realise the philosophical doctrine of communism'. Many of the 50 trades' groups into which the CWA in Cologne was initially organised in April 1848—stonemasons, nail-forgers, coopers, tanners, saddlers, wheelwrights, comb-makers, ribbon-weavers and so on—may well have been engaged in skilled work, but not in a highly industrialised context.[61] An anti-industrial, protectionist mood featured in many workers' mentalities, a desire to cope with the modern, nascent industrialising age in a pre-industrial way. Their political behaviour covered an extremely broad spectrum, both looking forwards to revolutionary systemic change and backwards to an anti-industrial, even Luddite social conservatism.[62] For Thomas Nipperdey, 'Industry's share in the overall economy was still very small. Germany was still an agricultural country, to judge from the population distribution and the number of those in employment.'[63] Stadelmann argues, 'in no way can

[58] McLellan, *Manifesto Introduction*, xvii.

[59] Friedrich Wilhelm von Reden, *Erwerbs- und Verkehrsstatistik des Königstaats Preussen in vergleichender Darstellung*, v2 (Darmstadt: Jonghaus, 1853), 1037.

[60] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 239.

[61] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 29–30.

[62] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution,* 326.

[63] Thomas Nipperdey, *Germany from Napoleon to Bismarck, 1800–1866* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996), 171.

one speak of an industrial proletariat in the modern sense on German soil … the real development of large-scale industrial enterprise only begins in the '60s'.[64] According to Fernbach, 'the proletariat, in the Marxian sense, was still a small minority of the population'.[65] For Schieder, 'the "modern proletariat", whose emergence Karl Marx described on the eve of the revolution in the Communist Manifesto, did not yet exist in Germany in 1848 … the industrial workers of 1848 in Germany were above all artisans and especially journeymen'.[66] Blumenberg, finally, after a sideswipe at 'the corroborative statistics' (he believed more in personal testimony), is the most sweeping: 'in Germany there was neither the classic bourgeoisie nor the proletariat which … are presumed to exist in the *Communist Manifesto*. It was therefore completely impossible that a bourgeois revolution in Germany should be followed immediately by a proletarian revolution.'[67]

This overwhelming body of evidence on the absence of a meaningful German states' proletariat on the eve of the *Manifesto*'s publication certainly puts pressure on Marx's contention in the final section of the *Manifesto* that 'the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution'.[68] Even Engels, reflecting on this in 1884, was perplexed: 'The proletariat, undeveloped to an equal degree, having grown up in complete intellectual enslavement, being unorganised and still not even capable of independent organisation, possessed only a vague feeling of the profound conflict of interests between it and the bourgeoisie'.[69]

Marx's specific targeting in the *Manifesto* of a tiny German proletariat—and one shouldn't forget that Engels told Marx, in a letter dated mid-November–December 1846, thus a year or so from the composition of the *Manifesto*, 'we can only appeal to a communist proletariat which has yet to take shape in Germany'[70]—seems a major tactical misstep. Should he, or, to be fairer to him, could he have known better? It's not as if, after all, that Marx and Engels in general shunned 'corroborative statistics'. Hunt, writing of Engels's 1845 *Condition of the Working Class in England*,

[64] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 9, 10.
[65] David Fernbach, *The Revolutions of 1848*, 26.
[66] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution*, 326, 328.
[67] Blumenberg, *Karl Marx: An Illustrated History*, 78.
[68] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.
[69] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung. MECW 26*, 122.
[70] *Engels to Marx, mid-November–December 1846. MECW 38*, 92.

says, 'Alongside his own first-hand narratives. … Engels especially enjoyed deploying the reams of official documentation coming out Whitehall. And when there were no Blue Books [official British reports] available, "I always preferred to present proof from Liberal sources in order to defeat the liberal bourgeoisie". … It was a polemical trick which Marx would perfect in *Das Kapital*. Thus the *Condition* is jam-packed with factory commission reports, court records, articles from the *Manchester Guardian* and *Liverpool Mercury*, and rosy accounts of merry, industrialising England from liberal protagonists.'[71]

In his 1867 *Preface to the First German Edition* of *Das Kapital*, Marx complains that 'the social statistics of Germany and the rest of Continental Western Europe are, in comparison with those of England, wretchedly compiled'.[72] Statistics on England in the mid-nineteenth century were extraordinarily detailed, but 'wretchedly compiled' seems both excessively harsh on the German states, and, more importantly, simply not true in practice, both before the publication of the *Manifesto*, and more particularly in the period from 1850 until 1867, when major German statisticians such as Dieterici[73] and Ernst Engel[74] published frequently.

Schaub argues that the use of supportive statistics in the Büchner/Weidig *Hessian Country Messenger* is by no means exceptional in an 1830s' pamphleteering context.[75] In his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844, Marx quotes extensively from the 1843 work, *Die Bewegung der Produktion* (The Movement of Production), by Schulz, a work described by Schulz in its subtitle as 'a historical-statistical discussion'. Away from Dieterici's orbit, the 'Association for German Statistics' was founded in 1846 by Reden, who praised Engels's *Condition of the Working-Class in*

[71] Hunt, *The Frock-Coated Communist*, 104.

[72] *Capital. MECW 35*, 9.

[73] The statistics 'industry' in Germany only really took off in mid-century—Dieterici's first *Mittheilungen des statistichen Bureau's in Berlin* is dated 1849, the same Bureau's *Tabellen und amtliche Nachrichten über den Preussischen Staat für das Jahr 1849* appeared from 1851. Of the sixth *Tabellen und amtliche Nachrichten*, devoted to 'manufacturing plants and factory enterprises' in Prussia, Dieterici comments that 'the material is so rich that it wasn't possible for me to publish it in one volume'. The first volume, for 1849, runs to no less than 995 pages, but is dated 1851, the fourth, 1853.

[74] Engel was head of the Prussian Statistical Bureau from 1860 to 1882 and published his very detailed *Zeitschrift des Königlich Preussischen Statistischen Bureaus* series from 1861.

[75] Gerhard Schaub. "Statistik und Agitation. Eine neue Quelle zu Büchners *Hessischem Landboten*" in *Geist und Zeichen, Festschrift für Arthur Henkel*, ed. Herbert Anton, Bernhard Gajek, Peter Pfaff (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1976), 351–75.

England (it deserved 'particular attention for both its subject and its thoroughness and accuracy').[76] The association's journal, which ran to thousands of pages, was first published in 1847 in Berlin. The first edition started by citing Prussian polymath Alexander von Humboldt, 'in political budgeting as much as in research into natural phenomenon, the numbers are always the decisive factor' before continuing (on page 23), 'lack of livelihoods, pauperism and mass depravity are as is well known sorry products of our peaceful age'.

Specifically in respect of the *Manifesto*, Marx could call on a German statistical outrider, Gustav von Gülich. Marx references Gülich and his *Historical Description of Commerce, Industry [and Agriculture] &c.*, in an article on protectionism (one of Gülich's penchants) published in September 1847, 'Herr v. Gülich has written a very scholarly history of industry and trade'.[77] His *Historical Description* ran to five volumes, and Marx filled three notebooks on it (reproduced across nearly 1000 pages of Volume IV/6 of MEGA²).

Gülich has his limitations. He races through history, with references to 'the state of trade [in the German states] in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries'. His coverage of commerce and industrial life largely stops in 1842, and he belonged on the fringe of petty bourgeois socialists such as Sismondi (the wonderfully forenamed Jean Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi), criticised by Marx in Section III of the *Manifesto*.[78] This school, though, as Marx acknowledged, did highlight such issues as 'the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; over-production and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth.'[79]

Most tellingly, in notes spanning nearly 140 pages (from Gülich's Volume 4), Marx jotted down Gülich's highly detailed observations on an

[76] Cited in Hunt, *The Frock-Coated Communist*, 116.

[77] *The Protectionists, the Free Traders and the Working Class. MECW 6*, 279. Marx also credits Gülich in the 1873 Second German Edition of *Capital*: 'Gustav von Gülich in his *Historical Description of Commerce, Industry [and Agriculture] &c.*, especially in the first two volumes published in 1830, has examined at length the historical circumstances that prevented, in Germany, the development of the capitalist mode of production, and consequently the development, in that country, of modern bourgeois society'. *MECW 35*, 13.

[78] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 509–10.

[79] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 509.

enormous array of German industries—textiles, especially, but also leather, paper, carpets, straw hats, oil, flour, starch, soap, wood, tobacco, sugar, beer brewing, brandy, glass, porcelain, mining and ironworks. What emerges from this overview is certainly the early steps in the industrialisation of the German states—the advent of railways from 1835, 184 blast furnaces in Prussia in 1836, chemical factories in Saxony, steam power—but also a picture of states far behind England in industrial sophistication. England exported far more to the German states than the reverse, English technicians and foremen worked in the German states, England had 'more attractive economic conditions, and more capital', while the German states had 'in the most recent period, in general, a greater increase in manual labourers in the countryside than in the town'.[80]

None of this is news to any historian of the nineteenth century. But Marx's notebooks on Gülich, compiled between September 1846 and December 1847—thus just months before the writing of the *Manifesto*—are surely evidence that he was empirically aware that Engels's contention in June 1847 that 'we have gradually arrived at the position where almost *all* branches of labour are run on a factory basis', could not be accurate with respect to the German states at that time. With no comprehensive industrialisation, there could be no 'universal proletariat' to reinforce a German states' revolution in 1848.

It is not as if Marx could not produce statistically backed analysis when he wanted to, during the revolution—he wrote an extraordinarily detailed account on 16 and 21 February 1849 of the mismanagement of the Prussian economy throughout the 1840s[81]—but there is no such statistical rigour in the *Manifesto*.

The *Rotten House* pamphlet, in contrast, devotes fully two-thirds of its contents to a detailed numerical analysis (it notes that the Working Men's Association 'have taken considerable pains to compile the following document') of the number in 1835 of registered electors, and the number of males above 21, in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Moreover, it then drills down deeply into its own data, to conclude that while there may be 839,519 registered electors (just 14% of the 6,023,752 males over 21), 'by an Analysis of the Constituency of the United Kingdom, we find that 331 Members being a majority of the House of Commons [there being

[80] *MEGA*², *IV/6*, passim.

[81] Marx could draw on a Prussian parliamentary report: *Prussian Financial Administration under Bodelschwingh and Co. MECW 8*, 379–89, 418–20.

658 MPs] are returned by 151,492 Registered Electors, giving an average of about 457 to each'. Thus, 'owing to the unequal state of the representation', only about one-fifth of registered electors, or just 2.5% of males (let alone females) over 21, 'have the power of returning the majority of the House of Commons'.[82] All this, three years after the Great Reform Act of 1832.

If, as Engels would spell out in March–April 1847 in *The Constitutional Question*, industrialisation of scale was not obviously in evidence in the German states—'in Germany the countryside dominates the towns, agriculture dominates trade and industry'—the proletariat also lacked an empowering unity, to allow it to fulfil its revolutionary role. The proletariat is not singled out as such in this state-of-the-nation essay, but is identifiable via its defining tag, 'the propertyless', attached to 'the working classes': [its] 'division into farm labourers, day labourers, handicraft journeymen, factory workers and lumpen proletariat, together with their dispersal over a great, thinly populated expanse of country with few and weak central points, already renders it impossible for them to realise that their interests are common, to reach understanding, to constitute themselves into *one* class. This division and dispersal makes nothing else possible for them.'[83]

This contemporary view of the proletariat is by no means confined to Engels. In *The Prussian Diet & the Prussian Proletariat* , an article in the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, Wilhelm Wolff, the likely author,[84] writes, 'yet at present we lack cohesion, we act as individuals often at variance one with another, we tear one another to pieces, we know not the strength of unity'.[85] The circular of the League's Central Authority, written at a similar time (14 September 1847), but this time signed by Schapper, Moll and Bauer, also addresses unity, as well as proletarian lethargy: 'Many German proletarians are anxious to liberate themselves, but, if they do not set

[82] Hetherington et al., *Rotten House*, 6, 18, 6–7.

[83] *The Constitutional Question in Germany. MECW 6*, 78, 83–4.

[84] In the view of Schmidt, Förder and Kandel. Mayer sees Engels as an alternative possibility. Thematically, Engels looks more likely, stylistically, Wolff (who certainly wrote the separate *Political and Social Survey* in this League journal). Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels in seiner Frühzeit* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1934), 269; Walter Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff, Kampfgeführte und Freund von Marx und Engels, 1846–1864* (Berlin: SED-Dietz Verlag, 1979), 97–8, 425; Herwig Förder, *Marx und Engels am Vorabend der Revolution* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 193.

[85] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 311.

about the task more energetically than they have done so far, they will indeed not make much progress. We can't wait for things to fall into our lap. Many people are hindered in their activity by their mental sluggishness … the majority of the proletarians, and the most active at that—those in Silesia, Saxony, Rhenish Prussia, Westphalia and Hesse have poor or indeed no leadership, at least no communist one.'[86]

What's more interesting, though, about Marx's faith in the German states' proletariat in the *Manifesto* (and Engels's, prior to it) is that its failure to make an impact in the 1848 revolution was regardless of, not because of, its limited scale and organisation.

It's informative to establish which were the industrial heartlands of the German states, where by extension the German industrial proletariat would be found, and then to see how far these correlate with those German states, and those German citizens, featuring most prominently in the 1848 revolution.

Both Cornu and Schraepler identify the most industrialised provinces of the German states as being the Rhineland, Westphalia, Saxony and Silesia,[87] all belonging to Prussia. Fernbach observes, 'the proletariat, in the Marxian sense, was … concentrated particularly in the cotton mills of the Northern Rhineland'.[88] Of the two cities which became Communist League strongholds (as such) in 1848 after the return of émigré members, Berlin according to Dieterici was 'a significant factory- and trade town'[89] but Cologne, Marx's base, was not.

Cologne was Prussia's third most populous town, with a population in 1849 of 94,789, well behind Berlin (423,902), more narrowly behind Breslau (110,702), in Silesia.[90] Sugar refining,[91] Cologne's largest industry, employed 707 people in 1846 across 13 factories, for an average per factory headcount of 54, but tobacco and cigars manufacturing, nominally a bigger activity, with 796 employees (though 292 were under 14), involved 51 factories, giving average factory employment of 16 (or, if one

[86] *The Central Authority to the League*. *MECW 6*, 603.

[87] Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx et Friedrich Engels, Leur vie et leur oeuvre*, v4 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), 12; Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 10.

[88] Fernbach, *The Revolutions of 1848*, 26.

[89] Carl Dieterici. *Tabellen und amtliche Nachrichten über den Preussischen Staat für das Jahr 1849*, v4 (Berlin: Hayn, 1853), 183.

[90] Dieterici, *Tabellen*, v1, 416.

[91] Hess's father was a Cologne sugar refiner.

crudely discounted the under-14-year-olds), under 10.[92] 'Real estate speculation' was 'by far the most profitable and popular investment in the decades before 1850' in Cologne.[93] In Gerhard Becker's words, 'in Cologne sat the major bankers, the influential trading houses, the managers of provincial taxation, the Rhenish Appeal Court'.[94] Cologne social historian Pierre Ayçoberry puts the sugar refining into context: although its sales turnover grew exponentially, from perhaps three million Thalers in 1836 to eight million Thalers 10 years later, this compares to the 1163 land transactions registered in Cologne in 1845 (up fivefold on 1835), also worth eight million Thalers (the capital tied up in sugar refining obviously being much lower than the sales value it generated). An economic staple of the era, meanwhile, the textile industry, was seeing its employment base contract sharply, in the face of competition from Saxony and England, technical advances and a survival only of the fittest: the number of major textile businesses in Cologne fell from 75 in 1839 to 57 in 1846.[95] Gerhard Becker comments that 'before the Revolution, the bulk of the proletariat was, however, not yet in industrial firms, but in craft-shops, trade, employed as servants'.[96] According to Sperber, steam engines and large workshops represented only small niches in the Rhenish manufacturing economy towards mid-century; in 1849, craft outworkers in the Prussian Rhine Province outnumbered factory workers employed in spinning and weaving mills by a ratio of nearly five-to-one.[97] Aachen was the Rhineland's main industrial centre of the era, with a focus on textiles. Before 1850, Aachen was a far more significant area than the Ruhr, with 13 times the number of textile workers, and 30% more employed in metallurgy.[98]

So what was the heartland of the German states' revolution in late February and March 1848? In the early weeks, very much not the industrialised provinces of Prussia. The German revolution got under way on 27 February 1848 in Mannheim, in Baden, at a rally attended by 2500 people, but then spread north to other states such as Hesse-Darmstadt,

[92] Reden, *Erwerbs- und Verkehrsstatistik des Königstaats Preussen*, 1037.
[93] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 23, 37.
[94] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849,* 13.
[95] Pierre Ayçoberry, *Cologne entre Napoléon et Bismarck; la croissance d'une ville rhénane* (Éditions Aubier-Montaigne: Paris, 1981), 145, 160, 147.
[96] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 13.
[97] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 24–5.
[98] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 22.

Nassau, Kurhesse, and beyond up to Brunswick, Hanover and Oldenburg, and east, to Württemberg, and Bavaria. In the first instance, this was a revolution of Third Germany[99]—in general, the small and medium German states, excluding Prussia and Austria—but there was revolutionary activity in Prussia from early March, with gatherings in Cologne (from 3 March), the first major revolutionary act in the state,[100] Breslau in Silesia, Berlin (from 6 March) and Saxony. According to Stadelmann, 'the government in Berlin had reckoned on more substantial clashes in the capital in the first days of March … it was not until the evening of 13 March[101] that the masses [there] became more strongly agitated'.[102] Through early April, anxious Prussian officials reported in to Interior Minister Alfred von Auerswald, warning in Trier of 'general resentment towards the civil guard … the garrison can't be relied on', and in Düsseldorf, that 'the very functioning of the administration is endangered'. In Aachen, there was 'severely heightened agitation from several incidents between reservists and local inhabitants'. Auerswald promised 'military columns' to combat the 'outrages'.[103] It's fair to say, in general, the German revolutionary vanguard was not Prussian.

Schmidt et al. contend that 'everywhere in Germany, the proletariat in the March days was a strong progressive force inside the anti-feudal opposition',[104] but this conclusion is challenged by the biggest event of the March days, in Berlin on 18 March, when the authorities turned on a large crowd gathered on the Berliner Schlossplatz (palace square). At 2 p.m., King Friedrich Wilhelm IV appeared on his balcony, but when no instruction was given to withdraw the troops assembled in the palace courtyard, the crowd grew restless, prompting the king to order his cavalry to disperse the crowd. Dragoons and two companies of infantry swarmed out of the palace, and after two shots were fired, either deliberately or by accident by a nervous soldier, bloody fighting on the barricades ensued.[105]

[99] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 57–8.

[100] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln*, *1848–1849*, 16.

[101] The same day that Austrian Chancellor Klemens von Metternich was forced to resign.

[102] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848,* 52, 53.

[103] Joseph Hansen, ed., *Rheinische Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte der politischen Bewegung 1830–1850*, v2 (Köln-Bonn: Peter-Hanstein, 1976), 11, 17, 64, 1.

[104] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, 80.

[105] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, 86; Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 64.

The casualty statistics on that Berlin day, which started to appear on bill posters, are telling. Of the 303 killed, only 52, or 17%, were identified as 'workers and proletarians'. The biggest number, 115, were journeymen, a motley collection of joiners, tailors, shoemakers, locksmiths, blacksmiths, silk knitters, bookbinders, carpenters and bricklayers. Servants, small traders, educated classes and non-working women together accounted for more deaths than the proletariat.[106] Stadelmann adds, of the demonstrators in general: 'it wasn't just men in worker's smocks and artisans, but also well-dressed students, journalists, respectable shopkeepers, the vet Urban … in short, "citizens of all classes"'.[107] He also provides an anecdote from Berlin on 18 March 1848: 'the student Arnold von Salis set off with a couple of friends for the Borsig locomotive plant, to get the support of the muscular engineers with their heavy iron-bars and hammers. They wouldn't stir themselves until they'd had their weekly wages paid out, they weren't remotely in some blind revolutionary frenzy.'[108]

It was a similar story at the Aachen riots in mid-April. According to Sperber, 'these disturbances in the Rhineland's leading industrial city involved few industrial workers. … Aachen's industrial labour force remained politically passive, as it would throughout the revolution.' Only 15% of those arrested were factory or textile workers, despite comprising over half the Aachen's labour force. Artisans and day labourers collectively accounted for half the arrests.[109] The Aachen People's Association was able to enrol only between 10 and 150 of Aachen's 48,000 inhabitants.[110] Stadelmann concludes: 'Wherever one looks, and I have taken trouble over numerous individual instances, the social disturbances did not properly speaking occur in the industrial sector and at all events were not of a proletarian character'.[111]

Trotsky's October 1937 introduction to the *Manifesto* concluded: 'the error of Marx and Engels … flowed … from an overestimation of the revolutionary maturity of the proletariat'.[112] Raymond Aron asked more

[106] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, 91; Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 65.

[107] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 57.

[108] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 57.

[109] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 161.

[110] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 197.

[111] Stadelmann, *Das Jahr 1848 und die deutsche Geschichte*, 28.

[112] Leon Trotsky, "Ninety Years of the Manifesto", in *The New International* IV, no. 2 (February 1938), 63.

pithily: 'why must the proletariat be revolutionary? … there is no conclusive evidence that the proletariat as such is spontaneously revolutionary'.[113] In Taylor's summation, factory workers were already not in the mould of rioters, being no longer machine-breaking Luddites, and with even less inclination to man the barricades.[114] Alvin Gouldner sums up, of the German states: 'it was artisans, not the proletariat, who exhibited the greatest militancy during the 1848 revolutions and, indeed, before then'.[115]

So much, by these accounts, for the *Manifesto*'s claim that 'of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class'.[116]

If Marx and Engels placed too much faith in German proletarians in the 1848 revolution, they placed too little in the peasants of the German states. This is surprising given that, within their immediate coterie, Wilhelm Wolff, characteristically, had been an early advocate—well before the onset of revolution in 1848—of involving the peasantry. His articles for the *DBZ*, drawing on his experiences in his native Silesia, dealt with the 'peasant question' above all,[117] notably his article on 1 August 1847, *Der Bauernstand und die politische Bewegung* (The Peasantry and the Political Movement), 'it's in the open country that we must organise agitation, if we want swiftly and successfully to chuck out the current governing order of our fine, German rulers … only by bringing together town and country'.[118] There are also commentators closer to our own era willing to see the peasants as a significant political force in 1848. Rainer Koch argues that 'a lasting union of Democrat and Peasant, of the intellectual, bourgeois-republican elite and of the great mass of the people would have, as an overwhelming phalanx of the revolution, set the seal on the fate of the ancien régime'.[119] A fanciful notion, perhaps, but there were more solid grounds for 'why the peasantry must be revolutionary', to invert Aron, than for an inevitable tactical alliance between the bourgeoisie and proletarian communists. For Schieder too, German peasants were not

[113] Raymond Aron, *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957), 70–1.

[114] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 19.

[115] Alvin Gouldner, "Artisans and Intellectuals in the German Revolution of 1848" in *Theory and Society* 12, no. 4 (July 1983), 522.

[116] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 494.

[117] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 171.

[118] *Der Bauernstand und did politische Bewegung. DBZ*, 1 August 1847.

[119] Koch, *Die Agrarrevolution in Deutschland 1848*, 369.

merely random, individual insurrectionists, 'but also in places thoroughly organised, and en masse on the side of the revolution'.[120]

Peasant violence against feudal overlords was very widespread, Sperber remarks, from Kikinda in Croatia-Slavonia, to Slotinicy in Bohemia, to Hechingen in southwestern Germany. Feudal privileges were not the only grievance, with other rural grievances including access rights to the forest and the division of common land. Nor was peasant protest devoid of a revolutionary element—'the peasants constantly justified their actions by reference to the political issues of the day, they marched into the forest behind the … flags of the revolution'.[121]

Many other commentators do in fact regard the countryside as much more fruitful territory for unrest and revolutionary activity than industrialised towns. Cobbett contended, in his *Political Register*, that industrial workers 'talk well, think well, are sprightly and full of intelligence; but they live in crowds, and their hands and skins are soft. … The country people, less intelligent and less talkative, are accustomed to all that hardens man: their hands are hard as sticks, they bear cold like cattle … and are not easily frightened at the approach of danger. … Never, let what will happen, will these people lie down and starve quietly.'[122] Similarly, and unhelpfully to one of Cobbett's primary aims, namely encouraging rural workers to petition (peacefully, and indirectly, through him) the government for parliamentary reform, 'the labourers … were unaccustomed to expressing their protests in the written word … they still perceived the riot, as well as more covert forms of protest, as the most efficacious means of popular political action'.[123] Aron again, 'the fact [is] that proletarians as such are less inclined to violence … the peasants, resentful against the big landowners because they aspire to the possession of the land, should be far more disposed to violence. It is in the countryside that the question of ownership has a real and decisive importance.'[124]

The anger and violent response of German states' peasants took on a ubiquitous character in March 1848. According to Hans-Joachim Behr, 'In March 1848 in the final resort the agrarian communities with nearly all social problems became also in many places the subject of grievances and

[120] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution*, 324.

[121] Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, 124–6.

[122] Cobbett, "To the Readers", *Political Register* 69, no. 8 (February 20 1830), 242.

[123] Ian Dyck, "William Cobbett and the Rural Radical Platform" in *Social History* 18, no. 2 (May 1993), 189–190.

[124] Aron, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, 91–2.

open conflicts. There were only a few parishes in the countryside which were not seized by the outbreaks of violence in some fashion.'[125] It was also a case of the countryside being much harder to police, as Rainer Koch explains (via a colourful quote from Wilhelm Riehl in 1851): 'to a much greater extent than the bourgeois liberals, the manual workers or even the workers' movement would have been able, the agrarian revolution posed a question of survival for the old authorities: "The available military forces could wade in when the urban population rose up, but where the peasants rise up from their homesteads, it's as if a town is simultaneously on fire in every quarter"'.[126] Taylor concurs: 'The peasants alone made revolution really dangerous'.[127]

The peasants' participation in the 1848 revolution in the German states falls into two periods, with peasants initially active particularly in the South and South-West, and to the fore. According to Jean Sigmann, 'the peasants of the South were to take their destinies into their hands in March 1848',[128] while Rainer Koch records 'in the southern and south western estates and manors, the agrarian revolution preceded the general political movement'.[129] As early as 1 March, a peasant-driven movement got under way in Nassau, and on 4 March, around 30,000 peasants, some armed, poured into Wiesbaden, making it a 'completely peasant-occupied town'. Youths carried placards through the streets, one saying, 'no prince, no count, no nobleman shall exist from now on'.[130] Hobsbawm adds: 'south-west Germany saw a great deal more of peasant insurrection than is commonly remembered'.[131] In a categorisation of 489 instances of protest in the German states in March–April 1848, reported by Siemann, there were 85 actions by peasants and 88 by agrarian underclasses, together more than the 150 'political' actions and considerably ahead of the 94 actions by urban underclasses. Peasants burned down the castle of Niederstetten, in Württemberg, on the night of 5 March.[132] According to Stadelmann,

[125] Hans-Joachim Behr, "Revolution auf dem Lande", in *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 150, (2000), 45.

[126] Koch, *Die Agrarrevolution in Deutschland 1848*, 368; Wilhelm Riehl, *Die Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Verlag der Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1897), 89.

[127] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 26.

[128] Sigmann, *Eighteen-fortyeight*, 127.

[129] Koch, *Die Agrarrevolution in Deutschland 1848*, 369.

[130] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 70.

[131] Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Capital* (London: Abacus, 2012), 28.

[132] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 109.

'after 4 March, the peasant revolution spread across the country … no-one paid taxes any more, a general freedom to hunt was proclaimed, along with unrestricted access to woodlands. … In Weinsberg [in north Baden-Württemberg, on 12–13 March], when the intimidated bailiff offered the key to the wine-cellar, he received the response: "we haven't come to eat and drink, we want nothing … other than to burn the documents which bring us to beggary".'[133]

While peasants were prominent participants in the revolution in the spring of 1848, it was once believed that they then fell away as a revolutionary grouping, playing no meaningful role in the ongoing phase of the revolution.[134] This, though, overlooks a second wave of activity in September 1848 as frustration at the slow pace of feudal liberalisation prompted fresh peasant protests in Schleswig, Saxony, Bavaria, the Badenese Oberland, the Odenwald (Wertheim, 13 September) and Mecklenburg (surprisingly in its case, because while being more than usually subject to Grand-Ducal oppression, it was also in Germany's far North).[135]

Marx and Engels undoubtedly grasped the grievances which drove the peasants in the German states to revolt in 1848. A first piece in the *NRZ* on 25 June 1848 reviews a memorandum on how 'the abolition of feudalism in the countryside' will be regulated, expressing astonishment that 'there has not been a peasant war long ago in the old-Prussian provinces. What a mess of services, fees and dues, what a jumble of medieval names …!'[136] In the second, appearing on 30 July, Marx is indignant at Agriculture Minister Gierke's comments on the bill notionally proposing the abolition of feudal obligations[137]: 'does Herr Gierke consider that the right to pluck the peasants' *geese* is out of date, but the right to pluck the *peasants themselves* is not?' He closes with a witty aphorism, 'what in brief is the significance of this lengthy law? It is the most striking proof that the

[133] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 79.

[134] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution*, 324; Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 181.

[135] Siemann amends the earlier view, drawing on new research. *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 157; see also his "The Revolutions of 1848–49 and the Persistence of the Old Regime in Germany (1848–50)" in John Breuilly, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society, 1780–1918* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 109.

[136] *Patow's Redemption Memorandum. MECW 7*, 117.

[137] Marx argues that the bill in practice by no means proposed the abolition of feudal dues, without compensation.

German revolution of 1848 is merely a parody of the French revolution of 1789. On 4 August 1789, three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, the French people, in a single day, got the better of the feudal obligations. On 11 July 1848, four months after the March barricades, the feudal obligations got the better of the German people.'[138]

Both Marx and Engels acknowledged that by the summer of 1848, any putative alliance between bourgeoisie and peasantry had failed. Marx on 29 July writes that 'the German bourgeoisie of 1848 unhesitatingly betrays the peasants, who are its *natural allies*, flesh of its own flesh, and without whom it cannot stand up to the aristocracy'.[139] But Engels, at a much more significant time, straight after the uprising in Frankfurt in September 1848, argued that where their urban counterparts had been repelled, 'angry peasants are not likely to put their weapons down … the peasant war begun this spring will not come to an end until its goal, the liberation of the peasants from feudalism, has been achieved'.[140]

While these remarks point to an informed empathy with peasants over their primary grievances, doubts remain as to whether Marx and Engels ever perceived, or were willing to engage with, peasants as genuine political allies. We have already heard of Engels's theoretical contempt in 1847 for peasants ('helpless class' and so on). After the warrant for his arrest over his appearance at the Worringen rally was issued on 3 October 1848, Engels's time on the run initially took the form of an agreeable walking holiday through France into Switzerland. While much of the account of his overall trip (*From Paris to Berne*) involves him sampling local wine and women, there is some substantive political commentary. Just days after his encomium to peasants in Frankfurt, he now writes that 'the peasant in France, as in Germany, is a barbarian in the midst of civilisation … everywhere this same obtuse narrow-mindedness, this same total ignorance of all urban, industrial and commercial conditions, this same total blindness in politics, this same wildly uninformed surmising about everything beyond the village, this same application of the standards of peasant life to the mightiest factors of history'.[141]

This is a de haut en bas return to the *Manifesto*'s attack on the narrow horizons of rural life—Draper comments on 'the *Manifesto*'s general insensitivity to the peasant question'[142]—which also makes the differently

[138] *The Bill Proposing the Abolition of Feudal Obligations. MECW 7*, 293, 294–5.
[139] *The Bill Proposing the Abolition of Feudal Obligations. MECW 7*, 295.
[140] *The Uprising in Frankfurt. MECW 7*, 444.
[141] *Seine and Loire. MECW 7*, 519, 523.
[142] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 273–4.

tailored 17 *Demands* of late March 1848 ('it is to the interest of the German proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants to support these demands with all possible energy')[143] look like temporary tokenism. As Hobsbawm puts it, 'we may note in passing that during 1848–1849, Marx and Engels, like most of the left, underestimated the revolutionary or even the radical potential of the countryside in which they took little interest'.[144] Taylor argues that Marx dismissed peasants 'as a reactionary force without revolutionary significance. … Nevertheless the revolutions were serious only when the peasants were drawn into them.'[145]

The wider Marx faction did belatedly pay more attention to peasants as a political force. At the first Rhenish District Congress of Democratic Associations, which took place in Cologne on 13–14 August 1848,[146] a resolution was passed on the necessity of conducting work among the factory proletariat and also the peasants. As noted earlier, Schapper, for the CWA, urged an approach not based solely on political education, 'Let us speak to the peasants about material interests! Ideas are not attractive to someone who has no bread to eat or who is bent over by debt!'[147]

On 27 August 1848, the CWA, now with Moll as president, followed up this new targeting in its house journal:

> Peasants and workers are the mainstays of the state, and yet among the most oppressed of all. The capitalists are forever finding means and ways of flipping the burdens, which ought to be falling on themselves, onto the shoulders of the people … in the peasant and working-classes lies the revolutionary force of Germany … at the present time, the only remedy. When the peasants and the workers unite, when they stick closely together, then they will soon be freed of the feudal burdens, of the profiteering and the pressures of capital.[148]

By November 1848—although in the dying days of that year's German states' revolution—Marx had realised, in his 'No More Taxes!!!' campaign, that German peasants in the countryside were both responsive and

[143] *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany. MECW 7*, 4.

[144] Eric Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World* (London: Abacus, 2014), 64.

[145] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 25.

[146] *Footnote 347. MECW 7*, 650.

[147] Cited in Dieter Dowe, *Aktion und Organisation: Arbeiterbewegung, sozialistische Bewegung und kommunistische Bewegung in der preußischen Rheinprovinz, 1820–1852* (Hannover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen), 183.

[148] *ZAV*, 27 August 1848.

practically (in contrast to garrisoned towns) more difficult to police. Marx writes to Lassalle on 13 November 1848, telling him to resolve at his meeting of the People's Club in Düsseldorf a 'general refusal to pay taxes—to be advocated especially in rural areas'.[149] Marx later (18 November) says the countryside has 'the best opportunity to serve the revolution'.[150] The tax boycott campaign certainly energises the rural peasantry who are also urged to write to their enlisted sons urging them not to betray their (tax-boycotting) parliament.[151] The *Deutsche Zeitung* of 20 November 1848 writes that 'the peasants are dreaming of nothing more and nothing less than complete freedom from taxes'.[152]

Within Marx's circle, much the most concerted, and certainly the highest profile and highest achieving, intervention on behalf of peasants came through two series of articles, in the *NRZ*, written by Wilhelm Wolff. The first series, of six articles—*Wozu das Volk Steuern Zahlt* (Why the People Pay Taxes)—running from mid-December 1848 until mid-January 1849, dealt successively with the respective taxation of the 'Junker-clique',[153] and of the Prussian peasantry, the abolition of feudal obligations, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and finally suffrage and parliamentary manoeuvrings affecting peasants. Wolff's *Die Schlesische Milliarde* (The Silesian Milliard)[154] is altogether more heavyweight, a sustained attack on regressive taxes in a series of nine lead *NRZ* articles between 22 March and 25 April 1849. While also criticising the Grundsteuer (Land Tax) and Schutzgeld (Federal Caution Money), Wolff rails most forcefully against the Klassensteuer (Class Tax), described by historian Huber as 'something

[149] *Marx to Lassalle, 13 November 1848. MECW 38*, 180.

[150] *Tax Refusal and the Countryside. MECW 8*, 40.

[151] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 325–6, 336; Joachim Strey and Gerhard Winkler, *Marx und Engels 1848/49* (Berlin: SED-Dietz Verlag, 1972), 138.

[152] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 158.

[153] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 196.

[154] The 'Silesian Milliard' was Wolff's estimate of how much the 'robber knights' had underpaid in tax in the preceding 20 years, a figure he put at 300 million Thalers, being an equivalent echo of the 1000 million francs—or milliard—extracted from 'the French peasant'. Wilhelm Wolff, *Die Schlesische Milliarde* (Hottingen-Zürich: Verlag der Volksbuchhandlung, 1886), 30. Engels provides a separate commentary on the milliard background and calculation. *On the History of the Prussian Peasants. MECW 26*, 348–351.

between a poll tax and an income tax'[155] and by Prussian statistician Dieterici as 'a personal tax on everybody'.[156]

Wolff's skill, in the *Silesian Milliard*—'the highpoint in Wolff's overall political and journalistic output. It is his most comprehensive and best Marxist work'[157]—but also in general, was his ability to break down complex subjects to render them intelligible, and to introduce journalistic hooks that would resonate with his peasant audience. Here, he disentangles the Class Tax:

> Let's pluck someone out from the masses. He owns eight Morgen[158] of land of middling quality, pays a host of tithes annually to his 'gracious' lord, must perform a large amount of statute labour for him every year, and still has to pay Class Tax of seven Silver Groschen and six Pfennigs monthly, or three Thalers annually. Contrasted with him, we have a 'gracious' lord with the most extensive estates, with forests and meadows, iron-works, zinc ore mines, coal mines etc.—as an example, the arch-wailer, Russophile, feaster on democrats and Deputy to the Second Chamber, Count Renard. This man has an annual income of 240,000 Thalers. He sits on the highest rung of the Class Tax, paying no more than 12 Thalers monthly, or 144 annually. Compared with the rustic tenant with the eight Morgen, he should have been paying at least 7,000 Thalers in Class Tax annually.[159]

Engels, in his 1876 tribute to Wolff,[160] claims of *The Silesian Milliard*, 'few of the many inflammatory articles in the *NRZ* had such an effect as these … orders for the newspaper from Silesia and the other Eastern

[155] Ernst Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789*, v1 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1957), 213.

[156] Dieterici, *Mittheilungen des Statistischen Bureaus in Berlin* I, 7, 1849, 104.

[157] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 207.

[158] About five hectares or ca. 12 acres.

[159] The argument that the Count should be paying, proportionate to his income, 7000 Thalers annually in Class Tax makes arithmetic sense if the 'rustic tenant' is earning ca. 100 Thalers annually. Wolff, *Die Schlesische Milliarde*, 32.

[160] Wilhelm Wolff was a rarity in the Marx/Engels circle, remaining a respected loyalist from first encounter, in April 1846, to his death in 1864. He attracts corresponding testimonials from both Marx and Engels. The former dedicates *Capital* to 'my unforgettable friend, intrepid, faithful, noble protagonist of the proletariat', the latter, in his 1876 tribute to Wolff (which covers the 1840s' revolutionary period in detail), describes Wolff's 'passionate hatred of all oppression of the masses … unshakeable strength of character, absolute unquestionable reliability'. *Capital. MECW 35*, 5; *Wilhelm Wolff. MECW 24*, 131.

Provinces increased at a furious rate, individual issues were requested'.[161] Prussian Interior Minister von Manteuffel regarded the *NRZ*'s April 1849 articles, notably *The Silesian Milliard* (and Marx's *Wage Labour and Capital*) as sufficiently inciting that he sent them to the Justice Ministry, with a view to instigating a legal prosecution.[162]

The fourth article in the first series, on the provisional law abolishing feudal obligations in Silesia, was reprinted as a pamphlet by leading members of the Rustic Association and widely circulated through Silesian villages. The Rustic Alliance further distributed free of charge 10,000 copies of the articles on the *Silesian Milliard* (a significant effort, bearing in mind that barring its final day sale of 20,000 copies, the highest circulation figure for the *NRZ* was 6000). The *NRZ* editorial team responded on 15 April 1849 by saying, 'we are delighted that the named articles are being further distributed'.

Schmidt claims that 'the agrarian question was precisely in these months one of the neuralgic points, which the revolutionary party had to capitalise on … the peasantry was discontented in the extreme and found itself in a mood of revolutionary agitation. … Wolff's articles show the efforts of the *NRZ* to draw the peasantry into the revolutionary fight.'[163] Such comments, and more particularly the claim of the German *Collected Works* that these (series of) articles were 'part of the systematic propaganda for the winning-over of the peasant masses of Germany',[164] are something of an overstatement, given that they were largely the output of one man,[165] but *The Silesian Milliard* and, in a more diffused way, the No More Taxes!!! campaigns show that with the right grievance(s), the right journalistic stimulus and the right organisation on the ground (Silesia's Rustic Alliance, with its 200,000 registered members), the Marx faction could appeal successfully to the peasantry.

There is no counterfactual purpose here in suggesting that the *Manifesto*'s final sentence should have been 'Peasants of all countries, unite!', but this was a social group that was empirically at times more revolutionary and active than Marx's north German industrial proletarians.

[161] *Wilhelm Wolff*. *MECW 24*, 146.

[162] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 207.

[163] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff,* 199, 203. Strey and Winkler make similar claims: 'it's clear that the *NRZ* in this current phase of preparation for the social-republican revolution sought to establish the alliance with all the peasants'. Strey and Winkler, *Marx und Engels 1848/49*, 270.

[164] *MEW 19*, 552.

[165] Marx had a hand in working up with Wolff a 12 April 1849 piece on Land Tax.

Our comparator pamphleteers dealt with, if not peasants directly, certainly the rural working class. Büchner and Weidig target peasants (though without addressing them directly) in the opening sentences of their *Hessian Country Messenger*: 'Behind the plough go the peasants, but behind the peasants go the gentry, driving them on together with the oxen, stealing the grain and leaving them the stubble'.[166] Schulz's *Question and Answer Booklet* opens '"how is it in the world then?" and "how isn't it" and "how ought it to be"—such questions and the answers to them are to be found in this booklet, and the citizen and peasant shall see for themselves whether everything in it, is true and just'.[167] Cobbett in his time addressed both rural and urban readers, but his pamphlet, *To the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland*, explains tax, for instance, in terms of its payment in bushels of wheat. *Rural Rides* was 'Cobbett's quintessential text on rural and agrarian England'.[168] Although Chartism is most closely associated with London and provincial urban centres, the analysis of *The Rotten House of Commons*, addressed 'to the Working Classes of the United Kingdom', measures working-class under-representation in parliament nationally. In the economic analysis in Shelley's *An Address to the People on the Death of Princess Charlotte*, 'the labourer [is] he that tills the ground and manufactures cloth'.[169]

A recurring theme of this book has been the geographical emphasis placed by the *Manifesto* on the German states. As Hobsbawm asserts of the *Manifesto*: 'although its horizon was firmly international … its initial impact was exclusively German'.[170]

This emphasis would seem entirely supported by Engels's anticipatory confidence: 'Germany was, in the beginning of 1848, on the eve of a revolution, and this revolution was sure to come, even had the French revolution of February not hastened it'.[171] This, though, is after-the-event confidence since this observation of Engels's appears on 28 October 1851, in his retrospective series, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, written for the *New York Daily Tribune* (NYDT).

[166] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 167–8.
[167] Ay, *Das Frag- und Antwortbüchlein von Wilhelm Schulz*, 762.
[168] Ian Dyck, Introduction to *Rural Rides* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), viii.
[169] Forman, ed., *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 109.
[170] Hobsbawm, *Manifesto Introduction*, 4.
[171] *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany. MECW 11*, 21.

What the pre-revolution Engels actually thought, as he was writing an article (*Revolution in Paris*) for the *DBZ* over 25–26 February 1848, thus days after the French Revolution had got under way, and on the eve of the Mannheim People's Assembly (the first event of the German states' Revolution), was a good deal more half-hearted:

> Germany, we hope, will follow. Now or never will it raise itself from its degradation. If the Germans have any energy, or any pride or any courage, then in a month's time we shall be able to shout: "Long live the German Republic".[172]

There is a remarkable consistency to the disparaging view of the German states' revolutionary potential evinced by Marx and Engels, towards the close of 1847 and in early 1848, while the *Manifesto* is being conceived.

Engels's lengthy rebuttal in early October 1847 of Heinzen's 'long polemic against the Communists' sets the tone: 'As a result of its industrial lethargy, Germany occupies such a wretched position in Europe that it can never seize an initiative, never be the first to proclaim a great revolution, never establish a republic on its own account without France and England'.[173]

Principles of Communism, Engels's final run-through for the *Manifesto*, locates the German states firmly at the bottom of the revolutionary pecking order:

> The communist revolution will therefore be no merely national one; it will be a revolution taking place simultaneously in all civilised countries, that is, at least in England, America, France and Germany. In each of these countries it will develop more quickly or more slowly according to whether the country has a more developed industry, more wealth, and a more considerable mass of productive forces. It will therefore be slowest and most difficult to carry out in Germany, quickest and easiest in England.[174]

Even in February 1848, just days after Marx has finished writing the *Manifesto* with its upbeat expectations of the German states, there is no let up in doing these states down. In an article published in the *DBZ* on 13 February 1848, Marx argues: 'Germany is retarded in its political

[172] *Revolution in Paris. MECW 6*, 558.
[173] *The Communists and Karl Heinzen. MECW 6*, 293.
[174] *Principles of Communism. MECW 6*, 352.

development, it still has a long political development to undergo. We should be the last to deny this!'[175]

A week later, also in the *DBZ*, Engels is no less forceful: 'Germany lags behind. Every nation is moving forward. … Only the 40 million Germans never bestir themselves.'[176] Engels then suggests the German states could be humiliated into revolution: 'the Germans must first of all be thoroughly compromised in the eyes of all other nations, they must become, more than they are already, the laughing-stock of all Europe, they must be *compelled* to make the revolution'.[177]

The confidence, too, in the *Manifesto* that 'Germany … is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is … but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution' seems to have dribbled away as early as 8 March 1848. After reporting back to Marx on the arrests of Gottschalk, August Willich and Anneke, Engels starts buoyantly enough: 'otherwise the news from Germany is splendid. In Nassau a revolution completed, in Munich students, painters and workers in full revolt, in Kassel revolution on the doorstep, in Berlin unbounded fear and indecision, in the whole of western Germany, freedom of the press and National Guard proclaimed; enough to be going along with.'

But despite this clear evidence of a good many Germans having 'bestirred' themselves (and notwithstanding the often flippant tone of Marx-Engels correspondence), a defeatist Engels then concludes: 'if only Friedrich Wilhelm IV digs his heels in! Then all will be won and in a few months' time,[178] we'll have the German Revolution.'[179] It's taken Engels less than a fortnight to forget any dreams of saying 'Long live the German Republic … in a month's time'.

In fact, it is hard to find any instances in March 1848 when Marx and Engels are unequivocally upbeat about the progress of revolution in the German states. There is just one moment, on the eventful 18 March, when Engels tells Marx: 'In Germany, things are going very well indeed, riots

[175] *The Débat Social on the Democratic Association*. *MECW 6*, 538.

[176] *Three New Constitutions*. *MECW 6*, 543.

[177] *Three New Constitutions*. *MECW 6*, 544.

[178] This chimes with Engels's scepticism in his January 1848 piece, *The Movements of 1847*, that revolution in Prussia was as imminent as Marx maintains in the *Manifesto*, although at this specific point, Engels's timetable otherwise of 1849 (or later) seems to have foreshortened. See Chap. 2.

[179] *Engels to Marx, 8 March 1848*. *MECW 38*, 159–60.

everywhere and the Prussians aren't giving way. So much the better.'[180] It's 20 words.

Otherwise, before, during and after the events of 1848–1849, Marx and Engels are unrelentingly negative about the revolutionary capability of the German states. Engels's 'anticipatory' optimism in 1851 was entirely absent three days earlier, on 25 October 1851, even within the same series of articles for the *NYDT*: 'the working class in Germany is, in its social and political development, as far behind that of England and France as the German bourgeoisie is behind the bourgeoisie of those countries'.[181]

Marx's December 1848 review of the betraying bourgeoisie, *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution*, is also particularly downbeat and scathing:

> When the March deluge—a Biblical deluge in miniature—subsided, it left on the surface of Berlin no prodigies, no revolutionary giants. … The Prussian March revolution was intended to *establish* nominally a constitutional monarchy and to actually establish the rule of the bourgeoisie. Far from being a *European revolution* it was merely a stunted after-effect of a European revolution in a backward country. Instead of being ahead of its century, it was over half a century behind its time. … The Prussian March revolution was not even a *national, German* revolution; from the outset it was a *Provincial Prussian* revolution.[182]

So why did Marx target the German states in the *Manifesto* (and how to explain Engels's periodic ambivalence on the subject, generally being dismissive of their revolutionary potential—notably in the run-up to and at the time of the *Manifesto*'s composition[183]—though not unambiguously)?

Third-party explanations are not very satisfactory. Ryazonov pointed out factually enough, in his 1937 biography of Marx and Engels, that the *Manifesto*'s sponsor, the Communist League 'was composed of a few Belgians, some communist-minded English Chartists, and, most of all, of Germans'.[184] Laski suggests, of League members, 'they were, after all,

[180] *Engels to Marx, 18 March 1848. MECW 38*, 165.
[181] *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany. MECW 11*, 10.
[182] *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution. MECW 8*, 159, 161–2.
[183] As discussed in Chap. 2.
[184] David Ryazanov, *Marx and Engels, An Introduction to their Lives and Work* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 57.

Germans, with the passionate nostalgia of the exile for his native land'[185] (a generalisation hard to apply to Marx during his post-revolutionary exile in England from 1849). Taylor refines Laski's point, more dispassionately if more disputably, suggesting Marx was simply a German, writing for German tailors.[186]

As with the role of the peasantry, there is no intention in this book to be pointlessly counterfactual, thus crafting a different *Manifesto* to the one actually written in January 1848. But there is a very germane question in the context of its geographical targeting—if the German states, questionably, why not, also, England?

Fernbach is implicitly perplexed on this point—'Yet the country to which they primarily directed their attention was not advanced England, but backward Germany'.[187]

It is, of course, easy to dismissively treat the role England—and more particularly, the Chartist movement and its leaders—ultimately didn't play in 1848. Henry Weisser wades in:

> The standard interpretation of 1848 in Britain is that while Continental Europe reached a turning point, and failed to turn, as the famous aphorism states, Britain reached its turning point in 1832 [the year of the Great Reform Act], and thus avoided revolution in the year of revolutions.

He then turns to, or on, the Chartist leaders and their movement:

> In 1846, Engels had been instructed by [Chartist leader] Harney that "a revolution in this country would be a vain and foolish project". … Most Chartists did not see themselves, like French workers at the barricades, as potential revolutionaries.[188]

Nicolaevsky goes so far as to suggest, drawing on a survey of revolutionary movements from 1814–1852, based on materials collected by the Vienna police, that during the very first days after the revolution in Paris, 'Karl Schapper made an attempt to "rouse a revolt in London as well" but did not succeed, as the Chartists did not support him'. If there were any truth

[185] Laski, *Communist Manifesto*, 59.
[186] Taylor, *Manifesto Introduction*, 35.
[187] Fernbach, *The Revolutions of 1848*, 25.
[188] Henry Weisser, "Chartism in 1848: Reflections on a Non-Revolution" in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1981), 12, 14, 22, 25.

in this story, this would have to have been between 22 February and 7 March 1848, the period Schapper spent in London before moving on to Paris. While Nicolaevsky adds 'we have not been able to find any confirmation of this statement',[189] this Schapper anecdote would certainly square with Engels's 1885 portrait of him, in his history of the League: 'Of gigantic stature, resolute and energetic, always ready to risk civil existence and life, he was a model of the professional revolutionary'.[190] Elsewhere in his League history, Engels says of the 1840s that 'The English Chartists, on account of the specific English character of their movement, were disregarded as not revolutionary'.[191] This is quite a climbdown from Engels's verdict on their potential, in the 1845 *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*: 'the People's Charter, whose six points … which are all limited to the reconstitution of the House of Commons, are sufficient to overthrow the whole English Constitution, Queen and Lords included'.[192]

Malcolm Thomis and Peter Holt also take this common line on England—'that revolution did not occur in the period 1789–1848 must be attributed primarily to the absence of any popular desire for revolution'[193]—while Marxist historian George Rudé regarded the question, 'why was there no revolution in England in 1848? … hardly worth discussing'.[194]

But, as with much of the criticism of Chartism in 1848, there is a strong element of hindsight wisdom about such comments, which misrepresents the perception and potential of events in England that year, of which the Chartist Demonstration at Kennington Common[195] on 10 April 1848 was the case in point.

As John Saville concludes, 'To contemporaries in 1848 the affair of Kennington Common was certainly not as trivial as it has mostly been portrayed in the history textbooks'. The quotations with which he sets the

[189] Boris Nicolaevsky, "Toward a History of the Communist League, 1847–1852" in *International Review of Social History* 1, no. 2 (1956), 242.

[190] *On the History of the Communist League. MECW 26*, 313.

[191] *On the History of the Communist League. MECW 26*, 316.

[192] *The Condition of the Working-Class in England. MECW 4*, 518.

[193] Malcolm Thomis and Peter Holt, *Threats of Revolution in Britain 1789–1848* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 128.

[194] Cited in Alan Sked, "Great Britain and the Continental Revolutions of 1848", in *An Anglo-German Dialogue: The Munich Lectures on the History of International Relations*, eds. Adolf Birke, Magnus Brechtken, Alaric Searle (Munich: KG Saur Verlag, 2000), 43.

[195] In south-east London.

scene in the days running up to the demonstration make it plain that the scale and stakes of the demonstration were far bigger than most revolutionary events of 1848 on the Continent.

That the third Chartist petition would be handed over on Monday 10 April had been formally announced in the *Northern Star* of 18 March, but public tension rose considerably in the week prior to the handing-over. A 39-strong Chartist Convention, with representatives drawn from all over the United Kingdom, came together at the John Street Institute in Fitzrovia (founded by Owen in 1840) on 4 April, and on the following day, issued a promotional placard (in bold, with exclamation marks), whose final paragraph reminded the working people of London that 'the eyes of EUROPE *are fixed upon you*'.

On the eve of the demonstration, the chairman at the Chartist meeting in Blackheath proclaimed: 'We are determined to conquer tomorrow; nothing shall put us down. We shall not be terrified by bullets or bayonets. They have no terrors for oppressed starving men.' Members of the Communist League were to be actively involved in the event, Lessner recounting in his memoirs that fellow League member and tailor Georg Eccarius prepared for the demonstration by sharpening his tailor's scissors, to be used for fighting the police when they tried to disperse the demonstrators.[196]

All rather melodramatic no doubt, but the authorities didn't underestimate the threat. Queen Victoria and her family left London for the Isle of Wight on the morning of 8 April. The near 80-year-old Duke of Wellington was summoned to help coordinate defences. All the main buildings in Whitehall were heavily protected. Colonel C.B. Phibbs reported to Prince Albert that 'all the bridges would be occupied by troops and Guns pointed, and that an immediate battle was expected'. [The Earl of] Clarendon told Sir George Grey, 'I feel sure you will not appeal in vain to the "Haves" in England against the "Have Nots"', to which Thomas Allsop responded in a letter to Owen: 'The worst feature is the antagonism of classes shown by the readiness of the middle classes to become special constables'.[197]

It's worth spelling out the extent to which Kennington Common dwarfed the scale of the uprising in Berlin on 18 March 1848, generally regarded as a central event in the 'March Days', if not in the German

[196] Friedrich Lessner, *Vor 1848 und Nachher* (Deutsche Worte, no. 3: Wien, 1898), 110.

[197] John Saville, *1848: The British State and the Chartist Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 120, 102–5, 111, 106, 108, 114.

states' revolution as a whole. Estimates of the number of demonstrators, and of the scale of the forces facing them in London, vary considerably. Dorothy Thompson settles conservatively for 'perhaps 20,000' demonstrators.[198] Saville has ranged against them: 7122 military including cavalry, just over 4000 police and about 85,000 special constables.[199] William Langer (in his essay, *The Pattern of Urban Revolution, 1848*) suggests 3000 police, 'at least 150,000 volunteer special constables—including the future Napoleon III of France—while all major public buildings were sandbagged. Meanwhile three ships packed with troops patrolled the Thames and up to 50,000 more troops were kept in reserve should real trouble break out. Should that have happened, both Wellington and Napier, in charge of the military, were prepared to use cannon against the demonstrators.'[200] The authorities allowed just four cabs (one containing Chartist leaders) to deliver to Westminster the third petition, containing, if not the ca. six million names they claimed, a (still challenged) ca. 1.9 m signatures. Over in Berlin, 3000–4000 insurgents erected nearly 1000 barricades, and faced 14,000 troops and 36 cannon.[201] Prussia's Prince Wilhelm alone behaved disproportionately, remaining in temporary exile in London for far longer than Queen Victoria stayed on the Isle of Wight.

Fernbach talks up the significance to Marx and Engels of English Chartists as a pre-revolutionary (if not necessarily violent) vanguard, of distinctive scope and scale, 'the first historic movement of a mass character … based on the industrial proletariat. Recognising this fact, Marx and Engels gave consistent support to the Chartists.'[202] In 1845, in *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, Engels wrote: 'In Chartism it is the whole working-class which arises against the bourgeoisie'.[203]

Some critics argue that within the Marx-Engels relationship, it was Engels who particularly carried the torch for an English revolution. It is certainly true that it is predominantly Engels who talked England up and the German states down. It is Engels in the *Principles of Communism* saying that the communist revolution 'will therefore be slowest and most difficult to carry out in Germany, quickest and easiest in England'.

[198] Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists* (London: Temple Smith, 1984), 325.
[199] Saville, *1848*, 109.
[200] Cited in Sked, *Great Britain and the Continental Revolutions of 1848*, 44.
[201] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 87, 89.
[202] Fernbach, *The Revolutions of 1848*, 25–6, 21–2.
[203] *The Condition of the Working-Class in England. MECW 4*, 517.

Stathis Kouvelakis is dismissive of this championing of England, 'the young Engels's "Anglo-centric" theory of revolution appears to be the result of a blindness that … afflicted few of his contemporaries, for whom the idea that London (or Manchester) might replace Paris as the capital of the revolution seemed far-fetched, to say the least'.[204] One of the afflicted contemporaries was Hess, who wrote on 10 October 1847 (pre-dating Engels's *Principles* by some three weeks), 'yet the conditions for such a revolution of the proletariat are not universally on hand; not in Germany, where the people are oppressed in multiple ways; not even in France—although here … a revolution could soon break out, for which the proletarians are nicely placed—perhaps England is the only country in Europe, where a revolution of the proletariat is possible, and where it will be a necessity in a not too distant time'.[205]

Very close to the writing of the *Manifesto*, Marx proved himself to be every bit as 'Anglo-centric' as Engels. In London on 29 November 1847, a meeting was held to mark the 17th anniversary of the Polish uprising of 1830. Both Marx and Engels gave speeches. It was to be expected that appropriately pro-Polish sentiments would be voiced, but Marx also said, 'of all countries, England is the one where the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is most highly developed. The victory of the English proletarians over the English bourgeoisie is, therefore, decisive for the victory of all the oppressed over their oppressors. Hence Poland must be liberated not in Poland but in England. So you Chartists must not simply express pious wishes for the liberation of nations.'[206]

The damp squib outcome of the confrontation on 10 April marked a major setback for Chartism, and was intended to, as Saville suggests: 'The Whig government … did not overreact, as has often been suggested'. The Chartists, with their 5 April message that 'the eyes of EUROPE *are fixed upon you*' had rightly assessed the significance of their event, both at home and abroad. Whig ministers intended not merely to see off their own radicals but also to demonstrate to their counterparts in Europe's other capitals that they had learned the lessons of the barricade battles in Paris in February. Banning any mass demonstration of Chartists to accompany the

[204] Stathis Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution, From Kant to Marx* (London: Verso, 2003), 224.

[205] *Consequences of a Revolution of the Proletariat, DBZ*, 14 October 1847. Hess, *Schriften*, 430.

[206] *On Poland. MECW 6*, 389.

petition to Westminster nipped any possibility of a subsequent riot in the bud. Better still, it was 'a bloodless victory—one indeed that could be laughed off, as this one was'.[207] Langer, cited by Sked, attributes 'the lack of revolution in Britain in 1848 to the government's precautions against the Chartists on 10 April … the alternative to concessions was systematic repression'.[208]

But Kennington Common in fact did not mark Chartism's last hurrah. While Prince Albert dismissively remarked to Baron Stockmar, 'we had our revolution yesterday, and it ended in smoke', Lord Palmerston was more circumspect, writing to Clarendon, also on 11 April: 'Things passed off beautifully here yesterday, but the snake is scotched, not killed'.[209] Dorothy Thompson writes, 'So far from Chartist feeling declining in the immediate aftermath of 10 April, there seems to have been an increase in violence in the response of many of the younger Chartists. … Halifax, Leeds and Bradford were areas of great activity in the early summer, when pitched battles between police and Chartists resulted in arrests and rescues in rapid succession.'[210] According to Saville, there was unrest through the summer, particularly in and around Manchester, in Bradford and its environs, and in Liverpool. Organised Chartist activity also revived, in due course, in London.[211] Hobsbawm argues that 'Chartism did not die in 1848 but remained active and important for several years thereafter',[212] while Stedman Jones contends that 'the failures of the strike of 1842 and the Kennington Common demonstration in 1848 were demoralising defeats (even if Chartism did not come to an end in 1848, as the middle-class myth would have it)'.[213] Henry Mayhew claimed in 1849 in the *Morning Chronicle* that artisans were Chartist-inclined and 'almost to a man red-hot politicians'.[214]

[207] Saville, *1848*, 119–20. Rudé chooses to invert this logic, suggesting the April 1848 demonstration was an 'anti-climax artificially stimulated more by political events in Europe than by the situation in England itself', cited in Sked, "Great Britain and the Continental Revolutions of 1848", 43.

[208] Sked, *Great Britain and the Continental Revolutions of 1848*, 44.

[209] Saville, *1848*, 120.

[210] Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists*, 327.

[211] Saville, *1848*, 140, 132.

[212] Eric Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries* (London: Abacus, 2007), 141.

[213] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 71.

[214] Cited in Philip Waller, *Town, City and Nation: England, 1850–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 116.

Engels, in particular, and Marx certainly did not lose the faith. Days after Kennington Common, Engels told his brother-in-law on 15 April 1848 that 'my friend' Chartist Harney 'in a couple of months … will be in Palmerston's shoes. I'll bet you tuppence and in fact any sum.'[215]

The *NRZ* struck a rare defeatist note on England on 23 June 1848, 'Is not the bourgeoisie tired of revolution? And is there not standing in the middle of the ocean the rock upon which the counter-revolution will build its church: England?'[216] But on 31 July 1848, responding in the *NRZ* to *The Kölnische Zeitung on the State of Affairs in England*, Engels, returning again to the issue of relative scale, could still confidently write: 'The class war of the Chartists, the organised party of the proletariat, against the organised power of the bourgeoisie, has not yet led to those terrible bloody clashes which took place during the June uprising in Paris, but it is waged by a far larger number of people with much greater tenacity and on a much larger territory'.[217]

While Chartism may have had some after-life after 1848, Saville still concluded of 1848 that the activity that had followed Kennington Common 'increased until the mass arrests of the summer brought the whole movement throughout the country to an end in September'.[218]

Marx appeared to agree, remarking on 18 October 1848, 'in England, all the Chartist leaders arrested and deported',[219] but he attempted to breathe fresh life, and importance, into Chartism in a New Year's message, *The Revolutionary Movement*, published in the *NRZ* on 1 January 1849. After a year of so many revolutionary setbacks, it is no surprise to read Marx (once more invoking the 'England as counter-revolutionary rock' image of the previous June) gloomily pronouncing that '*England* seems to be the rock against which the revolutionary waves break, the country where the new society is stifled even in the womb'. But the country and its proletarian movement are again antonymous, and he hasn't totally given up on the Chartists, 'and only a *world war* can overthrow the old England, as only this can provide the Chartists, the party of the organised English workers, with the conditions for a successful rising against their gigantic

[215] *Engels to Emil Blank, 15 April 1848. MECW 38*, 171. Lord Palmerston had his third period as British Foreign Secretary from 1846–1851.

[216] *The Downfall of the Camphausen Government. MECW 7*, 108.

[217] *The Kölnische Zeitung on the State of Affairs in England. MECW 7*, 297.

[218] Saville, *1848*, 125.

[219] *The Frankfurter Oberpostamts-Zeitung and the Viennese Revolution.* MECW 7, 473.

oppressors. Only when the Chartists head the English Government will the social revolution pass from the sphere of utopia to that of reality.'[220]

Carver provides plausible grounds for the focus in the *Manifesto* on the German states, 'Marx may of course have been appeasing Germans in the League (which was principally German, anyway) who might have felt consigned to a revolutionary backwater by Engels's Anglo-centric view'.[221]

But while the *Manifesto* was being written, England, with its far greater industrialisation, and hence more substantial proletariat, as well as a mass movement in Chartism, offered a much more substantive economic, social and political case for revolution than the German states could muster at that time. Kouvelakis can quite rightly say, 'let us note that that the English repressive apparatus proved very effective indeed in 1848',[222] but this apparatus, though certainly in place in January 1848 and before, was not deployed on the same scale as it was in the run-up to and aftermath of Kennington Common.[223]

Kouvelakis comments, 'the *Manifesto* … co-authored by Marx and Engels on the eve of the "real" revolutions of 1848, *does not mention* England in connection with social revolution',[224] or reflect in any way, 'Engels's Anglo-centric' view. This is not literally true in that the *Manifesto* in its round-up of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism, in Section III, does refer to the opposition of (utopian) Owenites in England to Chartists, implicitly a point in favour of Chartists' practical relevance.[225] There is also an oblique *Manifesto* allusion to the 'revolutionary' character of the English Civil War and passing mentions of the English Ten Hours Bill of 1847 and of the Young England literary movement.[226] But these are marginal references: Kouvelakis's general contention holds good, and there is certainly no reiteration in the *Manifesto* of Engels's argument in *Principles* that 'the communist revolution … will therefore be slowest and most difficult to carry out in Germany, quickest and easiest in England'. The absence in the *Manifesto* of a pronounced 'Anglo-centric' view seems another *Manifesto* missed opportunity in 1848.

[220] *The Revolutionary Movement. MECW 8*, 214–15.

[221] Terrell Carver, *Marx and Engels: the Intellectual Relationship* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983), 86.

[222] Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution*, 224.

[223] Saville, *1848*, 15–27.

[224] Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution*, 226.

[225] There are other, very incidental allusions to England by Marx. See Chap. 2.

[226] See Chap. 2.

In general, the columns of the *NRZ*, certainly in 1848, are preoccupied with constantly evolving internal politics in the German states and Prussia especially: 'local Cologne events were considered but there was no ongoing reporting on Cologne and the Prussian Rhine province'.[227] But as the editors of the English *Collected Works* spell out, the paper also very much harboured pan-national and international aspirations: 'The *NRZ*, supporting as it did the revolutionary actions in many countries, was rightly regarded as the revolutionary organ not only of German democracy, but also of European democracy'.[228]

Engels was foreign editor but Born and M. Dyrenfurth wrote on Berlin, Albert Lehfeld on Frankfurt, Dronke on Poland, Hermann Ewerbeck and Ferdinand Wolff on developments in Paris, with, from the end of July 1848, Eduard von Müller-Tellering in Vienna. The *NRZ* covered events in France, the Austrian Empire (in addition to Austria, taking in Hungary, Lombardy-Venetia, Bohemia, Croatia, Galicia, Transylvania and affecting Slavs, Magyars, Poles, Slovaks, Ruthenians/Ukranians, Romanians, Moravians, Illyrians and Serbs), Belgium, Italy in general, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and America—as well as the varying involvement of Russia.

This unique international reach begs a number of questions. How far were the countries the *NRZ* covered of intrinsic importance in the 1848–1849 revolutions? How far were they of disproportionate interest to the *NRZ* alone? How far did they capture the attention of not just the *NRZ*'s readership but also of the constituencies targeted by the *Manifesto* and the 17 *Demands*, bearing in mind that the day-to-day practical political activity of Marx and Engels in 1848 had a Cologne orientation or one certainly anchored within the German states? The conclusions vary from country to country.

For Schmidt et al., 'it was in the centre of Europe, in Germany, that the reverberation of the Paris February days was strongest … the outbreak of bourgeois revolution was precipitated by the example of France'.[229] The 'June days' in Paris—'the first act of the drama', in Marx's phrase, and in the *NRZ*'s first month of existence—found a less widespread echo. For the *Collected Works*' editors, 'the paper's proletarian and internationalist attitude became especially evident during the uprising of the Paris workers in June 1848. It was the only newspaper in Germany, and practically in the

[227] *MEGA*², *I/7*, 889.
[228] *MECW 7*, XX.
[229] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 64.

whole of Europe, that from the very outset firmly sided with the insurgents.'[230] Conservative newspapers in contrast celebrated the suppression of the uprising, 'the turning point of the revolution in the whole of Europe'[231] but the Central Committee of Democrats of Germany also 'avoided taking a stance on the June events', a planned address (at the Second Congress, on 27 October 1848) failing to materialise 'because the circumstances were too complicated'.[232]

The 'Vienna Insurrection'[233] of October 1848—'the second act of the drama'—was rather different. Looking back for the *New York Daily Tribune* in March 1852, Engels wrote, 'we now come to the decisive event which formed the revolutionary counterpoint in Germany to the Parisian insurrection of June, and which by a single blow, turned the scale in favour of the counter-revolutionary party'.[234] The *NRZ* provided several progressively more dispirited reports, but the Second Democratic Congress this time issued on 29 October 1848 an impassioned appeal 'To the German People! … The cause of Vienna is the cause of Germany and the cause of freedom. With the fall of Vienna, the old tyranny will raise its banner higher than ever. … It is up to us, German brothers, not to allow Vienna's freedom to perish.'[235] Marx had arrived in Vienna on 27 August, staying several days, both to try and raise funds for the *NRZ* and to address several meetings of Viennese democrats and workers. With the CWA now under the control of the Marx faction, Marx could also comment back in Cologne on the events in Vienna, for *Freiheit, Brüderlichkeit, Arbeit*.[236]

Hungary provided the major internal challenge to the Austrian Empire in 1848–1849, but the *NRZ*'s coverage, although eventually extensive (up until its own demise on 19 May 1849), only belatedly took off, and not for parochially Hungarian reasons. On 28 January 1849, Engels reported in the *NRZ*, 'German Austria, an independent union of states, is waging war against Hungary, an independent state; the reason for it is of no concern of Prussia's.' But this was not a lack of interest on Engels's part but displeasure: Prussia was being asked to assist in the arrest of

[230] *MECW 7*, XX.

[231] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 178.

[232] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 80.

[233] The insurrection, which ran for four days, saw 3000 Viennese citizens and 1300 soldiers killed, with 2400 arrests and 25 executions. Gabriel, *Love and Capital*, 156–7.

[234] *The Vienna Insurrection. MECW 11*, 54.

[235] *Appeal of the Democratic Congress to the German People. MECW 7*, 490.

[236] *Committee Meeting of the CWA, 6 November 1848. MECW 7*, 598.

Hungarian leader Lajos Kossuth, 'the greatest man of the year 1848', which Engels felt was neither any of Prussia's business nor its legal right. By 18 May 1849, all borders, legal or otherwise, were down, 'by becoming a European war, the Hungarian war is brought into reciprocal interaction with all other factors of the European movement. Its course affects not only Germany, but also France and England.'[237] Prussia's involvement, or interference, in extra-territorial affairs extended to 40,000 Prussian soldiers being sent to Bohemia, and saw Engels both characterising King Friedrich Wilhelm IV as 'the imperial Russian subordinate knyaz [prince] in Potsdam' and also giving vent to a general anti-Prussian tirade:

> It was only by force that we became Prussian subjects and have remained Prussian subjects. We were never Prussians. But now, when we are being led against Hungary, when Russian robber bands are setting foot on Prussian territory, now we feel that we are Prussians, indeed we feel what a disgrace it is to bear the name of Prussian![238]

Denmark, for all its peripheral position on the northern edge of the Confederation and its disparate 'empire' (Greenland and West Indies colonies, in addition to Iceland and the Faroe Islands), briefly in 1848 mattered a great deal to Prussia, to Marx and Engels, and to ordinary citizens in the German states, through its involvement in Schleswig-Holstein. For Engels, who wrote seven pieces for the *NRZ* on 'the Schleswig-Holstein Question', or 'The Danish affair',[239] as he labelled it, the issue brought together antipathy towards Prussia, the FNA and Russia, as well as a potential catalyst for German unification and for reviving a German states revolution.

'The Schleswig-Holstein Question' constituted a territorial dispute that had endured for centuries (the 1460 Treaty of Ribe determined that the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein should be 'up ewig ungedeelt', or 'eternally undivided'). Southern Schleswig had been drawn to Holstein and the German states, but Northern Schleswig, with a sizeable Danish

[237] *The Prussian Warrant for the Arrest of Kossuth*. *MECW 8*, 269–270; *Hungary*. *MECW 9*, 463.

[238] *The Third Party in the Alliance*. *MECW 9*, 395. This is but one instance of Engels's Rhinelander anti-Prussianism. His 1885 *History of the Prussian Peasants* provides a choice footnote: 'Prussian perfidy is fathomless'. *MECW 26*, 347.

[239] *Army Order, Election Candidates, Semi-official Comments on Prussian Ambiguity*. *MECW 7*, 435.

population, to Denmark. Although both Schleswig and Holstein were largely German-speaking counties within the Danish kingdom, Holstein was also part of the German Confederation. The situation came to a head on 21 March 1848 when Denmark determined to annexe, and then advanced into, Schleswig. When German nationalists rose up against Denmark, Prussia was drawn into the conflict, General Wrangel advancing into Schleswig, with lesser military support also coming from other German states. When European war threatened given the backing of Russia and England for Denmark, and the lack of support from Austria, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV ordered Wrangel, and the superior Prussian forces, to withdraw from captured Danish territory. On 26 August 1848, a humiliating seven-month armistice between Denmark and Prussia was signed in the Swedish city of Malmö, initially without ratification by the FNA.

Engels ends his first article on the armistice, on 8 September, by advocating (with 'little hope') that the FNA 'should not let itself be intimidated' but should rather, 'discard the armistice'. This will provoke 'another European war, a rupture between Prussia and Germany, new revolutions, the disintegration of Prussia and the *genuine unification of Germany*'.[240] His follow-up piece, published two days later, argues that in contrast to the conflicts in Italy, Posen and Prague, the Germans were, in Schleswig-Holstein, fighting for the revolution, making the Danish war, popular among the German people, 'the first revolutionary war waged by Germany'.[241] Engels further wraps the *NRZ* political programme around the armistice by linking 'the German Revolution and its first result—German unity', and by arguing that non-ratification by the FNA would trigger 'just the kind of war that the flagging German movement needs'—against Prussia, England and Russia. This would be a war, against 'the three great counter-revolutionary powers … which would really cause Prussia to merge into Germany, which would make an alliance with Poland an indispensable necessity'.[242] It was not to be. On 23 September, the *NRZ* printed a proclamation, stating that 'the decision of the Frankfurt National Assembly of the 16th, approving the dishonourable armistice with Denmark, is a betrayal of the German people and of the honour of

[240] *The Danish Armistice. MECW 7*, 414.
[241] *The Danish-Prussian Armistice. MECW 7*, 421.
[242] *The Danish-Prussian Armistice. MECW 7*, 424–5.

German arms'. Those FNA deputies who were not willing to resign were denounced as 'traitors to the people'.[243]

Notwithstanding Engels's alliance hopes, Poland had quickly proved a lost cause in 1848. After tentative initial support from Prussia for a campaign led by Ludwig Mieroslawski to liberate Polish territory from Russian control—'let us go into action against Tsarist Russia in an alliance with liberated Germany!'[244]—the Prussian mood turned, dividing along German- and Polish-speaking lines, and resulting in Prussian troops in April 1848 easily seeing off Mieroslawski's poorly armed nationalists.[245] This didn't, though, substantially harm Poland's long-established image as a romantic revolutionary lost cause. Büchner's first extant letter to his family, in December 1831, reported the rapturous passage through Strasbourg of the in general quite unworthy General Ramorino,[246] one of the 6000 rebels in the 'Great Emigration' after Poland's 1830 defeat by Tsar Nicholas. 'Vive la liberté, vive Ramorino!' go the cries. Büchner's letter concludes, 'Thereupon Ramorino appears on the balcony, expresses his thanks, there are shouts of Vivat!—and the comedy is done'.[247] In similar if much more sincere vein, Marx and Engels had both given speeches at the 'International Meeting Held in London on November 29, 1847 to Mark the 17th Anniversary of the Polish Uprising of 1830'. Poorly treated, as ever, as the Poles may have been in 1848, their actual significance in the events of the European Revolutions did not warrant the scale of the *NRZ*'s coverage, well into the autumn. Italy, on the other hand, was a much more noteworthy revolutionary player, justifying the *NRZ*'s attention, especially in 1849, when, along with Hungary, it appeared to offer a revolutionary last gasp.

In mid-July 1848, it is stated that 'only a war against Russia would be a war of revolutionary Germany'.[248] There is an attempt by Engels in his 1884 history of the *NRZ* to put this Russian policy retrospectively

[243] *Decision of the Mass Meeting*. *MECW 7*, 588.

[244] Stefan Kieniewicz, "1848 in Polen" in *Die Europäischen Revolutionen von 1848*, eds. Horst Stuke and Wilfried Forstmann (Königstein im Taunus: Athenäum Verlag, 1979), 163.

[245] Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, 135–6.

[246] After a career of incompetence, Ramorino was executed in 1849 for disobeying orders before the Battle of Novara. At his own request, he was allowed to command the firing squad that shot him.

[247] Reddick, *Georg Büchner*, 189.

[248] *German Foreign Policy and the Latest Events in Prague*. *MECW 7*, 212.

centre-stage—'this policy pervaded every issue of the newspaper'[249]—and an acknowledgement that the major revolutionary events right across the continent somewhat got in the way—'the Vienna, Milan and Berlin events were bound to delay the Russian attack'[250]—but in truth, interventionist Russia and betrayed Poland are more consistently treated in the *NRZ* in terms of Prussia's maladroit relations with both countries.

Marx and Engels clearly applied a wide-angle lens to the European Revolutions of 1848–1849. The next chapter primarily examines more narrowly how and why Marx and Engels varyingly chose to engage with unfolding events in Paris, in March and early April 1848, and in the German states in the 'March days' and beyond.

[249] Herres and Melis suggest that the *NRZ*'s political programme of a single, indivisible, democratic German republic, and war with Russia, including the restoration of Poland 'were in no way pursued with the thoroughness and resoluteness implied by Engels'. *MEGA*^{2}, *I/7*, 905.

[250] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849)*. *MECW 26*, 127, 126.

CHAPTER 5

Lingering in Paris, Brussels Preludes

Gabriel rightly observes that Marx 'in general did not like organisations and public politics',[1] but this otherwise accurate generalisation is much less obviously valid in 1847. The year leading up to the composition and publication of the *Manifesto*, and the months immediately following, sees a good deal of political organising and manoeuvring, by Marx as well as Engels. This chapter shines an especial spotlight on Marx's decision to remain in Paris throughout March 1848. Marx and Engels were also involved with three Brussels organisations—the Communist Correspondence Committee, the German Workers' Educational Association and the Brussels Democratic Association (BDA)—and, notably, the Communist League. With the exception of the Correspondence Committee, they were active in these groups, in particular in the second half of 1847 and into 1848. This chapter begins by examining how their activity impacted the emergence of the *Manifesto* and what that activity achieved.

From the beginning of 1847 until 6 April 1848, when they jointly travelled to Mainz and then on to Cologne, Marx and Engels were physically together for ca. 20 weeks (or 30% of this period). Otherwise, Marx was predominantly in Brussels, and Engels in Paris.

[1] Gabriel, *Love and Capital*, 106.

D. Ireland, *The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99464-8_5

Marx identified ambitious goals for the Correspondence Committee (founded in early 1846 by Marx, Engels and Belgian democrat Philippe-Charles Gigot) when trying to recruit Proudhon[2] on 5 May 1846: 'the chief aim of our correspondence … will be to put the German socialists in touch with the French and English socialists, to keep foreigners constantly informed of the socialist movements that occur in Germany and to inform the Germans in Germany of the progress of socialism in France and Germany'. These worthy aims were rather undermined by Marx's P.S. to Proudhon, 'I must now denounce to you Mr. Grün of Paris … a literary swindler, a species of charlatan',[3] and the Committee—which eventually merged with the League of the Just in June 1847 to form the Communist League—consistently attacked Grün, with a separate circular against True Socialist Hermann Kriege issued in May 1846. Although Correspondence Committee branches were also established in London (in mid-1846), and in Paris (in August 1846), with additional representation in certain German centres such as the Wuppertal, Cologne and Kiel, the Committee's tone was too aggressively partisan (Chartist leader Harney also declined to join) to fully realise its ambitious, international aims. It is most obviously for the campaign against Grün—a major preoccupation, if not distraction for Marx and Engels, from the first half of 1846, through to the onset of European Revolutions in 1848, when the political casus belli against him essentially disappeared—that the Correspondence Committee merits any footnote in history.

Marx wrote to Herwegh on 26 October 1847, giving details of the other two Brussels groups. A German Workers' Educational Society (founded by Marx and Engels at the end of August 1847) 'already has about 100 members',[4] Marx writes, 'besides debates of quite a parliamentary nature, there is also social entertainment with singing, recitation, theatricals and the like'. Fridays were designated 'reading evenings' (there was a small library) but meetings were held twice weekly, with lectures on Wednesdays (the forum for Marx's *Wage*s series, amongst others) and Wilhelm Wolff's Sunday news updates, his 'masterpieces of popular

[2] Proudhon consented in his reply, from Lyon on 17 May 1846, 'to become one of the recipients of your correspondence, whose aims and organization seem to me most useful. Yet I cannot promise to write often or at great length.'

[3] Proudhon in due course opted to side with Grün, who in 1847 produced a German translation of Proudhon's *Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère* (The System of Economic Contradictions, or The Philosophy of Poverty).

[4] On 30 November 1847, Marx specifies 105 members.

presentation'. The Society clearly performed a useful function in educating and entertaining its eventual 105 members.

A prosaic footnote on the creation of the Brussels Democratic Association (BDA)—'the international banquet of democrats in Brussels on 27 September 1847 adopted the decision to found a Democratic Association. Engels was elected to its Organising Committee'[5]—scarcely does justice to what this had entailed. In a nine-page letter to Marx merely starting on 28 September 1847 (Marx was in Holland, visiting family), Engels recounts that the Marx-Engels faction had incurred the wrath of a whole variety of local political figures—'Bornstedt, Moras, Crüger, Seiler, Heilberg'—as a result of which 'enfin, all these heterogenous elements agreed upon a coup that was to reduce us once and for all to a secondary role.' Happily, Engels, something of a master fixer in this period (if less so against the more formidable Grün), proved equal to the challenge. Engels goes to some lengths to get himself appointed as one of the two BDA vice-chairmen, but then he immediately reveals, and formally advises BDA chairman Jottrand on 30 September, that he must shortly leave Brussels (he heads to Paris in mid-October). But Engels knew just the man to replace him as vice-chairman, as he told a BDA meeting: 'it had not occurred to them that there is, amongst us, one to whom the position belongs by right, one who alone is able to represent the German democrats here in Brussels and that is Marx—whereupon tremendous applause … either way we have succeeded in getting you and, after you, myself, recognised as representatives of the German democrats in Brussels, besides the whole plot having been brought to a dreadfully ignominious end'.[6] On 15 November 1847, Marx was duly appointed a vice-president of the BDA. Thereafter, Marx was an enthusiastic flag-waver for the BDA. He was tasked in late November 1847 with establishing written links between the BDA and the London Society of Fraternal Democrats, and attended a New Year's Eve celebration of the German Educational Workers' Society on 31 December 1847, at which he proposed a toast, in French, to the BDA, which was greeted with loud applause.[7] Marx was particularly active with the BDA during January 1848, when he should perhaps have been more fully focused on writing the *Manifesto*. His speech on free trade on 9 January 1848 was given to the BDA, and he also spent

[5] *Footnote 159. MECW 6*, 588.
[6] *Engels to Marx, 28–30 September 1847. MECW 38*, 127, 129.
[7] *German Workers' Society New Year's Eve Celebration. MECW 6*, 639.

time in Ghent from 17 January 1848 helping to set up a second BDA branch. Marx's involvement with the BDA lasted only until his expulsion from Brussels in March 1848 but he could happily conclude in his October 1847 letter to Herwegh that 'little Belgium' offered greater scope for direct propaganda than 'big France' and that public activity, however minor, was 'infinitely refreshing for everyone'.[8]

While Marx was enjoying being infinitely refreshed, Engels (over and above his role vis-à-vis Grün) was actively connecting with Chartism (and the Fraternal Democrats), contemporary French politics and, to a lesser degree, Ireland. These Engels commitments certainly have relevance to the events of the time, but are otherwise distinctive for largely not being reflected in the eventual *Manifesto* (French reflections being historical).

The major organisational engagement of 1847–1848 was the Communist League. Marx and Engels did not join the League's predecessor organisation, the League of the Just, until January 1847, at the persuasion of its London member (and close Schapper confederate) Moll, and then only on the proviso, it is suggested, that the League's thrust and direction could be moulded to their design. From June 1847, the League of the Just had morphed into the Communist League, and by the end of the year, Marx and Engels had control of its statutes and the terms of its *Manifesto*; by early March 1848, Marx headed its controlling Central Authority.

Engels wrote to Marx on 23 November as they anticipated the third and definitive version of their pamphlet: 'I think we would do best to … call the thing Communist *Manifesto*',[9] but this is not how the pamphlet actually emerges at the end of February 1848. Instead, its title page proclaims it as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

In the run-up to the *Manifesto*'s appearance, and within the *Manifesto* itself, there are plenty of passing references to 'the party'. In his letter to Marx of 25 October 1847, Engels writes that he had informed French socialist Blanc that 'Monsieur Marx' was 'the chief of our party (i.e. of the most advanced faction of German democracy)'.[10] Of Engels's vision of the definitive *Manifesto*, in the 23 November 1847 letter just referenced, he

[8] *MEGA*² *III/2*, 116.
[9] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 149.
[10] *Engels to Marx, 25 October 1847. MECW 38*, 134.

proposes 'in between, all kinds of secondary matter, and, finally, the communists' party policy'.[11]

In the *Manifesto* proper, Marx mentions that 'the Communists do not form a separate party. … The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties.'[12]

But all this talk of a 'Communist Party' is a fiction. As Draper acknowledges, 'from the standpoint of present-day usage, the most misleading word in the main title is "party". No organisation called the "Communist Party" existed.'[13] Wheen agrees, 'The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* may be the most widely read political pamphlet in human history, but it is also the most misleadingly titled: no such party existed'.[14] Draper makes a valid and important subsidiary point that given that the modern party system only evolved during the course of the century, 'party' in 1848 usually implied a tendency or current of opinion rather than an organisation.[15]

In his 1884 essay on the *NRZ*, Engels commented: 'On the outbreak of the February Revolution, the German "Communist Party", as we called it, consisted only of a small core, the Communist League, which was organised as a secret propaganda society'.[16] The March 1848 follow-up to the *Manifesto*, the *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*, is equally explicitly described by the English *Collected Works* editors as being 'drawn up by Marx and Engels in the name of the Central Authority of the Communist League'.[17]

It seems clear as far as Engels was concerned that if the 'Communist Party', as an entity, meant anything in 1848, it meant the Communist League. Stedman Jones argues that 'in the first instance, it [the *Manifesto*] was intended for the members of the League alone, and its aim was to bind the various branches—particularly those in Paris—to a single agreed

[11] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 149.

[12] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 497, 498.

[13] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 204. Hobsbawm and Fernbach make the same point. Hobsbawm, *Manifesto Introduction*, 12; Fernbach, *The Revolutions of 1848*, 28.

[14] Wheen, *Karl Marx*, 115.

[15] Draper, *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, 204.

[16] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 26*, 120.

[17] *Preface. MECW 7*, XVI.

programme'.[18] Carver similarly talks of the 'the intended audience—the Communist League'.[19]

The Communist League certainly appears to have been pivotal in the history of the *Manifesto* in 1847–1848. At its Second Congress, meeting in London from 28 November to 8 December 1847, the League formally commissioned Marx and Engels to compose the *Manifesto*.

There are perhaps two ways of concluding on the significance of the League, and Marx's and Engels's connection with it, as this affected the German states' revolution. Either (conventionally) that the League, with its 'scarcely more than 300'[20] members in all (and 84 in London), was far too small to exercise any real influence with either the *Manifesto*, or in the 1848 revolutions. Alternatively (less conventionally), that if Marx and Engels had more diligently, and effectively, exercised the influence over the League that they had sought so hard to achieve, then perhaps the German states' working classes might have made more of an impact on their revolution. This less conventional reading is more fully examined in the next chapter.

The League provided (at least) the *Manifesto*'s initial audience, and also, logically at the outset, its distribution agents. By dint of all these roles, it would certainly have a part to play in the potential success of the *Manifesto* in 1848.

Among League naysayers, Nicolaevsky commented, of the situation in April 1848: 'The Communist League was not equal to the situation the revolution had created. It was inadequate in every way.'[21] Ryazanov adds: 'During the disturbances of the year 1848, the Communist League played a very insignificant part … least of all was its influence felt in France. … A more or less important part was played by individual members of the League in Germany, but in no case did they act as representatives of the Communist League.'[22] The Valentin verdict is even more incisive: 'the Communist League as a united organisation was not to play any important part in the German Revolution of 1848/1849'.[23]

All this ignores the significant hand Marx and Engels had in the League's affairs, from the autumn of 1847 onwards. Although the

[18] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, 221.
[19] Carver and Farr, *Companion to the Communist Manifesto*, 69.
[20] Carver and Farr, *Companion to the Communist Manifesto*, 23.
[21] Boris Nicolaevsky, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 173.
[22] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 22–3.
[23] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, v1, 533.

Manifesto may have been formally commissioned by the League, it is clear that this was a pamphlet controlled, and designed, by Marx and Engels. From Engels's defining drafts (thus, the *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith,* and then the *Principles*), through to the side-lining of Hess's potential contribution, we come to Engels's confidence ahead of the Second Congress. Engels tells Marx, as noted earlier, in the letter of 23 November 1847, that 'THIS TIME WE SHALL HAVE IT ALL OUR OWN WAY', and that, of 'his' own pre-*Manifesto*, 'I think I can get it through in such a form that at least there is nothing in it which conflicts with our views'.[24] Marx formulated the statutes (8 December 1847) on behalf of the League, with the statutes' first Article[25] reflected in the *Manifesto*.

After being arrested and expelled from Brussels, Marx arrived in Paris on 5 March 1848 and remained there until leaving to return to Prussia on 6 April 1848. He had not lived in the French capital since being expelled on 2 February 1845. In the view of Samuel Bernstein, 'Marx was little known in Paris at the time of the February Revolution. Some of the German workers and French radicals remembered him from his earlier visit, or had heard of him through Engels … comparatively few knew anything about his life.'[26]

Against this background, Engels then provides an unpropitious scene-setting for any mark Marx might have made in his month in Paris, in several respects. Although Engels was expelled from Paris on 29 January 1848 and would not return until 21 March, he did his diplomatic and level best while he was in the French capital to make connections for Marx, among those in the relevant Parisian political circle who mattered before the February 1848 revolution, and who would matter during it.

First of these is Blanc, who was 1 of 15 ministers in the short-lived Provisional Government appointed on 24 February 1848, representing its left wing, along with Alexandre Martin, otherwise known as 'Albert the Worker'. Blanc was soon to be decried—at the crucial mass rally to the Hôtel de Ville on 17 March 1848, he was asked 'Are you, too, a traitor?' while Proudhon later accused him of having betrayed the revolution that day.[27] Nonetheless, Engels claimed, to brother-in-law Emil Blank on 28

[24] *Engels to Marx, 23 November 1847. MECW 38*, 146, 149.
[25] *Rules of the Communist League (December 1847). MECW 6*, 633.
[26] Bernstein, *Marx in Paris*, 342.
[27] Bernstein, *Marx in Paris*, 352.

March 1848, that 'For the time being, then, the men of *La Réforme* (Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, L. Blanc, Albert, Arago) again have the upper hand. They, more than anyone else in the government, still represent the workers, and are communists without knowing it.'[28]

Engels has continuing difficulties in getting to Blanc, as he serially reports in letters to Marx—'it was only today that I managed to see little Louis Blanc' (25 October 1847); 'a few days previously I had again failed to find [him] in because he was on guard' (14 November 1847); 'I went to see L. Blanc. I'm remarkably unlucky with him—he's travelling and will perhaps be back today' (24 November 1847); 'At last I have run L. Blanc to earth—this little literary lord receives visitors only on Thursdays! And then only in the afternoon!' (21 January 1848).

As to the relations between Blanc and Marx, Engels suggests to Marx that at the early 25 October 1847 encounter, 'he spoke of you with great sympathy and said he was sorry that you and he had parted rather froidement' (Gabriel comments that, beginning as early as 1844, 'Blanc, like Bakunin, would cross paths many times with Marx over the years, and as with Bakunin, most of the encounters would be adversarial').[29] Engels loyally adds in his October 1847 letter, for Marx's benefit, 'People, you see, are as well-disposed as one could wish', but is also perhaps overly keen to stress, 'by the way, I was not compelled to make any concessions to these people'.

It all mattered little. Engels struggled to make any headway on Marx's behalf. In the first 25 October 1847[30] encounter with Blanc, Engels proclaims 'You, I said, were the chief. You can regard Monsieur Marx as the head of our party … and his recent book[31] against Mr. Proudhon as our programme. Of this he took most careful note. Then finally he promised to comment on your book in *La Réforme*.' On 21 January 1848, Engels reports his exchange with Blanc, who had reluctantly admitted that 'he had not yet had time to read your book. I have leafed through it and seen that M. Proudhon is attacked with some acerbity'—'Well then, will you be able to write the article for *La Réforme* you promised us?'—'An article, good gracious no, I'm so hard pressed by my publishers—but I'll tell you

[28] *Engels to Emil Blank, 28 March 1848. MECW 38*, 168.

[29] Gabriel, *Love and Capital*, 62.

[30] Oddly, Blanc replies to Marx on 26 October 1847, correcting the latter's belief that he edits *La Réforme*. Marx could presumably have established from Engels that the French newspaper's editor then was Flocon. MEGA² *III/2*, 371.

[31] Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*.

what to do: write the article yourself and I'll see that it appears in *La Réforme*'.[32] The review, even a soft one written by Engels, never appeared in *La Réforme*.

Privately, to Marx (in the letter of 21 January 1848), Engels is happy to turn on Blanc: 'As for L. Blanc, he deserves to be castigated. Write a review of his *Révolution* for the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung* and prove to him in practice how far above him we are; the form amicable, but the content leaving no doubt as to our superiority. We'll see that it reaches him.'[33] Possibly at a very similar time, Marx was writing in Section IV of the *Manifesto*, 'In France the Communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats',[34] Engels explaining, in a note to the 1888 *Preface*, 'the party then represented … in literature by Louis Blanc, in the daily press by *La Réforme*'.

Ferdinand Flocon ('Citoyen Flocon') was another minister in the Provisional Government, somewhat to the right of Blanc, and editor of *La Réforme* until February 1848. He is treated more sympathetically, if also patronisingly, by Engels. Although in 1848, he was only 47, he is consistently referred to by the 27-year-old Engels as 'père Flocon' ('With père Flocon I am hitting it off well'; 'Père Flocon is proving more amenable'). Flocon is ill when Marx tries to see him soon after his arrival in Paris. Engels belittles Flocon for his inability to grasp an article on free trade: 'But what an ass Flocon is! L. Blanc told me yesterday that Flocon had objected to your libre-échange article, qu'il était un peu confus!!!! The muddle-headed creature! Flocon understands nothing of the matter and seems to me to grow more ignorant day by day. At best he's a man of good will.'[35]

Engels, in the 14 January 1848 letter to Marx, somewhat grudgingly quotes what Flocon had said to him: 'you are tending towards despotism, you will kill the revolution in France, we have eleven million small peasants who at the same time are the most fanatical property owners. After all, he said, our principles are too similar for us not to march together; as for us, we will give you all the support in our power.'[36]

[32] *Engels to Marx, 25 October 1847. MECW 38,* 134; *21 January 1848. MECW 38*, 156.
[33] *Engels to Marx*, *21 January 1848. MECW 38,* 157.
[34] *Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 518.
[35] *Engels to Marx, 25 October 1847; 14 January 1848; 14 November 1847. MECW 38*, 135, 152, 143.
[36] *Engels to Marx*, *14 January 1848. MECW 38*, 152.

Flocon certainly further demonstrates his goodwill, in advising Marx on 1 March 1848 (just before his expulsion from Brussels) that Marx's 1845 ban from France is now lifted: 'Good and loyal Marx, The soil of the French Republic is a field of refuge and asylum for all friends of liberty. Tyranny exiled you, now free France opens its doors to you.'[37]

Engels's private view of Flocon is in no way reciprocated by Flocon himself, Engels recording on 26 October 1847, 'My article [written on 23 October 1847] has appeared in *La Réforme*. Curiously enough Flocon hasn't altered one syllable', while Marx tells Engels soon after arriving in Paris, 'They spoke kindly of you at *La Réforme*'.[38] Marx does have an article published in *La Réforme* on 12 March 1848 (by then, Flocon was no longer editor), dealing with the recent persecution of foreigners in Brussels.

The third of the prominent figures on the French left is Étienne Cabet, described by Sperber as 'probably the most prominent socialist in Europe before 1848',[39] and by Samuel Bernstein, 'of all the French communists before 1848, the most prolific writer, the most active and the most influential propagandist among the workers'.[40] Cabet was, though, admired rather than always supported. His Icarian 'Emigration Scheme' gets a mixed press in the September 1847 *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, 'we are glad to recognise, as all communists must recognise, the indefatigable zeal, the amazing persistence with which Cabet fights in the cause of suffering humanity. … Nevertheless we cannot allow matters to pass unnoticed when, in our view, Cabet enters upon a false path.'[41]

Engels had certainly had an entrée with Cabet (another 'père', though this time a 59-year-old one) in the past—he tells Marx on 19 August 1846, 'I went to see Cabet. The old boy was extremely cordial'—but access proves more difficult later on. In a letter to Marx of 25 October 1847, he writes, 'I have not yet seen Cabet. He is happy, it seems, to be leaving, having noticed that things are showing signs of disintegrating here.'[42] Marx and Engels write jointly to Cabet on 5 April 1848, of their

[37] *Ferdinand Flocon to Marx, 1 March 1848. MECW 6*, 649.

[38] *Engels to Marx, 26 October 1847. MECW 38*, 139*; Marx to Engels, between 7 and 12 March, 1848. MECW 38*, 158.

[39] Sperber, *The European Revolutions of 1848–1851*, 83.

[40] Bernstein, *Marx in Paris*, 335.

[41] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 295.

[42] *Engels to Marx, 19 August 1846. MECW 38*, 53*; Engels to Marx, 25 October 1847. MECW 38*, 136.

unsuccessful efforts to secure an audience, 'During the last two days of our stay in Paris we presented ourselves at your house several times. But we always found your offices so crowded with people that our all too limited time prevented us from taking our turn and waiting. We therefore regret that we have to leave without having had one last interview with you.'[43] There is no other reference to Cabet in the 1847–1848 correspondence between Marx and Engels.

Engels's unsuccessful efforts to secure a review in *La Réforme* were not the only way in which Marx failed to make local headway with his *Poverty of Philosophy*, which might have acted as a Parisian calling card. Part of Engels's activity on Marx's behalf in November 1847 involved clarifying the sales performance of *Poverty*, which had been published simultaneously in July 1847, at Marx's expense, by Carl Vogler in Brussels and by A. Frank in Paris, who acted as commission agents ('agents de vente'), thus receiving a commission for sales secured. Marx had a long-term professional and personal relationship with Vogler (a Communist League member arrested in Aachen at the beginning of April 1847, and then returned to Brussels on 17 June 1847), who wrote 12 times to Marx in 1847–1848.

He appears to have written to Marx once about *Poverty*, on 21 September 1847, summarising sales for Marx's 'pamphlet'. Vogler advised that out of a Brussels print-run of 800, from a total 1500, 150 copies had been forwarded to Paris (it's not clear on what basis), while 253 copies were in stock, in Brussels or Leipzig. This suggests half the Brussels print-run had been sold. Although *Poverty* had been written in French, and, as of 1846, 61% of Brussels inhabitants were Dutch speakers, the balance were French speakers, notably French-speaking members of the Flemish bourgeoisie.

The Parisian experience with *Poverty* is less satisfactory. In two letters to Marx, dated 14 and 23 November 1847, Engels reveals he has established that as of 16 November 1847, out of (presumably) a Paris print-run of 700 copies, 96 had been sold, 'that cur' Frank's despatch arrangements having been 'truly appalling'.[44] Many years later, Marx, as he explained to Engels on 15 October 1868, had tried to get to the bottom of the *Poverty* sales outcome. It transpired that 92 copies were still sitting in the Paris

[43] *Marx and Engels to Étienne Cabet, 5 April 1848. MECW 38*, 169–70.

[44] *MEGA*^{2} *III/2*, 361; *Engels to Marx, 14 and 23 November, 1847. MECW 38*, 142–3, 146, 149.

shop—the English *Collected Works* comment the 'Paris publisher, as is clear from the letter, had stopped the sales altogether'[45]—while Frank's business has been sold (in 1865) to F. Vieweg. In a follow-up letter to the Lafargues, of 15 February 1869, Marx complains that 'the worst is that Vieweg not only keeps, but sequestrates the book'.[46] Bernstein comments, as of the 1848 revolution in France, 'only a small number [of the German workers and French radicals] had read his *Poverty of Philosophy*',[47] while the grand design of reaching out directly to Parisian socialists and radicals by writing a book in French, since their perceived intellectual influence did not extend to universal fluency in German, floundered 'because the book never reached its intended destinations; the publishers took Marx's money … a few copies circulated hand to hand among German émigré intellectuals in Paris.'[48]

The final piece of pre-revolutionary Parisian scene-setting by Engels concerns the status of the Communist League in the city. In his letter dated 14 January 1848—thus a fortnight before Marx, in Brussels, completes the *Manifesto*, and just weeks before the European Revolutions break out—Engels updates Marx on the Parisian state-of-play:

> Things are going wretchedly with the League here', he writes. 'Never have I encountered such sluggishness and petty jealousy as there is among these fellows. Weitlingianism and Proudhonism are truly the exact expression of these jackasses' way of life and hence nothing can be done. Some are genuine Straubingers,[49] ageing boors, others aspiring petty bourgeois. A class which lives, Irish-fashion, by depressing the wages of the French, is utterly useless. I am now making one last attempt, if that doesn't succeed, I shall give up this kind of propaganda.[50]

On 7 March 1848, there should have been a shift in local momentum. The Central Authority of the League was formally relocated from London to Paris, with Marx nominated chairman. As he tells Engels in a letter written between 7 and 12 March 1848, 'Central Authority has been constituted here, since Jones, Harney, Schapper, Bauer and Moll are all on the spot. I have been nominated chairman and Schapper secretary. Members

[45] *Marx to Engels, 15 October, 1868. MECW 43*, 137–8; *footnote 204*, 596.
[46] *Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 15 February, 1869. MECW 43*, 217.
[47] Bernstein, *Marx in Paris*, 342.
[48] Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, 175–6.
[49] The Engels term for journeymen.
[50] *Engels to Marx, 14 January 1848. MECW 38*, 154.

are: Wallau, Lupus,[51] Moll, Bauer and Engels. Jones left for England yesterday; Harney is ill.'[52] Chartist leaders Harney and Ernest Jones were temporarily 'on the spot', as part of a Fraternal Democrats delegation sent over from England to congratulate the new Provisional Government, but the bringing together in Paris of Schapper, Moll and Bauer from London, of Marx, Wilhelm Wolff (from 10 March 1847), Karl Wallau and Engels (from 21 March), all lately in Brussels, represented an impressive consolidation of League leadership in one place.

But this was a League head in Paris without much of a local body: how effective could these leaders be without loyal and active supporters on the ground? In this respect, Engels's report of 14 January 1848 was far from being a one-off. In a string of official League communiqués, one learns, first in the report to First Congress of 9 June 1847, that 'in Paris the League has much declined in recent years … there was no sign of the slightest progress, not the slightest concern with the development of the principle, or with the movement of the proletariat as it was proceeding in other localities of the League, and outside the League. The consequence was that all those who were not satisfied with what they were offered inside the League looked outside the League for further enlightenment.'[53] Three months later, in a 14 September 1847 update, 'there are still many people in the Paris communities who have not yet shaken themselves free of Grün's nonsense and Proudhon's most strange ideas. Oddly enough, these people, who are members of the Communist League, seem to reject communism; they want equality and nothing else.'[54] By 18 October 1847, matters have come to a head, with a report from the Central Authority to the Brussels district branch revealing, 'in Paris, it's all come to an end—a whole [League] district, with the exception of a couple [of individuals] has declared itself against the principle of communism and has hereupon provisionally been expelled from the League'.[55]

None of this stopped Marx from being feverishly busy in Paris. In a breathless letter to Engels on 16 March 1848, he writes, 'I never have a

[51] Affectionate nickname for Wilhelm Wolff.

[52] *Marx to Engels, between 7 and 12 March, 1848. MECW 38*, 158. As the new chairman, Marx replaced Schapper, who had been president of the League at its First Congress in June 1847.

[53] *First Congress to the League, 9 June 1847. MECW 6*, 590.

[54] *The Central Authority to the League. MECW 6*, 609.

[55] *The Central Authority of the Communist League to the Brussels district, 18 October 1847. MEGA*^{2}. *III/2*, 369.

minute to write at any length. I confine myself to essentials' (there are four brief references to recent political developments, otherwise the letter concentrates on what Engels needs to do about the Marx family luggage and silver after the move from Brussels, and on money matters).[56] Just one day later, Marx's wife Jenny tells Weydemeyer, 'my husband, being so caught up in the work and running-around[57] in this huge city'.[58]

So what was Marx doing? Here, one needs to separate the real from the imagined. On the factual front, the Communist League leaders held a committee meeting on 8 March 1848 for the renamed Paris district, chaired by Schapper (notwithstanding Marx's appointment as President of the League's Central Authority), with the secretary being Marx, who in turn was to submit draft rules for a new German Workers' Club (GWC). The GWC, bringing together German émigré workers in Paris, and ones more amenable than the League's Paris district, had two main functions, first, countering the efforts of Bornstedt and Herwegh (both leading lights in the German Democratic Society) to march an armed German Legion over the German border, and, separately, arranging the return of individual League members to their German heartlands. The GWC's committee members were Marx, Schapper, Moll, Wallau, Bauer, and Hermann. It met twice a week, on Tuesdays (the first meeting being on Tuesday, 14 March 1848) and Fridays at the Café Picard at 91, Rue St Denis, and by the beginning of April had amassed 400 members, especially tailors and bootmakers.

Marx's view that the German Legion was inadvisable and foolhardy was entirely borne out by events—it was routed at its first engagement, on 27 April 1848, near Dossenbach (in south Baden), with 30 dead and 60 wounded, by a company of Württemberg infantry, which suffered no casualties. Herwegh and his wife Emma escaped, disguised as peasants, but in the following days, a further 394 legionnaires were captured by Württemberg patrols. Nonetheless, before the Legion set off from Paris, it seemed to have won the argument among German émigrés. According to Nicolaevsky, 'the majority of the revolutionary and democratic German exiles were opposed to Marx. They called him coward and traitor.'[59]

[56] *Marx to Engels, 16 March 1848. MECW 38*, 161–2.

[57] *MECW 38* offers 'pother' here, which, while an admirably ancient English word, misses the German etymology of 'Lauferei'.

[58] *Jenny Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 17 March 1848. MECW 38*, 539.

[59] Nicolaevsky, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter,* 160.

Alphonse Lucas, the reactionary chronicler of the clubs of this period, criticised the GWC's members 'for adopting the right "indiquer à la France la manière dont elle devait se gouverner" (of telling France how she should govern herself)'.

Two other League-related items from this month in Paris should be mentioned. First, on 18 March, 1000 copies of the *Manifesto* arrived from London, although they predominantly ended up being distributed around the German states, rather than disseminated in Paris. Interestingly, Engels mentions, almost en passant in his 28 March 1848 letter to brother-in-law Blank, four *Manifesto* measures which he thinks the French Provincial Government should be implementing: 'The most unfortunate thing is that the government, on the one hand, has to make promises to the workers and, on the other, is unable to keep any of them because it lacks the courage to secure the necessary funds by revolutionary measures against the bourgeoisie, by severe progressive taxation, succession duties, confiscation of all émigré property, ban on the export of currency, state bank, etc'.[60]

Secondly, between 21 and 24 March 1848, Marx and Engels wrote the successor pamphlet to the *Manifesto*, the 17 *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*. Engels suggests in his 1885 *History of the Communist League* that this second document 'was drawn up and signed by the members of the new Central Authority' (at this point, the committee being Marx, Schapper, Bauer, Engels, Moll and Wilhelm Wolff) but its authors were solely Marx and Engels. The *17 Demands* is certainly important, both thematically and tactically, but at ca. 530 words, was less than 5% of the length of the *Manifesto*. It looks to have been briskly and decisively written, and to have benefited from Engels's talent in getting quickly to the point. The pamphlet comprised, bar some limited exposition on peasants, state banks and the pamphlet's target audience, simply the list of demands.

Bernstein in his 1939 article, *Marx in Paris: A Neglected Chapter*, also suggests,[61] after, it seems, minor prompting three years earlier by Nicolaevsky's *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, that Marx was kept far busier than usual while in Paris by frequent attendance, at no less than seven meetings (4, 12, 14, 16, 18 March, 7, 10 April 1848), at the revolutionary club, the *Society of the Rights of Man*, sympathetic to the extreme Left

[60] *Engels to Emil Blank, 28 March, 1848. MECW 38*, 168.
[61] Bernstein, *Marx in Paris*, 1848, 344–55.

utopian communist Louis Blanqui. Bernstein even speculates that Marx may have been on the mass[62] demonstration to the Hôtel de Ville on 17 March 1848.

Bernstein in this instance was barking up the wrong tree, as Peter Amman demonstrated in his witty 1961 article, *Karl Marx, Quarante-Huitard Français?*[63] which provided irrefutable evidence that Marx could not have physically attended the meetings of 4 March, 7 April or 10 April.[64] Not that there wasn't a Marx mentioned in the club's meeting minutes, simply not the one who wrote the *Manifesto*. Amman identifies no fewer than 15 Marxes in *L'Annuaire-Almanach*, with the club attendee most likely to have been a cap manufacturer.

If Marx (Karl) had the right measure of Herwegh's and Bornstedt's German Legion, his reading of French Revolutionary events in March 1848 is less sure-footed. League member Sebastian Seiler quotes a significant speech at the GWC by Marx (this could not have been earlier than 14 March, the GWC's maiden meeting, and with its second meeting on 17 March clashing with the Hôtel de Ville march, and being postponed, these comments may have come as late as the second, 21 March 1848 meeting):

> Marx made a long speech at one of these meetings and said that the February revolution was only to be regarded as the superficial beginning of the European movement. In a short time, open fighting would break out in Paris between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. On its result the victory or defeat of revolutionary Europe would depend. He therefore insisted that the German workers remain in Paris and prepare in advance to take part in the armed struggle.[65]

In France, there were several positive developments after the abdication of Louis Philippe I and the formation of the Provisional Government (even with its bias to moderates) on 24 February 1848—thus, the abolition of the death penalty for political offences, the suppression of the

[62] Official attendance was given at 200,000, though Jenny Marx in a letter the same day to Joseph Weydemeyer, suggests 400,000. *Jenny Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, 17 March, 1848. MECW 38*, 539.

[63] Peter Amann, "Karl Marx, Quarante-Huitard Français?" in *International Review of Social History* 6, no. 2 (1961), 249–55.

[64] Marx was en route to Paris on 4 March, and en route to Prussia by 6 April.

[65] Sebastian Seiler, *Das Komplott vom 13 Juli 1849 oder der letzte Sieg der Bourgeoisie in Frankreich* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1850), 21. Marx (writing to the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* in 1850) disowned Seiler's book. *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 873.

Octroi (levy on goods entering a town or city) and salt taxes, the reduction of working hours, the introduction of universal male suffrage—as well as some much more questionable ones such as the Ateliers Nationaux (National Workshops).[66] But the rapid marginalisation in government of the working class,[67] and the introduction as early as 16 March 1848 of the '45 centime tax', paid for in particular by 'Jacques le bonhomme … in truth it hit the peasant class above all, they had to pay the costs of the February revolution' as Marx himself colourfully concluded in his 1850 review of the 1848 French Revolution,[68] pointed to an already ebbing revolutionary tide. Some saw the 17 March rally as a triumphant demonstration of working-class power, for others, it 'was the last glorious day of the democratic party'.[69] The general elections to the National Assembly on 23 and 24 April saw the socialists (and under rightward-drifting Alexandre Ledru-Rollin) secure only 9% of a chamber dominated by moderates. France had not spent long in the vanguard of 'the European movement'.

But, much more importantly, what did this commitment to France have to do with the determinedly German focus of the *Manifesto*—'the Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany'? Marx was asking his tiny number of German émigré supporters (remembering their numbers peaked, at only 400—or just 0.5% of the estimated 80,000 German exiles in Paris[70]—at the beginning of April) to commit to 'the armed struggle' in Paris, rather than to the far more visceral and romantic, if foolhardy, armed struggle of the German Legion, with its projected campaign in their homelands.

Marx in any event would rapidly change course. News of the outbreak of revolution in Vienna on 13 March, and the consequent fall of Metternich, reached Paris on 19 March, and of the barricades fighting in Berlin on 18 March, on 20 March. From 21 March, with the arrival in Paris from Brussels of Engels, Marx and Engels decided the time was now

[66] 'English workhouses in the open', Marx termed them.

[67] 'In this way the representatives of the working class were banished from the seat of the Provincial Government, the bourgeois part of which retained the real state power.' *The Class Struggle in France. MECW 10*, 55

[68] *The Class Struggle in France. MECW 10,* 61.

[69] Bernstein, *Marx in Paris*, 1848, 352.

[70] Gabriel, *Love and Capital*, 138.

ripe for them, and the many League members from London and Brussels, to return to their German states.[71]

And while the German Legion may have proved to be the wrong German cause, it was not as if there were not some encouraging noises coming out of the German states from early March onwards or that the League did not appear demonstratively stronger on the ground there, than in Paris. If, in time, faith in the revolution in the German states would turn out to be as misplaced as banking on France, a German émigré in Paris could at least surely have judged for himself how well it had turned out for the French proletariat and peasantry in March 1848.

There are grounds for believing, too, that Marx and Engels were more on top of early revolutionary events in the German states than one might have imagined, given where they were then living. On 3 March, Gottschalk, Anneke and Willich led the 5000-strong rally in Cologne to present 'The Demands of the People'. All three were arrested, prompting Engels to comment sarcastically to Marx on 8 March: 'It's a bad business in Cologne. Our three best men are in jug … the thing was initiated without rhyme or reason … everything was organised with appalling stupidity.'[72] But Valentin is less dismissive: 'the Cologne petition should be considered as the first communist endeavour in Germany, and has therefore more than local significance'. Valentin, Stadelmann and Obermann all believe that with Gottschalk and Anneke being League members, it was inconceivable that the Cologne rally could have happened without the knowledge and will of Marx. Karl Stommel, in contrast, is sceptical of any organisational role on Marx's part.[73]

With Gottschalk and Anneke being the leading lights in the League in Cologne, and Marx not on the ground, the Stommel thesis seems more probable. Perhaps Marx and Engels were simply privately happy, given their in-fighting with Gottschalk, to learn of an ill-organised venture unravelling. Engels is well-informed on what he describes as 'splendid' news from the German states, being aware of specific events in Nassau, Munich, Kassel and Berlin, and the granting of press freedom and the proclamation of a National Guard, and the general tenor of 8 March 1848 commentary surely offer some nuggets of encouragement.[74] The

[71] *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 873.
[72] *Engels to Marx, 8 March 1848. MECW 38*, 159.
[73] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 243.
[74] *Engels to Marx, 8 March 1848. MECW 38*, 159–60.

follow-up letter of 18 March—'in Germany things are going very well indeed'—strikes a similar tone.[75]

As to the League's strength in the German states, for every report in June and September 1847 damning the League in Paris, there are more encouraging views on the German position. In June (pointedly, 'in London, our League is strongest'), there is word of setbacks in Berlin (a Grün supporter unsurprisingly to blame), but 'Hamburg is also organised. … The League is also established in Altona, Bremen, Mainz, Munich, Leipzig, Königsberg, Thorn, Kiel, Magdeburg, Stuttgart, Mannheim and Baden-Baden.' In September, the overall picture is less upbeat, especially in Hamburg, but there is more positive news in Leipzig, and (significantly, for its role in April 1848), again Mainz.[76]

To a crucial detail. In the same 18 March letter to Marx, Engels, still in Brussels (this being around three days before his arrival in Paris) says, 'I hope we shan't have to remain very long in Paris'.[77] Engels had got the point that it was time to get out of France and do something more meaningful in the German states. The 'what' is the nub.

The co-writing of the 17 *Demands*, between 21 and 24 March (instigated, one shouldn't forget, by Marx and Engels themselves), might be construed as a concerted, if revised, push to promote a campaigning programme given a false start by the *Manifesto*, to arm returning League members with a more usable and relevant pamphlet. In reality, it looks to have been an act of bad faith by both Marx and Engels.

The evidence comes from a letter to Marx from the doctor Roland Daniels, in Cologne, dated 21 March, 'via Fräulein Schöler, I hear that you have in mind to found a newspaper. In Paris or Germany?'[78] 'Fräulein Schöler' is Caroline, or 'Lina', Schöler, a close friend to both Jenny Marx—'rest assured that in me you will always find a loyal and loving friend', she told Lina on 14 July 1849—and to Karl Marx from their Brussels days in the mid-1840s through to Karl's death in 1883. Lina was briefly engaged to Jenny's brother Edgar in the mid-1840s, and was also a character witness for Daniels and his wife Amalie in the Cologne Communist Trial of 1852. Lina in 1848 lived in Paris, so for Daniels to

[75] *Engels to Marx, 18 March 1848. MECW 38*, 165.

[76] *First Congress to the League, 9 June, 1847. MECW 6*, 592–3*; The Central Authority to the League. MECW 6*, 605–8.

[77] *Engels to Marx, 18 March 1848. MECW 38*, 165.

[78] *MEGA² III/2*, 403.

have learnt of the newspaper scheme such that he could raise it with Marx on 21 March implies that Lina must have first heard of it from Jenny, or perhaps even Karl himself, no later than 19 or 20 March.[79] The clear inference is that Marx, only confirmed as President and figurehead of the League less than two weeks before, on around 7 March, planned the *NRZ* before writing the 17 *Demands*, which he would not personally be orchestrating for the League.

Engels was clearly involved with the *NRZ* project from the outset too. On 26 March, he writes to his brother-in-law Blank, clarifying 'Paris or Germany?' and the whole plan, 'I wrote to Mother asking for money so that within a few days I could return to Germany where we are starting up the *Rheinische Zeitung* [soon to be the *NRZ*] again. Mother is now very anxious to see me back in Germany, partly because she believes that there might again be some shooting here in the course of which I could get hurt, partly because she wants me to return anyway'.[80] He writes to Blank again two days later, telling him his subscription to the new newspaper has already been registered.

A further question-mark over Marx's commitment to the 17 *Demands* is provided later in 1848 by Hermann Becker, at that time one of the leaders of the Cologne Association for Workers and Employers. On the face of it, it's hard to regard Hermann Becker as a hostile witness since he was twice arrested for communist leanings, on 25 September 1848 and again on 19 May 1851, and his evidence here comes from his written testimony at the Cologne Communist Trial (at which he was sentenced to five years in jail). But he did not see eye-to-eye with Marx.

Specifically in this instance, Hermann Becker had angered Marx for inviting Weitling to address the Cologne Democratic Society on 21 July 1848—'Haven't we got enough of Gottschalk's nonsense already, and now you must introduce Weitling'. The following day, Schapper broached the subject of the *Demands of the Communist Party* at the Cologne Democratic Society. At this, the written testimony reveals, Hermann Becker raised a protest:

> Since the *Manifesto* was known to me, I had a more thorough understanding of the matter and declared myself against a fundamental discussion of

[79] Marx in June 1848 describes a one- (usually) to two-day delivery time for letters from Paris to Cologne. *MECW 7*, 121, 123.

[80] *Engels to Emil Blank, 26 March 1848. MECW 38*, 165–6.

> the *Demands* in front of so ill-educated an audience; for the basic intuition, from which the *Manifesto* proceeds, is an erroneous one as far as it relates to Germany.

Merely Hermann Becker's personal viewpoint, but then to the more interesting crux of the anecdote: 'When some days later, I spoke to Marx about the incident, he explained that the point about the *Demands* was much less to do with putting them into practice, than with countering Gottschalk's woolly talk'.[81] Marx's admission here might seem improbable but there would have been little benefit to Becker in fabricating such an anecdote in a state trial, and it suggests factionalism in Marx's wider circle might well have had a role in this pamphlet's effective promotion (or otherwise).

Nicolaevsky outlines the shifting narrative in late March 1848, 'The outbreak of revolution in Germany gave the Communists new tasks. Their place was no longer in Paris, but in the country in which they and they only could show the working class the way. That country was Germany. Marx advised the exiles to return to Germany individually and start building up proletarian organisations.'[82]

There are some points to add here. Herwegh's legion departed, initially for Strasbourg, on 1 April 1848, to much fanfare, coinciding with the unremarked return of individual exiles, to their German heartlands, gathering pace. Not only were Marx and Engels not among the latter, but their eventual departure from Paris was not until 6 April, nearly three weeks after Engels's line to Marx that 'I hope we shan't have to remain very long in Paris'. It appears, moreover, that their promise to Cabet on 5 April, 'We do not doubt for one instant that we shall shortly be able to give you favourable news of the communist movement in Germany',[83] would have to be delivered in due course second-hand.

It's an unsatisfactory mystery that Marx and Engels took so long to return to Prussia. Any sophisticated political observer, as Marx surely was,

[81] Karl Hackenberg, *Der rote Becker. Ein deutsches Lebensbild aus dem neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Julius Baedecker, 1902), 54–5. At the next Democratic Society meeting on 4 August 1848, Marx took Weitling to task too: 'separation of political and social interests assumed by Weitling … unthinkable … the claim that social development retards political development … also incorrect … dictatorship which Weitling proposed as the most desirable constitutional form is … impractical and quite unfeasible'. *MECW 7*, 556.

[82] Nicolaevsky, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, 163–4.

[83] *Marx and Engels to Étienne Cabet, 5 April 1848. MECW 38*, 170.

would have realised (and in his case, did) that the game was up for a proletarian-, and especially peasant-oriented French Revolution, as of 16 or 17 March 1848. There was much more at stake elsewhere: it was, after all, the critical 'March days' for the German states as a whole.

Marx and Engels obtained passports from the French Provisional Government on 30 March but did not leave Paris until 5 or 6 April (Herres and Melis suggest the earlier departure date but they don't cross the border till 7 April). Wilhelm Wolff's similar French passport was ratified by the Hesse embassy on 29 March; he headed home with much greater urgency that day or on 30 March,[84] returning on more or less the same day as fellow Central Authority member Wallau. Marx and Engels arrived in Prussia on 8 April.

One point is clear. The fact that Marx took so long to join other League members in the German states can't be attributed to incoming obstruction by the authorities since he does not seem to have had any great difficulty getting back into Prussia. Marx was granted the 'right to reside' by the local City Council when he arrived in Cologne in April 1848, with the renewal of his Prussian citizenship (which he had resigned on 1 December 1845, to put himself beyond the reach of official interference) subject to rubber-stamping by the royal authorities (under a law of 1842). The local Royal Government in Cologne eventually, in August 1848, turned down the Marx citizenship application, a ruling endorsed by Minister of the Interior Friedrich Kühlwetter on 12 September 1848. Marx therefore, technically, remained a foreigner, but as late as March 1849, Cologne's city government (along with Cologne's Police Superintendent) resisted urgings from the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in Berlin to expel Marx, as being likely to prove counter-productive. An expulsion order was finally issued by the Prussian Government on 11 May 1849, and Marx left Cologne for Frankfurt on 19 May 1849.

The next chapter considers how Marx and Engels engaged with workers' groups in the revolutionary period, and how this compared with the activities and tactics of other key figures in their orbit, such as Wilhelm Wolff and Stephan Born.

[84] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 149.

CHAPTER 6

Engaging with Workers: Mainz, the Communist League, Stephan Born and the CWA

Marx's practical engagement with workers' organisations in the German states in 1848–1849 was a protracted affair, running through right until June 1849, passing several crucial milestones along the way. These were: the Mainzer Aufruf (Mainz Appeal) of 5 April 1848, the 'dissolution' of the Communist League in May 1848, a relationship with Born, which evolved from keeping him at arm's length in 1848 to rapprochement in 1849, and the takeover of the Cologne Workers' Association (CWA) on the arrest of Gottschalk on 3 July 1848. This chapter evaluates how, and how effectively, Marx engaged.

Mainz, then in the duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt (now in Rhineland-Palatinate), was the Rhineland's second largest city after Cologne, but with less than half the latter's population in the late 1840s. Mainz's revolutionary credentials were for a time stronger than those of Cologne. Mass meetings were held in Mainz during the week of 28 February–5 March 1848 (Cologne had managed modest scale meetings under Willich on 28 February and 1 March). The threat of a mass march from Mainz to his grand-ducal seat in Darmstadt prompted Grand Duke Ludwig II to dismiss his reactionary prime minister Karl du Thil on 5 March and institute a new regime under a liberal prime minister, Gagern, celebrated by a major public celebration on Ash Wednesday, 8 March. A second celebration of the newly won freedoms took place on 20 March (although Gagern announced the following day that any further rioting would be given short

D. Ireland, *The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99464-8_6

shrift).[1] The 5000-strong rally in Cologne on 3 March was clearly well attended and alarmed the authorities,[2] but its main immediate upshot was the arrests of its three organisers: Gottschalk, Anneke and Willich.

Thereafter—and bearing in mind both Mainz and Cologne were garrison cities—Mainz, despite being no more industrialised than Cologne, proved to be an important Rhineland revolutionary centre, along with Düsseldorf, Cochem and Kaiserslautern.[3] Between late March and early May 1848, there were clashes between Prussian troops and the local populations in Mainz; after tavern brawls, and then large-scale street confrontations in mid-May, the deputy fortress commander threatened to turn his artillery on the city.[4]

The political leanings of Mainz's leaders are worth delineating. Although 21-year-old Mainz shop assistant Johann Schickel ('little Schickel' in an Engels's letter three years later) told Marx on 14 April that 'the Mainzers are just like all these southern German black-red-gold jackasses', Welta Pospelowa (then at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in east Berlin) argues that 'Mainz was not as strongly contaminated as the towns in Baden by the "ultra-revolutionary" voices of the petty bourgeois democrats, by their craving for immediate "republican" insurrections'.[5] Ludwig Bamberger, co-founder on 11 March of the Mainz Democratic Club, and sometime editor of the *Mainzer Zeitung*,[6] was an example of a Mainz-style republican petty bourgeois democrat and thus also part of the constituency that Marx and Engels in the 17 *Demands* said communists should be reaching out to. Schickel was also wide of the mark in suggesting in his 14 April letter to Marx, of Mainz, 'if one were to step

[1] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 73.

[2] Cologne's Lord Mayor Steinberger on 4 March wrote a worried letter to Prussian Prime Minister Ludolf Camphausen regarding the petition submitted to him by Gottschalk on 3 March 'on behalf of many workers' and the 'masses who are turning against property and wealth'. Joseph Hansen, *Preussen und Rheinland von 1815 bis 1915* (Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1918), 497.

[3] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 154.

[4] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 161, 183.

[5] Welta Pospelowa, *Adolf Cluß—ein Mitglied des Bundes der Kommunisten und Kampfgeführte von Marx und Engels*, Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 3 (Berlin: SED-Dietz Verlag, 1980), 93.

[6] Sperber suggests that the *NRZ* was no more radical than the *Mainzer Zeitung*. Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 212.

forth here as a communist, you'd certainly be stoned to death although these oxen have the most confused grasp of what communism is'.[7]

For Mainz would briefly be designated the 'Central Authority of the Communist League' and would issue an important appeal 'To All Workers of Germany', nominally in the name of the Workers' Educational Association in Mainz, but composed by two League Central Authority members, Wallau and Wilhelm Wolff,[8] and a League member Adolf Cluss, and seeking to orchestrate a nationwide network of workers' associations. The 'Mainz Appeal' was surely indisputably a League initiative, although, Schieder reasonably argues, 'to all appearances drawn up independently of Marx and Engels'.[9]

Mainz's impassioned appeal was launched on 5 April 1848: 'If we do not want once again … to be exploited, despised and downtrodden … then we must not lose a moment … isolated, as we have been hitherto, we are weak, although we number millions. United and organised, on the other hand, we shall constitute an irresistible force. Therefore, brothers, everywhere in towns and villages form workers' associations.'[10] In Schraepler's view, the Appeal primarily had the intention of drawing in the workers, chiefly interested in purely economic issues, into the political movement.[11]

This was not the first time Wilhelm Wolff had tub-thumped for the League. In the 9 June 1847 round-robin accompanying the League's First Congress, jointly signed with Schapper, but here in a section in his handwriting,[12] Wolff urged members on: 'It is now for you, dear Brothers, to prove that you have the cause of the League, the cause of communism, at heart. The League has emerged victorious from a period of decline. Apathy and laxity have been overcome. … The future of the League is secure. … But, dear Brothers, our position is not yet such that we can for one moment relax our efforts. … Therefore the interest of the League, the

[7] *MEGA*^{2} *III/2*, 421.

[8] Wallau and Cluss were the signatories; the Appeal's phrase 'united and organised' is also used by Wolff in his *Kommunistische Zeitschrift* essay, *The Prussian Diet & the Prussian Proletariat*. Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 312.

[9] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution*, 338.

[10] *To All Workers of Germany. MECW 7*, 535.

[11] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 262–3.

[12] Bert Andréas, ed., *Gründungsdokumente des Bundes der Kommunisten, Juni bis September 1847* (Hamburg: Verlag Ernst Hauswedell, 1969), 32.

communist cause, still demands of you a short period of the most strenuous activity.'[13]

The Mainz Appeal appeared to draw important early support right from the top of the League structure. President Marx and Central Authority member Engels made Mainz their first port of call on returning on 8 April to Prussia, from Paris, and spent two days in the city before moving on to Cologne. Bear in mind, too, that it was the Central Authority, led by Marx, encouraging League members to return to their hometowns, to organise and spread the League's message[14] (though Gottschalk would be disappointed that he was not keeping Cologne to himself, with neither Marx returning to the much more militant Trier, nor Engels to Barmen). League members returning to Mainz, in March or the first days of April, included Wallau, Paul Stumpf, Philipp Neubeck and Schickel, joining Cluss, Stumpf's brother Gottfried and Germain Metternich.

Wolff writes from Breslau 'to the Central Authority of the League of Communists in Mainz' on 18 April, Regensburg-based League member FA Bergmann doing the same on 21 April (he complains that the 17 *Demands* are in many respects 'too blunt' and he could achieve the same propaganda goals 'with different words'). Central Authority member Schapper, as part of his promotional tour taking in nearby Wiesbaden and Hesse-Nassau, sat in on a League meeting in Mainz on 20 April. Reporting back on Mainz on 26 April to the Central Authority 'in Cologne'—the central cast had reassembled there, and, contrary to Wolff's and Bergmann's impressions, as of 15 April—Schapper said he was 'extremely surprised to hear that although there were many League members there', it had not been organised into a League district, which he rectified. Nonetheless, 'in Mainz, there is a Workers' Association in blooming health, and numbering 700 members … there's a good basis in Mainz, where decent progress will be made'.[15] Sperber suggests Mainz's Workers' Association was proportionately much stronger than Cologne, its lower classes, more revolutionary.[16]

All this attention and interest flattered to deceive. Cologne would prove a big stumbling block. At his meeting in Cologne with Gottschalk, around

[13] *A Circular of the First Congress of the Communist League to the League Members, 9 June 1847. MECW 6*, 598.

[14] Gerhard Becker is one of many sources. Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 24.

[15] *MEGA² III/2*, 435.

[16] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 233.

7 April, Wolff reported, 'I gave him the Appeal of the Mainz Workers' Association, and Gottschalk will put the word about in the Cologne Workers' Association'. He didn't. According to Gerhard Becker, Gottschalk 'did not read out the appeal word for word to the committee of the [Cologne] Workers' Association [which first met on 14 April] or have it printed in the association's newspaper'.[17] Having had no response to the Appeal, Cluss sent a follow-up inquiry, around 19 or 20 April, asking whether Cologne had received it (purely for form's sake, since Wolff had told Wallau on 18 April that he had passed a copy to Gottschalk).[18] In his actual response to Mainz—addressed to 'Brothers'—and dated 14 April, but appearing in the first issue of the CWA's paper on 23 April, Gottschalk first ruminated on the 'glorious struggle at the barricades' in Berlin on 18 and 19 March (and similar heroic efforts at Leipzig in 1813, and Waterloo in 1815). He then continued, 'so we too, heeding the demands of the zeitgeist, have established a workers' association, following the example of our sister town of Mainz'. Its task would be 'to resolve the social questions, paying constant attention to political events' but, more specifically, 'we want guarantees for the rights and interests of workers, so that each can live freely, be well and rejoice in his freedom … in striving for this goal, we reach out a brotherly hand to you; unity brings strength, and we must be strong, so that we can defend the results and the rights gained by fighting against every suddenly appearing despotism. We want everything for the people, everything through the people, and our watchword is: Freedom, Brotherhood, Labour.'[19]

A nod to the virtue of unity, certainly, but no suggestion that Cologne saw itself as subservient to Mainz, or that it attached importance to Mainz coordinating a national network of workers' associations. 'Empty flummery' is Gerhard Becker's verdict on the Cologne response. Acting president of the 'Mainz Workers' Educational Association' Gottfried Stumpf, and Cluss, on 23 April fired off a tart (note the 'in general' and 'one banner') but neatly phrased rejoinder to the CWA, the thrust of which was that Mainz didn't think much of the CWA's definition of 'unity': 'You have in both your communications [one did not survive] spoken from the

[17] Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 60–1.

[18] Becker claims Wolff circulated copies of the Appeal to Cologne League members over and above Gottschalk and that a CWA committee secretary, 'local writer Hocker', drafted the CWA response to Mainz. Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 61.

[19] *ZAV*, 23 April 1848.

soul, we too have up till now pursued the same goal and also sought to reach the same [goal] in general through the same means … fighting under one banner will and must crown the success of our efforts'.[20]

Quite separately, Paul Stumpf (as chair) and Cluss (as assistant), this time in the guise of the Mainz District of the League, sent on 23–24 April their review of its activities to the League's Central Authority in Cologne (starting, 'Proletarians of all countries, unite'). The tone is altogether more deferential and pleading. Mainz reported, correcting Schapper's more generous perception, that its workers' association had ca. 400 members, but getting to the crux, that 'with regard to our designation as the provisional Central Committee for German workers' associations, we can report that up to now, we have received, relatively, still very few notifications. We've had news of the setting-up of workers' associations at Todtnau by Freiburg-in-Breisgau, Pforzheim, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Darmstadt, Offenbach, Hanau, Frankfurt, Odernheim, Bruchsal.' The significance of this list of towns is first, that most (seven of the 10) were in fairly close proximity to Mainz, at a distance of 25–50 miles. But this wasn't exclusively the case: Pforzheim was over 100 miles away—not much nearer than Cologne (117 miles)—while Freiburg was 165 miles away. Moreover, Geneva, over 350 miles away, also responded. As well as being printed as a pamphlet, the Appeal appeared in various newspapers, including, on 12 April, the *Deutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung*, in Berlin (also over 350 miles away).[21] Paul Stumpf and Cluss spend the final section of their activity round-up asking for policy guidance from the Central Authority.

It's important to differentiate the responses from Gottschalk, for the CWA—ultimately visible and published—and from Marx, and the Central Authority. The Cologne rebuff to Mainz was not solely down to Gottschalk and was very much two-pronged. There is some impression that on his errand to Mainz, Schapper took a firm hand, knocking the Mainz District of the League and its members into proper shape, but this is not how Paul Stumpf and Cluss saw it in their activity round-up, where Schapper's name features merely in a bland procedural fashion in the minutes for the Mainz District's 20 April sitting; he certainly is not mentioned in the separate later references to the Appeal and the responses to it. As for Marx (and Engels, for that matter), their two-day visit to Mainz, on 8–9 April, straight after the launch of the Appeal, surely ensured they were fully appraised of

[20] Pospelowa, *Adolf Cluß - ein Mitglied des Bundes der Kommunisten*, 93.
[21] Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 60.

its contents and purpose. Thereafter, Marx was firmly established in Cologne, as was from 15 April (if not to everyone's knowledge) the League's Central Authority, to whom Paul Stumpf and Cluss directed their 23–24 April report. There is no record of how Marx may have contributed to the Appeal's potential success either on his visit to Mainz or after hearing from Paul Stumpf and Cluss. One is left strongly to conclude that Marx simply ignored the Appeal, not least because a nationwide network of workers' associations was not to his (or the *NRZ*'s) 1848 liking. Gerhard Becker loyally suggests that it was Gottschalk's 'thwarting' of this 'directive of the Central Authority' that prompted Marx to have Gottschalk publicly, at the subsequent meeting of the Cologne community of the League, confirm that he was resigning from the League.[22]

In any event, Mainz was soon to throw in the towel. At the end of April, it made a final plea to the League Central Authority, to urgently convene the proposed congress of the workers' associations, since there had been no reaction to the Appeal from the most important towns, and the chances therefore for a successful nationwide coordination by Mainz were very negligible. Again, it seems the Central Authority did not respond. By 17 May, at the latest, Mainz dropped its self-designation as 'provisional central committee for the workers' associations of Germany'.[23]

Nicolaevsky reports that 'the Mainz Appeal … attracted a very limited response',[24] while Siemann gives a more nuanced verdict, 'locally based special efforts and diverging aims contributed as much to the failure as the fact that the large associations in Cologne and Berlin rejected the centralisation efforts concentrated on Mainz'.[25]

Mainz soon fell apart, as Dronke reported to the Central Authority on 5 May: 'I found the League [in Mainz] at the onset of complete anarchy; Wallau was in Wiesbaden; Neubeck was in a café playing dominoes while a meeting was scheduled; [Germain] Metternich … regards the cause with the greatest indifference.'[26]

Beyond the Mainz Appeal, it's interesting to identify the very diverging efforts of senior League figures to spread the League word, and its two key pamphlets, the *Manifesto* and the 17 *Demands*, through the German states.

[22] Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 61; the meeting took place on 11 May, *MECW 7*, 542.

[23] Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 64–5.

[24] See also *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 877; Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 298.

[25] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 92–3.

[26] *MEGA*^{2} *III/2*, 442–3.

After arriving back from Mainz, Engels didn't stay long in Cologne, leaving on around 14 April, for his home patch, the Wuppertal (Wupper valley), some 40 miles north. While leftists in Mainz or Trier could put their radicalism on display, this was not the case 'in the conservative, neo-orthodox, Prussian loyalist Wuppertal'.[27] Engels and Marx experienced this conservatism first-hand when attending a meeting of the democratic 'Political Club' in Elberfeld on 8 May 1848. A journalist for the rather self-importantly titled, if well-connected, Stuttgart- and Munich-based *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser*[28] (Morning Newspaper for Educated Readers) enjoyed reporting that the majority of the club's company took the very greatest care to shun 'that table, at which the Cologne Agitators had sat down … there had even been the odd voice loudly arguing for these dangerous types to be shown the door'.[29]

When Engels writes to Blank on 15 April, from Barmen, there is a hint of revolutionary intent—'the whole of Barmen is waiting to see what I shall do. They believe I'm going to proclaim the republic forthwith'—but it's only a very brief one. He continues to Blank, 'I, of course, am not meddling in anything but waiting quietly to see what happens'. He then hands on the revolutionary baton, with a curious observation that would undoubtedly have caught 'the philistines' of Barmen off-guard: 'But they're in for a surprise when once the Chartists make a start'.[30]

The recruiting that Engels was intent on was first and foremost of subscribers for the *NRZ*, and he didn't get much joy on that count, telling Marx on 25 April, 'there is damned little prospect for the shares here. … Nothing whatever is to be got out of my old man … sooner than present us with 1,000 thalers, he would pepper us with a thousand balls of grape.' However diligent his fund-raising efforts may have been, it seems, as noted, that Engels wasn't indulging in very much direct League proselytising, 'If even a single copy of our 17 points were to circulate here, all would be lost for us. The mood of the bourgeoisie is really ugly.'[31] He does however tell Marx on 9 May, 'A beginning has also been made with a community of the League'.[32]

[27] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 194, 193.

[28] The paper was long-established, first appearing in 1807. Engels himself was Bremen correspondent in 1841.

[29] Cited in Herres, *Sozialismus und Kommunismus.*

[30] *Engels to Emil Blank, 15 April 1848. MECW 38*, 170–1.

[31] *Engels to Marx, 25 April 1848. MECW 38*, 172–3.

[32] *Engels to Marx, 9 May 1848. MECW 38*, 175.

Engels was getting out and about, visiting, before his return to Cologne on 20 May, as well as Barmen, nearby Elberfeld, but also Engelskirchen, some 50 miles from Barmen. He had little to show, though, for having spent over five weeks away. From the stony political ground of the Wuppertal, Engels was able to unearth a limited amount of funding for the *NRZ*,[33] and even this proved short-lived. As he recalled in 1884, 'the shareholders themselves were more than unreliable. Half of them deserted us immediately after the first number came out and by the end of the month [June 1848] we no longer had any at all.'[34]

Wilhelm Wolff, as recounted by his biographer Schmidt, who in turn relies on a lengthy round-up dated 18 April 1848 from Wolff to the Central Authority,[35] shows what could be done, by a Central Authority member. Having received a farewell beating from the Brussels police on 27 February, Wolff had a short intervening stay in Valenciennes, just over the border into France, before arriving on 10 March in Paris, from where he was the first leading League figure to seek a Prussian passport on 26 March.[36] This was refused, but having then successfully secured a French passport, so as to be able to travel ultimately to his home territory of Silesia (in Eastern Prussia), via Metz and Mainz, Wolff left Paris on 29 or 30 March and was over the border on 31 March, and in Mainz the following day.

He carried with him copies of the 17 *Demands*, to which he would logically have contributed suggestions (notably on the peasants' demands) to authors Marx and Engels.[37] Schmidt suggests Wolff had three tasks: 'building the League in Germany, founding and politically influencing public workers' clubs and bringing together all the local workers' organisations across the whole country into one all-encompassing political alliance'. If this all sounds rather dewy-eyed, Wolff did at least encounter positive attitudes in the German states—'O blessed 1848! What joy, what enthusiasm there was in their faces'—in contrast to his experience on his return in 1861, 'what blaséness, what English puritanical equanimity'.[38]

[33] The *Deutsche Zeitung* of 6 June 1848 reported that overall only 13,000 Thalers, of the 30,000 Thalers targeted, were subscribed. Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 24.

[34] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 26*, 123.

[35] *MEGA*² *III/2*, 422–6.

[36] The financially self-sufficient Weerth, who also had a career as a businessman, returned on 20 March to Cologne, where he would later write for the *NRZ*.

[37] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 148.

[38] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 150–1.

In 1848, he seemed tireless, informing the Central Authority in mid-April, of 'multiple opportunities to spread the word on the railway, barely got to keep my mouth shut'. He stayed till 6 April in Mainz, where Wallau and Cluss had put together the 5 April Mainz Appeal, on whose composition Wolff is very likely to have assisted (given its wording).[39] Leaving Mainz, Wolff spent the night in Koblenz, 'chatting about the questions of the day with petty bourgeois and workers, in various pubs; I convinced them that founding a workers' club and holding discussions in national assemblies would in general be indispensable.' On a journey down the Rhine the following day, from Koblenz to Cologne, he handed out copies of the Appeal, 'after first chatting and setting out the arguments'. Wolff's visit to Cologne, where he saw Anneke and Gottschalk, passed on the Mainz Appeal and called for the energetic reorganisation of the League in Cologne, has been discussed already. He also spread the word on the train from Cologne to Hannover, then spent three days, from 10 to 12 April, in Berlin, meeting Born. Wolff tried to get all League members 'to put on a united front, and to get things in order'. He finally reached Breslau in Silesia on 13 April.[40] Here, the League's situation was 'even more hopeless' than in the towns he had previously visited, with no organisation. He spent several weeks canvassing and on 10 May was elected to the FNA. From 19 May to 14 June, he edited the *Schlesische Chronik* (Silesian Chronicle), whose democratic backbone he attempted to stiffen, and in the second half of June, moved on to Cologne, to join the *NRZ* editorial board.[41]

While Wolff was feverishly campaigning for the League, and Engels was being short-changed in his home territory, Marx remained largely in Cologne. While he tells Engels in a letter of 24 April from Cologne that 'a good many have already been subscribed for here' he then encourages Engels to even greater *NRZ* share-selling efforts before ironically closing, 'I might come to your part of the world if things don't look too fearsome with you'. Marx and Weerth spent two days (6–8 May) in Elberfeld, ca. 30 miles away, 'to discuss with Engels problems connected with the publication of the *NRZ* and the activity of the Communist League'.[42] There is

[39] See also *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 877.

[40] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 143–55.

[41] Schmidt, *Wilhelm Wolff*, 155–67.

[42] *Marx to Engels, about 24 April 1848; Footnote 219*, *MECW 38*, 171–2, 597. *MEGA*^{2} *I/7*, 878.

no record of what the visit might have achieved for the League, other than the unwelcome reception at the Political Club on 8 May.

The health of the League otherwise appeared to be an issue that did not thereafter actively engage Marx. Schraepler takes the view that Marx took a passive stance towards the League, leaving it up to the members of the individual districts, both at home and abroad, as to whether they still wanted to work together, without Marx attaching any value to the principle of coordinating their individual activities.[43] His implicit indifference to the petitioning from Mainz aside, Marx didn't have to worry about the League presence back in Cologne, for a branch had existed there since the autumn of 1847. Unfortunately, it was led by True Socialists Gottschalk and Willich, already butts of Engels's jibes for their clumsy handling of the 5000-strong rally in Cologne on 3 March 1848 ('appalling stupidity' and so on). Despite the potential personality clashes, given that the League's Central Authority—and Marx—were in situ from 15 April, the Cologne branch unsurprisingly soon became the League's most important in the German states.[44] Cologne was a sensible location for the *NRZ*, given the supporter base carried over from the days of the *Rheinische Zeitung* of 1842–1843 and the helpful legal regime of the Code Napoléon still prevailing in the Rhineland, but with property speculation as its most important economic activity, as Ayçoberry identifies, Cologne was hardly a proletarian hotbed or the most logical stronghold for the League.[45] Over at the CWA, at this time, Gerhard Becker suggests, 'the class nature of the revolutionary movement was kept hidden, the particular standpoint of the proletariat completely relinquished'.[46]

Away from Cologne, its pivotal League status notwithstanding, there was evidence of far more activism (over and above Wilhelm Wolff's) on the League's behalf involving other members of the League's hierarchy. The League, after all, had in a manner of speaking, gone public. The 17 *Demands*, unlike the *Manifesto*, had been signed. The League, or its named proxy (albeit one not prefixed with 'communist') the 'Alliance of German Workers', had attempted, unsuccessfully in Cabet's *Le Populaire*, successfully in the *Trier'sche Zeitung* of 29 March not only to disassociate

[43] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 271.

[44] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–1849*, 92.

[45] Ayçoberry, *Cologne entre Napoléon et Bismarck*, 152, 160; Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 37.

[46] Becker, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels in Köln 1848–1849*, 34.

itself publicly from the German Legion but also to display its links with various workers' societies in England, Belgium, Switzerland, North Italy, Holland and Scandinavia.

But reports on the League's penetration from its members spreading across the German states were not encouraging. After reporting to the Central Authority in Cologne, on 26 April, first of the disorganised status of the League in Mainz, Schapper recounts that he then moved on to Wiesbaden, to which Wallau had moved for work though the latter had done nothing there on behalf of the League.[47]

Dronke—very much a Marx-Engels protégé (he reports from Frankfurt on 29 April that he has got nowhere with share subscriptions to the *NRZ*; other letters to Marx are addressed to 'Sprung from the head of Jupiter' and signed coquettishly 'your little mandrake')—writes to the Central Authority on 5 May. He provides a generally discouraging but also nuanced round-up of his League encounters in Koblenz, Frankfurt, Kurhessen and Mainz. He sets up a League district in Koblenz, but in Frankfurt 'one is almost stoned if recognised as a communist' (after Schickel's report to Marx on 14 April, communist-stoning seems something of a topos). Pointedly, Dronke closes by saying, 'The various workers' clubs are getting very impatient. Would it not be time to submit a petition, signed in every town, in the style of the Chartists, to the so-called parliament? The *Demands* weren't that much taken into account, maybe a Workers' Petition, with six to eight points, and some amplifying guide. Do give me instructions, as to what I should say, when the workers bang on about the petition again.'[48] From Marx, and the Central Authority in Cologne, there was no response.

For Stadelmann, beyond Cologne and Berlin, 'in the remaining large German towns, the circle of the interested was yet smaller still, the readiness for world revolution even tinier … in Stuttgart, only two activists were identified, cobbler journeyman Birk and locksmith journeyman Mannes. One can gauge from this example how grotesquely overdone was the fear of German governments, and of March governments, of the international organisation of the Communist League'.[49] Nicolaevsky

[47] MEGA² *III/2*, 435.
[48] *MEGA*² *III/2*, 442–3.
[49] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 158–9.

comments, of April 1848, that it soon became clear that the League was far weaker in the German states than the Central Authority had imagined.[50]

There has been a long-running, if inconclusive, debate over whether Marx in 1848 formally dissolved the League. The debate for its practical significance is somewhat of the 'how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?' variety but this didn't stop a testy Cold War exchange of views between E.P. Kandel, the leading Soviet authority on the League, and Nicolaevsky, a former Menshevik, and Marx, and League, biographer. Nicolaevsky was for the dissolution thesis, Kandel against. The debate was undoubtedly highly personalised, Nicolaevsky responding to Kandel's epic (certainly as to title length) *The Distortion of the History of the Struggle Marx and Engels Waged for the Proletarian Party in the Works of Certain Right-Wing Socialists*[51] of 1958 with his own more crisply titled, if equally vituperative *Who is Distorting History?* of 1961.[52] John Cunliffe captures the temperature of the exchange, 'in recent years a bitter controversy has taken place over Marx's alleged dissolution of the Communist League in the spring of 1848'.[53]

Nicolaevsky's key witness is cigar-maker Peter Röser, president of the CWA for around four weeks from the end of May till its final meeting on 25 June 1849, and one of the defendants in the 1852 Cologne Communist Trial, at which he received a six-year sentence. Röser subsequently turned King's evidence, agreeing to reveal all he knew about the League, 'its formation, its development and its members' in return for promises of a passage to America, and considerable financial support, 800–1200 Thalers, neither of which were honoured by the Prussian authorities, and also of improved treatment in prison, via a monthly tariff of 15 Thalers. He ended up serving his full term, with only an irregularly improved feeding regime. Röser gave six depositions (on 30 and 31 December 1853, 2 and 3 January and 11 and 12 February 1854), and in his initial testimony on 30 December 1853—the most interesting—he reveals that at an undated

[50] Nicolaevsky, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, 173.

[51] E.P. Kandel, "The Distortion of the History of the Struggle Marx and Engels Waged for the Proletarian Party in the Works of Certain Right-Wing Socialists", *Voprosy Istorii* 5 (1958): 120–130.

[52] Boris Nicolaevsky, "Who is Distorting History?" 209–36.

[53] John Cunliffe, "The Communist League and the 'Dissolution Question'", *The Journal of Modern History* 53, no. 1 (1981), D1045.

meeting of the League (we know from elsewhere that this was 11 May 1848), 'Marx proposed the dissolution of the League'.[54]

Alas, Röser is a hopelessly unreliable witness (even if turning traitor was understandably self-preserving given his very poor health in prison). Most incriminatingly, Röser omits to mention that Bürgers attended the '11 May' meeting, a rather glaring omission since Bürgers was subsequently identified as the president who signed off that meeting's minutes. Since Bürgers admitted that he was a League member at the 1852 trial (where he received the same length of sentence as Röser), Nicolaevsky acknowledges 'there can be no question of Röser's attempting to conceal Bürgers's name from the police. Then there can be only one explanation: Röser forgot to mention Bürgers's name.'[55] Possibly. Röser's haziness can be partially forgiven, since he didn't even join the League until the spring of 1849. Additionally, Röser had told his police interlocutor, General Police Director von Hinkeldey, on 28 December 1853, 'I have no highly treasonous plot to report, since the leanings of our League excluded that kind of conspiracy; but on the basis of the written promise from Your Honour, I would be willing to talk about everything that I experienced with the League.'[56] Hinkeldey clearly didn't feel this amounted to much, or enough, to honour his promised bribes.

In a pamphleteering context, one should probably be wary of confessions to judicial hearings of the period, which tended to reveal what the witness presumed the presiding judge would want to hear. At the Noellner Inquiry on the Büchner/Weidig *Hessian Country Messenger*, on 1 November 1837, August Becker suggested that Büchner 'had no exclusive hatred towards the Hessian Grand-Ducal government; he believed, in contrast, it to be one of the best. He neither hated the Princes, nor state officials, but only the monarchical principle, which he held to be the cause of all misery.'[57] Given that the early paragraphs of the *Messenger* rail against the enormous financial burden, 'a blood tithe extracted from the body of the people', imposed by the state through 'the Grand-Ducal government', which 'is formed by the Grand Duke and his highest officials', this was preposterous.

[54] Cited in Werner Blumenberg, "Zur Geschichte des Bundes der Kommunisten: Die Aussagen des Peter Gerhardt Röser" in *International Review of Social History* 9, no. 1 (1964), 84, 89.

[55] Nicolaevsky, *Who is Distorting History?* 215.

[56] Cited in Blumenberg, *Zur Geschichte des Bundes der Kommunisten*, 84.

[57] Noellner, *Actenmäßige Darlegung des Verfahrens gegen Friedrich Ludwig Weidig*, 425.

In his 1885 *History of the Communist League*, Engels offers a dismissive verdict on its 1848 demise (one which also challenges the logic of the League hierarchy dispersing individual members to their hometowns):

> As could easily be foreseen, the League proved to be much too weak a lever by comparison with the popular mass movement that had now broken out. Three quarters of the League members who had previously lived abroad had changed their domicile by returning to their homeland; their previous communities were thus to a great extent dissolved and they lost all contact with the League. Some of the more ambitious among them did not even try to resume this contact, but each one began a small separate movement on his own account in his own locality. Finally, the conditions in each separate small state, each province and each town were so different that the League would have been incapable of giving more than the most general directives; such directives were, however, much better disseminated through the press. In short, from the moment when the causes which had made the secret League necessary ceased to exist, the secret League lost all significance as such.[58]

Marx more succinctly argues in *Herr Vogt* that the League in 1848 simply became redundant and passed away without any agency on his part, 'During the revolutionary period in Germany, its activities died down of themselves, since more effective avenues existed now for the realisation of its ends'.[59]

A secondary element of the Röser 30 December 1853 deposition relates that 'Schapper and Moll demanded throughout the preservation of the League', and there being no unanimity on this point, 'Marx used his discretionary power and dissolved the League'. Whether Marx was within his constitutional rights to act in this way is one of the further labyrinthine avenues in this debate, but Nicolaevsky also makes a case for Schapper, Moll and Eccarius preserving a League outside of the influence or control of Marx, with the League more formally resurfacing in the spring of 1849 and being re-joined by Marx late that year.[60] Marx and Engels certainly composed an Address to the Central Authority of the League around 24 March 1850, which recast 1848–1849 revolutionary history: 'The League

[58] *On the History of the Communist League*. *MECW 26*, 324–5.

[59] *Herr Vogt*. *MECW 17*, 80.

[60] Nicolaevsky, *Toward a History of the Communist League, 1847–1852*, 244; Nicolaevsky, *Who is Distorting History?* 222–24.

further proved itself in that its conception of the movement as laid down in the circulars of the congresses and of the Central Authority of 1847 as well as in the *Communist Manifesto* turned out to be the only correct one, that the expectations expressed in those documents were completely fulfilled'.[61] A follow-up Address (this time, round-ups of League activity around Europe) was written by Marx and Engels in June 1850.

The year 1850 also marked an organisational division, into—as Rosemary Ashton characterises them—'plotters' (the so-called 'action party', the Communist Central Committee, led by Schapper and Willich) and 'swotters', a Marx/Engels faction advocating 'education before revolution'. Engels's willingness to serve under Willich in the May 1849 Imperial Constitution campaigns in part indicated a desire not to be seen just as 'mere scholars who were only willing to *talk* revolution'.[62]

Whether Marx ignored or formally dissolved the League in mid-1848 may be the debate, but this framing arguably misses the main point. Marx had angled hard to take control of the League, of which becoming President was part and parcel, and he surely had some consequent responsibility to try and resolve the League's structural weaknesses. After all, Engels would later say (in 1885) of the League and its President, 'This inconsiderable fighting force, however, possessed a leader, Marx, to whom all willingly subordinated themselves, a leader of the first rank, and, thanks to him, a programme of principles and tactics that still has full validity today: the *Communist Manifesto*'.[63]

Not everyone had Wolff's drive and perseverance, but he demonstrated what could be achieved in just two weeks, by way of galvanising and coordinating leadership. Born's letter of 11 May 1848, from Berlin to Marx in Cologne, provides an alternative template to that of Wolff, but a no less important one. The letter is worth reproducing in some detail. Its tone is more than a little boastful, and 23-year-old Born is certainly talking up his own views (as well as playing to his audience), but he does identify a modus operandi for 1848.

Born, a typesetter, had taken a Damascene passage to Berlin. In 1847, he could be described as 'the most zealous disciple' of Engels, pulling a procedural or 'presidential trick' at the first June 1847 Congress of the

[61] *Address of the Central Authority to the League, March 1850. MECW 10,* 277.

[62] Rosemary Ashton, *Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 26, 65.

[63] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848–1849). MECW 26*, 120.

Communist League to get Engels elected as a delegate, being described by Engels in October 1847 as 'the most receptive to all of our ideas'. A month later, he was recommended by Engels (an interesting distinction on his part) to Marx at the BDA 29 November 1847 anniversary of the 1830 Polish Revolution since 'it's good that the Germans are represented by a working man'. Born was even, Engels reveals in January 1848, one of the confidants let in on the latter's affair with Hess's wife-to-be, Sibylle Pesch. 'A few days' after the uprising in Berlin on 18 March 1848—and over a fortnight before the arrival of Marx and Engels in Prussia—Born had hurried from Brussels to become the Communist League representative in the city. When he writes to Marx on 11 May, he had thus been in Berlin for less than two months:

> Dear Marx! You have perhaps picked up from some newspaper or other that I have had to battle with the police here, who wanted to get rid of me. … From 1 June, there will appear thrice weekly under my editorship a workers' newspaper: *Das Volk*. I have a very extended circle of acquaintances here, and am therefore counting on a decent success with it. … The proletariat is out-and-out revolutionary. I'm trying to hold it back, if that were only possible, from useless rioting, and instead organise all its scattered energies into one strong force. I stand pretty much at the head of the workers' movement here. The bourgeoisie trust my talent as a go-between, they haven't spotted that I'm bringing the workers together, and only operating that way so it doesn't go off half-cocked. They've taken my side against my expulsion. I'm chairman here of a quasi-workers' parliament of deputies from very many works and factories. The Trade Minister has now got in touch with us. The man's got no idea what he should do. He gropes around like a blind man. In general, the radicals in recent days have made progress and the people are no longer terrified of the word "republic". As regards the League, such as it is here, there's nothing I can report. No one's yet had the time, to organise it thoroughly as we used to. It's dissolved, it's everywhere and nowhere … as soon as there's more peace and time, it'll also be attended to.[64]

Born proves himself every bit as keen as Marx to be calling the shots—Minna Falk suggests 'Stephan Born attempted to control all the workers' organisations and to indoctrinate them through his newspaper'[65]—and knew how to bring workers together. Born's General German Workers'

[64] *MEGA*² *III/2*, 444–5.

[65] Minna Falk, review of *1848: Studien zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, by Hermann Meyer, *The Journal of Modern History* 26, no. 4 (December 1954), 385.

Fraternity eventually drew together 170 local workers' societies, from several German states (though 64 of the societies were in Prussia), with 15,000 members in spring 1849, and with its own workers' newspaper (after *Das Volk*, *Die Verbrüderung*). The first of Marx's workers' organisations, the Communist League, was dying of neglect (it seems no great priority in Berlin for Born, who appeared to have a different conception of what the goals of a workers' organisation should be, and how to go about achieving them). Born set out not only to mould the local proletariat but also to manipulate the local bourgeoisie, or, as post-war German historian Hermann Meyer phrases it, 'he believed in the potential to fulfil his socialist aspirations through the medium of confederacy with the bourgeoisie'.[66]

Born's fraternisation with commerce (thus, the bourgeoisie and the floundering Trade Minister) is of a different order to the relationship with the bourgeoisie proposed in the *Manifesto*, and before, but Born does demonstrate a pragmatic desire to simply get on with it. Born aside, the interaction of the proletariat with the bourgeois, and how long that should desirably last, seems a long-running source of Marxist confusion in 1847–1848. It is fair to acknowledge that events in this period were fast-moving, but the policy message from both Marx and Engels is never wholly coherent. This is particularly apparent in Engels's *Principles of Communism*: 'the decisive struggle between the bourgeois and the absolute monarchy is still to come' but 'the proletarian revolution … in all probability is impending'. On the one hand, 'the certainty that from the day when the absolute governments fall, comes the time for the fight between bourgeois and proletariat'; on the other hand, the possibility of an unspecified transitional phase, 'it is in the interests of the communists to help bring the bourgeois to power in order, as soon as possible, to overthrow them again'.[67] (As noted, Engels's most consistent position is that neither a bourgeois revolution in Prussia/'Germany', nor subsequently, a proletarian one, will come immediately).

Schapper in his lead article for the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift* in September 1847 also identifies a need for a bourgeois interregnum—'a transitional period will be needed … the transitional period which shall prelude the inauguration of a fully communised society'.[68] Elsewhere in

[66] Hermann Meyer, "Karl Marx und die deutsche Revolution von 1848", *Historische Zeitschrift* 172, H.3 (1951), 521.

[67] *Principles of Communism*. *MECW 6*, 356, 350, 357, 356.

[68] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 292–3.

the *KZ*, in the *Prussian Diet and the Prussian Proletariat, Together with the Proletariat Throughout Germany*, the likely author Wilhelm Wolff argues, 'of course the bourgeoisie is our enemy … we proletarians can achieve our freedom only … by destroying the bourgeoisie' but then questions whether 'we proletarians in Germany [are] in a position to change the social order' and asks 'does not yet another enemy confront us, one who takes precedence of the bourgeoisie … the absolute monarch'. But then Wolff provides a foretaste of the Mainz Appeal, with the same Born-like emphasis on worker organisation as the prerequisite for success: 'But in so far as we fail to get together, in so far as we proletarians lack solidarity, are unorganised, do not unite our forces … so far likewise shall we be incompetent to deal effectively and to our own advantage either with the "paternal" system of government [absolute monarchy] or with the bourgeoisie'.[69]

Marx foreshortens the timeframe of the bourgeois alliance in the *Manifesto*, 'the Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution … but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution', but reinforces the ideological dichotomy for Communists, 'in Germany they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie … but they never cease … to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat'.[70]

To compound this confusion, Schieder remarks that while the German revolution of 1848–1849 still ranks in the general historical consciousness as 'the bourgeois revolution', the March events of 1848 'had no exclusively bourgeois character, but instead were determined by workers and peasants'.[71]

Born can scarcely lay claim to being a frontline figure on the 1848–1849 revolutionary stage in the German states but he did have a practical strategy in Berlin in 1848 for squaring the bourgeoisie and advancing the proletariat (although the first issue of *Das Volk* also threw in, 'on the one hand supporting the bourgeoisie in resisting the aristocracy … on the other, standing shoulder to shoulder with the worker against the might of

[69] Ryazanov, *Introduction to the Communist Manifesto*, 306–7, 310.
[70] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. MECW 6*, 519.
[71] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution*, 322, 329.

capital').[72] Importantly, too, the practical strategy embraced the need to 'organise … into one strong force'; when the proletariat later became more genuinely revolutionary, there was a structure in place to capitalise on it.

It is not entirely clear what Born means by 'quasi-workers' parliament of deputies' but the phraseology suggests Born is not as anti-parliamentary, as Marx and Engels would prove to be in the *NRZ*. In his memoirs, Born talks of 'those who wished to put me on the list of candidates for the Frankfurt Parliament',[73] which he declines, not yet being the required age. Less self-interestedly, Born later felt it advantageous to publish in *Die Verbrüderung* his movement's manifesto, for onward presentation to the FNA. The Mainz Appeal also pursued parliamentary advancement, notably what proved to be frustrated attempts, by dint of the class-biased deputies' selection process, to get 'representatives from the working class to the German Parliament nominated and elected'.[74]

Born's suggestion in his 11 May letter that 'the people are no longer terrified of the word "republic"' rather too obviously pays lip service to the first of the 17 *Demands*, that 'the whole of Germany shall be declared a single and indivisible republic'; the aspiration was not actively or consistently pursued thereafter by Born, certainly, or by Marx and Engels themselves.

And lastly, there is Born's desire to base his movement, and overall activity, in Berlin (although there was a later move to Leipzig). In his 1884 overview of the *NRZ*, Engels commented, 'Cologne was where we had to go, and not Berlin. … The Berlin of that time we knew only too well from our own observation, with its hardly hatched bourgeoisie, its cringing petty bourgeoisie, audacious in words but craven in deeds, its still wholly undeveloped workers.' Stadelmann's view of Cologne is no less partisan—'the Cologne branch of the Communist League … certainly contained doctors, discharged officers, journalists and teachers, but among its three dozen members, very few proletarians'.[75] Engels's preference for Cologne over Berlin in part hinged on the Code Napoléon still prevailing in the former city, allowing press trials in front of sympathetic juries, although his claim, as noted, that 'on the Rhine we had unconditional freedom of the

[72] Born, *Erinnerungen*, 144–5.
[73] Born, *Erinnerungen*, 132.
[74] *To All Workers of Germany. MECW 7*, 535.
[75] Stadelmann, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848*, 158–9.

press—and we used it to the last drop'[76] hardly seems consistent with the harassment, trials and shut-downs to which the *NRZ* and its editors were subjected.

Born has his champions in the literature, notably Meyer[77]—Born being 'his leading personality'[78]—but opinions are not unanimous. Those less sympathetic might think the ebullience of his 11 May letter to Marx sits oddly with Born's view of Berlin in late March 1848, 'just a few days after the revolutionary intoxication of 18 March, which truly has gripped all of Germany, there's almost nothing more to note … the people have an air of fearing what the future holds'.[79] This gloomier view, which adds (frankly contradicting his opinion six weeks later) that there could be no 'call for a republic' at that time, in Berlin, is drawn from Born's more jaundiced, certainly revisionist and questionably wholly reliable 1898 memoirs.[80] Perhaps by and in May 1848, Born had decided he just had to make a go of it. The success of the Workers' Fraternity, and its scale, was certainly down to his energy and organisational skills.

If there seems little doubt that Born was energetic rather than apathetic from May onwards, it's less straightforward pinning down his political evolution. Superficially, the memoirs paint a clear enough picture. Despite professing in the spring of 1848 still to be 'an out-and-out Marxian and a dependable pupil of the Master', Born then continues, 'in one fell swoop, all communist thoughts were wiped away—they seemed to have no connection at all with what the present required. People would have laughed at me, or pitied me, if I'd admitted to being a communist … communism and communists were moreover only words, they didn't bind anyone. Indeed, people hardly talked about them.'[81] Some commentators reinforce this conventional account: Schraepler suggests, 'Born reckoned with a proletariat as it actually was on the ground, not as it ought to be',[82] while Valentin comments, 'the German workers' movement of 1848/49 was

[76] *Marx and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848-49). MECW 26*, 123.

[77] Meyer, *Karl Marx und die deutsche Revolution von 1848*, passim.

[78] Falk, *Meyer 1848*, 385.

[79] Born, *Erinnerungen*, 116.

[80] Gustav Mayer, among others, strongly argues for the revisionist flavour to the 1898 *Reminiscences* (in which Born also repudiates his 1847 anti-Heinzen essay—*Der Heinzen'sche Staat, eine Kritik von Stephan*—praised by Engels in October 1847). Mayer, *Friedrich Engels. In seiner Frühzeit 1820 bis 1851*, 253.

[81] Born, *Erinnerungen*, 122.

[82] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine,* 305.

not Marxist, and not communist'.[83] This certainly squares with Born's coincidental efforts to advance his workers' rights and organisation, rather than lay emphasis on their political education, and along Marxist lines. The individual clubs within the Workers' Fraternity put together co-operatives and developed itinerant friendly societies, health insurance and labour exchanges; in particular, they encouraged workers to take courses of further education and other forms of training. But while, Born acknowledged, there were plenty of members for whom 'the social question, the question of work, the question of daily life were primary and everything else, frippery', politics, with a particular leaning towards social democracy, was not altogether ignored. As Schieder suggests, this was not purely a narrow kind of trade unionism, but rather a kind of 'social parallel politics', to bourgeois parliamentary democracy[84] (from which, given practically limited suffrage and very few elected deputies, they were substantially excluded). And, as will be seen, in due course both Born and the Workers' Fraternity appeared to take a much more politicised turn.

Of Marx and Engels, in contrast, Siemann concludes: 'It is a fact that in 1848 Marx and Engels channelled their political energies not into the League, but into the middle-class democratic movement, above all through … their *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. … By contrast, they neglected the organisation of an independent workers' party, the core of which had developed in the Workers' Fraternity.'[85]

> Mayer argues similarly, 'Marx and Engels did not expect that the still undeveloped German working-class movement would greatly influence the revolution. They therefore took no active part in it except in the Rhineland, and left it to Stephan Born to organise the workers elsewhere in Germany'.[86]

The Communist League and the Cologne Workers' Association (CWA) were very different entities, but Marx's behaviour with each followed a common pattern. Gaining control of the organisation—in the case of the CWA, the presidency, which he held for over four months, the longest of any incumbent—was clearly important, but once achieved, Marx proved disinclined or unable to exercise the control to any especially productive purpose.

[83] Valentin, *Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*, v1, 533.

[84] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution*, 334–5. Gerhard Becker also discusses Born's activity in detail. Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 103–5.

[85] Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848–49*, 93.

[86] Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 92.

Marx's first involvement with a Cologne organisation on his return from Paris in April 1848, however, was with the Cologne Democratic Society (CDS), although he was not practically involved until June.[87] The membership of the CDS, which was founded on 25 April, was diverse, taking in educated bourgeois and artisans and workers, with a good deal of overlap with the more intrinsically working-class CWA (whose leader Gottschalk also belonged to the CDS; Schapper, Röser and Johann Jansen,[88] inter alia, were also members of both). The CDS met weekly, to discuss societal organisation, a preferable focus for Marx and Engels to the CWA's early preoccupation with workers' rights and issues.

The CWA came into existence on 13 April, with a meeting in the 'Wirtschaft Simon' (Simon Inn), attended mainly by workers and journeymen, with a handful of masters and intellectuals.[89] The CWA was very much the brainchild and personal fiefdom of Gottschalk. The membership trajectories of the two groups were very different. The CWA started with 300 members, rising to a peak of 8000, though since no membership fees were paid, 'membership'—one's name on a list kept by Gottschalk, in return for a card[90]—was rather nebulous. The 1400–1500 circulation of the CWA's first newspaper, the bi-weekly *ZAV*, in the group's heyday of July 1848 was perhaps more representative.[91] The CDS's peak membership is typically put at 700, though Herres and Melis argue for 1000.[92]

The CDS had a far broader remit—meetings just in August 1848 discussed revolutions through the ages, the contrasting experience of France and the German states, Prussian citizenship (in the personal context of Marx) and the FNA's stance on Polish partition. Notwithstanding this, there was an early attempt by Gottschalk to fuse the three democratic organisations of Cologne—thus, the CWA, the CDS and the Society for Workers and Employers—into one 'Republican Society'.[93] Given the CWA's at least nominally huge numerical superiority, this Gottschalk takeover was resisted by the other two groups. Instead, on 23 June,[94] Marx

[87] MEGA² *I/7*, 886.

[88] Gottschalk supporter, shot by Prussian authorities in 1849.

[89] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 26.

[90] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 32.

[91] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 32; Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 224, 230–31.

[92] *MEGA² I/7*, 885.

[93] Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, 266.

[94] Marx's first active engagement with the CDS.

and Karl Schneider II, for the CDS, were appointed to a six-man (two from each group) Democratic District Committee for the Rhine Province (which would hold the First Rhenish District Congress of Democratic Associations on 13–14 August).

All changed with the arrest of Gottschalk on 3 July and his imprisonment (he was held on remand until his trial on 21–23 December and acquittal). In contrast to Gottschalk's first arrest back in March, and much shorter imprisonment, there was a more sympathetic response in the *NRZ* of 4 and 5 July.

With Gottschalk now off the scene, the Marx faction rapidly took over. On 6 July, Moll was appointed CWA president, which position he held until the end of September when he had to flee to London. From this July day, with Moll initially at the helm, the CWA now changed course. Firmly rejecting the negative verdict of CWA historian Hans Stein, Gerhard Becker recounts that there then ensued, 'the exertions of the loyal fellow-soldiers of Marx to steer the association towards the politics of the *Communist Manifesto*, of the 17 *Demands* and of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* … on 13 July, on the motion of Schapper, it was decided that in committee sessions, questions would be discussed … under Gottschalk, there had been no organised discussions'. In the following months, the Association underwent a 'massive transformation of its consciousness … the enlightenment of the workers to their socialist class interests'.[95]

After an interregnum with Röser as acting president, Marx was appointed president on 16 October—'he was ready, provisionally until Dr. Gottschalk was set free, to accede to the desire of the workers',[96] recorded the CWA committee meeting. But Marx's role turned out to be far from provisional—he remained as president until handing over to Schapper on 28 February—and Gottschalk's efforts to regain control of the CWA after his release from prison on 23 December were strenuously resisted. The Association's workers did not take kindly to the organisation's new direction. Accepting the likely over-statement of the CWA's membership at peak of 8000, Sperber gives various annotated estimates for the collapsed membership in the Moll/Marx eras, being 707 (September 1848), 261 (October 1848) and 464 (February 1849).[97]

[95] Gerhard Becker is alluding to the manuscripts known as the *German Ideology*. Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 92–3.

[96] *Committee Meeting of the Cologne Workers' Association, 16 October 1848. MECW 7*, 595.

[97] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 230.

The early months of 1849 saw a generally pointless, distracting spat between Gottschalk and Marx, notably conducted via rival, near identically named CWA 'house' newspapers. Gottschalk's proxy, Wilhelm Prinz, launched *Freiheit, Arbeit*, on 14 January 1849, against which the Marx camp felt obliged to respond by relaunching *Freiheit, Brüderlichkeit, Arbeit* on 8 February 1849. The newspapers, which, as well as having near identical titles, bore the same masthead motif—a sturdy, bearded proletarian in a smock wielding a red flag—rained abuse on each other. After a frivolous illustration of 'Committee Marxism' on 21 January ('Citizen Marx is likewise of the opinion that … it was not a question, for the moment, of doing something in principle'), there is the much more serious open letter attack in *Freiheit, Arbeit*'s issue of 25 February by Gottschalk. There are two strands to this letter, the first (discussed already) accusing Marx, as an intellectual, of lacking interest in workers, the second, reprising Born's campaigning thrust, but in a much more structural and philosophical way.

The open letter, spanning over two pages of the *FA* issue in all, takes particular exception to Marx's argument in Issue 202 of the *NRZ* ('Gottschalk' specifically cites this issue), dated 22 January 1849. Here, Marx writes (oddly, faith in the bourgeoisie had seemingly survived the decisive apostasy of his *The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution* the month before):

> We are certainly the last people to desire the rule of the bourgeoisie … but we say to the workers and the petty bourgeois: it is better to suffer in modern bourgeois society, which by its industry creates the material means for the foundation of a new society that will liberate you all, than to revert to a bygone form of society, which, on the pretext of saving your classes, thrusts the entire nation back into medieval barbarism.[98]

Marx had a point here. The early months of the CWA were certainly characterised by a closed shop protectionism, aimed at preserving existing workers' rights, restricting incomers and opposing industrial modernisation[99]; significantly, one of the first topics for discussion at the newly politicised CWA, on 13 July, was whether 'machines were useful to men or not'.[100] This Marx line on the bourgeoisie was nonetheless a red rag to the

[98] *Montesquieu LVI. MECW 8*, 266.
[99] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln*, *1848–1849*, 41.
[100] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln*, *1848–1849*, 95.

bull for Gottschalk (already cited in the *Manifesto*, within the attack on 'German, or "True" Socialism', whose adherents are accused 'of preaching to the masses that they had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by this bourgeois movement').[101] Gottschalk now is incensed that communism requires the prolonged accommodation of the proletariat with the bourgeois, for questionable benefit. Better, alone:

> What do we gain from a revolution, why should we men of the proletariat shed our blood, must we really as you, Mr Preacher, lecture us, escape the hell of the Middle Ages by hurling ourselves voluntarily into the purgatory of decrepit capitalist rule in order to be admitted to the nebulous heaven of your *Communist Confession of Faith*. … And now that we, the revolutionary party of the proletariat, have realised we can expect nothing from any class other than our own, that we therefore have no other task than to make the revolution permanent.[102]

It's reasonable to point out that Gottschalk himself can scarcely lay claim to ideological purity, or consistency, vacillating during 1848–1849 between support for a constitutional monarchy, a republic and an outright proletarian revolution with no intervening bourgeois halfway house. Gerhard Becker's critique of him in this area—'he had to be acknowledged as Prophet … he despised the workers'[103]—is, though, too obviously defensively allusive to Gottschalk's open letter and ignores the considerable charitable work Gottschalk did amongst Cologne's poor.

The Marx faction did not take this attack on 'Mr Preacher' kindly, the *FBA* of 29 April responding with an 11-point denunciation of Gottschalk, culminating in an 'official' CWA resolution, 'that it in no way approves of Dr Gottschalk's behaviour after his acquittal by the jury at the trial here … or would permit any individual, whoever he may be, to treat the Workers' Association as if it consisted of stupid boys'.[104]

Although there are certainly records of Marx's attendance at several CWA meetings, his presidency was otherwise not especially visible or active, the sharp fall in the CWA's 'membership' notwithstanding. Sperber

[101] *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. *MECW 6*, 511.

[102] As elsewhere in this open letter, Gottschalk's titular reference is to Engels's June 1847 draft *Manifesto*, *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith*, but he is surely invoking Marx's *Manifesto*. *Freiheit, Arbeit*, 25 February 1849.

[103] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln*, *1848–1849*, 34–7.

[104] *Resolution of Branch No. 1 of the Cologne Workers' Association*. *MECW 9*, 500.

explains this away by saying that Marx was not a natural 'rabble-rousing agitator', that he was better employed working at the *NRZ* and with the CDS, leaving the Marx factional interests at the CWA in the hands of the more artisan Schapper and Moll.[105] All these points might be true, but they surely beg three questions: why, if the CWA evolved into something of a Workers' Educational Society, could Marx not be effective in that forum (the German Workers' Educational Society in Brussels had certainly been effective, and Marx within it); why was being CWA president important, as it patently was for him; and was Marx capable of engaging with workers' practical concerns?

The *NRZ* was consistently critical of government, notably the FNA, but from the sidelines. The CWA, soon after it came into existence in April 1848, issued through its newspaper, the *ZAV*, 'a veritable flood of complaints, requests and petitions to the town or ministerial authorities, in which the "acknowledgement of the legitimate demands" of workers and artisans was solicited'. One of the first petitions, directed at the Prussian Prime Minister Camphausen, demanded 'the abolition of indirect taxes … granting of state support for settlement of rents in arrears for workers and artisans without means as well as the return of all pledges up to a value of five Thalers from pawnshops'.[106] A month or so later, though, Gottschalk emphasised that 'the purpose of the Workers' Association is a higher one than doing away with the Milling & Slaughter tax or other individual irritations of today's government and administration … the purpose of the Association is the victory, the dominance of the working classes'.[107] Not a sentiment to be found in the *NRZ*, or, as the *ZAV* had it of the *NRZ*, 'your first appearance is already a formal act of suppression of the proletariat, a betrayal of the People'.[108] These comments paint an image of the *ZAV* as an outspoken campaigner, but Schraepler suggests the *ZAV* was very much an information newssheet, preoccupied with association meetings, proclamations and news of the day-to-day life of workers.[109] As noted, Born's *Die Verbrüderung* newspaper put proposals to the FNA on 2 September 1848.

[105] Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals*, 299.
[106] *ZAV*, 23 April 1848. Cited in Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 39–40.
[107] *ZAV*, 28 May 1848.
[108] Cited in Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeiterverein*, 280.
[109] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeiterverein*, 273.

In general, the *NRZ* opted not to cover workers' economic rights, with one major exception. Marx's No More Taxes!!! campaign, which spanned some 30 key *NRZ* articles, effectively running between 11 November and 7 December 1848, and saw Marx in the rare but undoubtedly effective guise of activist campaigner, and, moreover, one belatedly acknowledging the campaigning value of peasants. It drew initially on civil disobedience and eventually a call to violence, both orchestrated by Marx, as well as parliamentary support from the PNA. Marx especially targeted the rural poor (remembering that 78% of Prussia's population in 1849 was de facto rural) and a particularly unpopular tax, the indirect (and regressive) Milling & Slaughter Tax (Mahl- und Schlachtsteuer)—precisely the object of the *ZAV*'s disinterest—levied on such food staples as rye and wheat flour, pork and beef, paid by ca. 2.1 m Prussians, or 13% of the Prussian population. Separately in a series of *NRZ* articles, Wolff attacked the (direct) Class Tax (Klassensteuer) levied on adults between 16 and 60. The two taxes together contributed 14% of the ca. 70 million Thalers Prussian Finance Ministry annual tax take (in 1849). In a letter of 13 November 1848, as noted, Marx urged Lassalle to resolve at his meeting of the People's Club in Düsseldorf on a 'general refusal to pay taxes—to be advocated especially in rural areas'. On 18 November, Marx writes in the *NRZ* that 'the larger provincial towns, in particular the provincial capitals, can only be safeguarded through the revolutionary energy of the countryside'.[110]

The campaign is frequently dismissed as ineffective and insignificant, but there are numerous reports in many individual towns and in the (less easily policed) countryside of taxes not being collected, on single days, in the second half of November 1848, notably, in the heartland of the *NRZ*, the Rhineland, but also beyond, for instance in Saxony and Silesia. In Cologne itself, and in other garrison fortress towns, the strong military presence precluded tax boycotts. The *NRZ* (very much led by Marx) had a pervasive hand in the campaign, whether directly, through its own columns, or indirectly—placards are posted in both Trier and Prüm, in the Rhineland, citing the *NRZ*. Gerhard Becker contends, of the tax boycotts as a whole, that 'part of these actions, above all in the Rhineland, can definitely be traced back to the effect of the *NRZ*'. The campaign failed after forcible interventions by the military, legal pressures on Marx that resulted in a state trial on 8 February 1849 and the dissolution of the PNA on 5

[110] *Tax Refusal and the Countryside*. *MECW 8*, 39–40.

December 1848. Wolff's articles on tax and feudal inequality—*Why the People Pay Taxes* (December 1848) and *The Silesian Milliard* (March–April 1849)—marked an impressive engagement for the *NRZ* with peasants, of a different character. The Silesian Rustic Alliance distributed 10,000 copies of the issues carrying the *Silesian Milliard* articles.

If these tax campaigns represented effective engagement with the working classes, the *NRZ* otherwise was not on the same wavelength as more genuinely working-class newspapers such as Born's *Die Verbrüderung*, the most widely read paper among journeymen and workers, or Mathilde Anneke's *Neue Kölnische Zeitung* ('for citizens, peasants and soldiers … it is aimed at working people and will strive to be written so that even the most down-to-earth worker can understand it'). Much less politically akin was the *Wächter am Rhein* ('equality of political rights for all'), which stressed in its prospectus that it rejected the means adopted by the communists to change 'the conditions of the poorer classes' and was in this respect 'positively anti-communist'.[111]

The accessibility of the working-class press was in part a function of its affordability, which can be gauged by comparing its price (typically, the quarterly subscription rate) with workers' wages. The *NRZ*, appearing six times weekly from mid-August 1848, charged a quarterly one Thaler, 15 Silber Groschen[112] (silver groschen, SGr) to Cologne subscribers, or six Thalers per annum, or an annual eight-and-a-half Thalers to subscribers in the rest of Prussia. Mathilde Anneke's much more obviously proletarian *Neue Kölnische Zeitung*, also appearing six times a week, from 10 September 1848, charged an annual three Thalers subscription, thus half the Cologne cost of the *NRZ*.

Wolff writes in his *Silesian Milliard* article series in the *NRZ*, on tax inequality, that a 'poor weaver' might expect to pull in 3–4 SGr per day, equivalent (allowing for unpaid Sundays and holy days) to 30–40 Thalers per annum, while 'a poor labourer' might earn 60–80 Thalers annually.[113] Looking at more 'industrial proletarian' annual wage rates, Schraepler, citing Bishop Wilhelm von Ketteler, suggests tobacco and cotton factory workers earned 100 Thalers annually; engineering works employees, 105 Thalers; and a paper-mill worker, ca. 115 Thalers. *NRZ* editorial member Dronke claimed that an unmarried Berlin worker could earn as much 160

[111] Herres, *Sozialismus und Kommunismus.*
[112] One Thaler was worth 30 Silber Groschen.
[113] Wolff, *Die Schlesische Milliarde*, 46.

Thalers annually, against annual food and lodging costs of 84 Thalers, but Schraepler qualifies this arithmetic by saying, 'this relatively high rate could only arise given the few qualified skilled workers … a family man could not exist on his [more typical] wage'.[114] Ironically, one of the few workforces able to afford the *NRZ* (if they had had to pay for it) was its own printers. Born recalls in his 1898 memoirs that when he arrived in Berlin in May 1848, 'among the workers of the town, the mechanical engineers and printers to an extent formed the fashion-leading, if not to say aristocratic elements … the average weekly earnings of a compositor or printer was 3.5 Thalers', for a 13–14-hour working day, or ca. 80-hour working week. The equivalent annual wage of around 175 Thalers was well above average, but since 1843, a printer in Paris had been earning 'more than double' (a 115% premium) this rate, according to Born's 1898 recollections. A lengthy dispute, in whose final stages Born was involved, ended with 'a moderate increase in the tariff, which soon spread across the whole of Germany'.[115] Marx even ended up in a prolonged spat with his own printers on the *NRZ*, as to whether they should be paid at the new national level.[116] Schmidt et al. highlight the prevalence in March–May 1848 of disputes and strikes for higher wages and shorter working hours, in response to economic exploitation by employers.[117]

For the majority of workers, however, finding as much as six, or even over eight, Thalers per year to buy the *NRZ* would have been quite beyond the means of anyone earning annually c. 100 Thalers.

The final chapter in the story of Marx's engagement with workers in 1848–1849 begins with the CWA's decision in August 1848 (then, under Moll's presidency) to rebuff the invitation from Born to attend the first Workers' Congress, which took place in Berlin from 23 August to 3 September. This followed a piece on 25 July, in which the *NRZ* took care to disassociate itself from the programme issued by the Congress's commission.[118] Born was one of two presidents for the event. Born's emphasis on workers' organisation—'the organisation of the workers must be our principal task'—and on rights and welfare did not sit well with the developing, much more ideological bent of the CWA. But the divergent

[114] Schraepler, *Handwerkerbunde und Arbeitervereine*, 299.
[115] Born, *Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers*, 122–24, 130.
[116] Sperber, *The European Revolutions of 1848–1851*, 178.
[117] Schmidt et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution 1848–1849*, 156.
[118] *The Concordia of Turin*. *MECW 7*, 272.

feelings changed: the belated decision of the PNA in November 1848 to endorse the withholding of tax payments prompted the Workers' Fraternity to call for workers to be armed and chimed with Marx's similar call on 18 November 1848. This makes the subsequent decisions of the CWA, now led by Schapper, on 16 April 1849 to leave the Union of Democratic Associations of Germany, join Born's General German Workers' Fraternity and commit to attending a Workers' Congress in Leipzig (intended for June) look much less of an about-turn.[119] In the early part of 1849, there had moreover been something of a rapprochement between Born and the Marx faction. Born in his memoirs confirms that he stayed with Marx and his wife on a visit to Cologne in February, and was warmly received by them, and then saw Engels at the *NRZ* office the next day. There is no detail though of any policy discussions, but from then on, the *NRZ* adopted a warmer attitude towards Born and his organisation.

On 7 March 1849, the *NRZ* reported that Born had given an untypically incendiary speech in Leipzig on 27 February commemorating the anniversary of the start of the French Revolution in February 1848, 'which left the Leipzigers struck dumb with horror'. Gerhard Becker describes Leipzig as a city of 'narrow-minded townsmen with a backward proletariat'[120] but, as the English *Collected Works* relate, 'the rising activity of workers' associations and the markedly growing class consciousness of the German proletariat provided the opportunity to create a mass proletarian party'. Even before the fighting in the Campaign for the Imperial Constitution got under way, Born's *Die Verbrüderung* newspaper demanded on 1 May 1849 'revenge, revenge for the murdered children of the people'. Born wrote alongside, 'as long as the issue was only the Imperial Constitution, we could expect no rebellion from the German people … but now it's a different question, is it for the princes to toy with the representatives of the people, to hound them … when we support the Frankfurt National Assembly, we're supporting the sovereignty of the people … since we're already under the lash, what are we still waiting for?' Many members of the Workers' Fraternity signed up to fight, among them

[119] *General Meeting of the Cologne Workers' Association, 16 April 1849. MECW 9*, 494. The follow-up observation, in justifying the resignation from the Union, given on 24 April 1849 in a statement co-signed by Marx, that there was 'little to be expected … that would be advantageous for the interests of the working class or the great mass of the people' is in its phrasing an indicator of how far the Marx faction had come. *Report on the Convocation of the Congress of Workers' Associations. MECW 9*, 502.

[120] Becker, *Marx und Engels in Köln, 1848–1849*, 244–5.

Born himself, in the Palatinate and in Baden, for instance, or in Born's case, as a commander on the barricades albeit in Dresden in Saxony, where fighting raged from 4 May (when the king and his ministers fled) until 9 May when the local uprising was put down by Saxon and Prussian troops. Engels travelled from Cologne on 10 May, initially to join the fighting in his home territory of Elberfeld.

It is one of the closing ironies of the revolution in the German states that having passed up an opportunity—at least on the face of it—to create a workers' party across the German states with the Communist League, or with the Mainz Appeal in 1848, Marx should be presented with a third chance (or, at least, an opening) by the workers themselves. It was not to be. Although a preliminary congress did take place in Cologne on 6 May, the fighting in the Rhineland in the Campaign for the Imperial Constitution was ended by Prussian troops on 21 May. The CWA held its last public gathering on 25 June but the Leipzig congress planned for June, which might have resulted in a radical workers' party across the German states, did not take place.

Rapprochement with Born there might have been in 1849, but Engels in his 1885 *History* of the Communist League went back on the offensive, aiming shots at the League itself but also at Born, and his Fraternity, 'in contrast to the great political movement of the proletariat, the Workers' Fraternity proved to be a pure Sonderbund[121] which to a large extent existed only on paper and played such a subordinate role that the reactionaries did not find it necessary to suppress it until 1850 and its surviving offshoots until several years later'. The states of Prussia, Saxony and Bavaria begged to differ, jointly agreeing in 1850—by which date, its membership had risen as high as 18,000[122]—to persecute the Fraternity, which they labelled a 'hotbed of communism'. Engels goes on, 'Born, whose real name was Buttermilch, has become not a big political figure but an insignificant Swiss professor, who no longer translates Marx into guild language but the meek Renan into his own fulsome German'.[123]

[121] 'A separatist union of the seven economically backward Catholic cantons of Switzerland formed in 1843.' *Footnote 198, MECW 26*, 656.

[122] Schieder, *Die Rolle der deutschen Arbeiter in der Revolution,* 333.

[123] 'The Fraternity was suppressed in all the states belonging to the German Confederation in mid-1850.' *On the History of the Communist League*. *MECW 26*, 325–6, 656.

Born indignantly responded in his 1898 memoirs, 'whoever today reads the malicious words, with which Engels thinks of me 40 years later, must rightly think that the leaders of the party had long since broken with me. That was absolutely not the case.'[124]

Lest one becomes over-exercised with Born's sense of injury, he was protesting too much. Elsewhere in his memoirs, which appeared three years after Engels's death, Born commented, 'Engels, who never forgave me for stepping out independently in Berlin in 1848, reproached me for being in rather too much of a hurry in the year of revolution to turn myself into a political celebrity'. Not an unreasonable comment by Engels, but then Born reciprocates in kind, 'when we lived in Paris in 1847 as the best of friends, he openly remarked that he himself was unable to get anywhere with real workers. He was deep down the rich bourgeois's son, who received his allowance every month from his father, the grand factory man of Barmen; he was never touched by the cares of life, he had nothing of the worker about him.'[125] No love lost.

[124] Born, *Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers*, 197.
[125] Born, *Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers*, 48–9.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions: Targeting and Priorities

That the *Manifesto* failed to impact Europe's most revolutionary year of 1848 does not seem in dispute. A unanimity runs from Engels's 1890 admission that when 'we proclaimed … "working men of all countries, unite" … few voices responded' through to the need acknowledged by both Marx and Engels to bring out the 17 *Demands of the Communist Party in Germany*, just one month after the publication of the *Manifesto*, and therein to substantially revise eight of the *Manifesto*'s 10 measures, to the verdicts of almost every major Marxian commentator. The reasons for this failure fall under two generic headings: flawed targeting and alternative priorities.

First, though, one quite separate, bold possibility. One of the talking points this book has debated is the reasons for, and consequences of, Engels letting Marx write the *Manifesto* alone in January 1848 (and of Marx thinking he could).

Marx undoubtedly did write the *Manifesto* alone, in Brussels, in January 1848. *Manifesto* widely accepted wisdom also has it that the collaboration on the pamphlet and its preceding drafts, in which Engels had much the leading role in 1847, continued unabated that month. Engels, selectively, and Marx, wholeheartedly, certainly present the *Manifesto* in later years as a joint composition, one product of an indisputably close personal relationship in the late 1840s. Yet in the two extant letters from Engels in Paris to Marx in the 'composition month', dated 14 and 21 January 1848,

D. Ireland, *The Communist Manifesto in the Revolutionary Politics of 1848*, Marx, Engels, and Marxisms,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99464-8_7

which together run to nearly 1800 words, there are just 35 words (in the original German, and in the first letter) which allude to the *Manifesto* and Marx's critical task. The opening to Engels's first letter strongly implies he had not written hitherto to Marx that month, the closing phrase to his second—'write soon'—that Marx had not replied to the first, or indeed written that month at all.

Contrast this with Engels's fulsome *Manifesto* references on 23 November 1847—in another letter going from Paris to Brussels—in which he proposes dropping the catechetical form and calling the pamphlet 'Communist Manifesto' while outlining, implicitly for discussion or validation by Marx, the contents and structure of his latest draft. All this was in a far more wide-ranging letter, suggesting that Engels was quite happy to discuss *Manifesto* drafting issues inter alia, a strong pointer to the notion that Engels and Marx did not indulge in a parallel *Manifesto* correspondence in January 1848 that has not survived. Marx's solo writing in January 1848 had material consequences: with Engels's input, and leanings via the *Principles*, the *Manifesto* could have made a mark before revolutions flared across Europe, England could have been targeted, a communist state could have received far stronger definition and the written style could have been more populist. Marx in his 'German call-to-arms' in Section IV also chose to ignore Engels's general scepticism about the likelihood of an early 'German' revolution.

The above line of reasoning paints Engels as involuntary injured party. But one needs to challenge Engels's own negligible attention to the *Manifesto* in his two January 1848 letters as thoroughly: was this a function of pique at Marx's silence, or, heretical a thought as it might be to us today in the light of the *Manifesto*'s eventual renown, relative indifference as much on Engels's part as on Marx's? Engels and Marx were both very keen to claim the *Manifesto* in later years as an especially pre-eminent element of their combined oeuvre. Perhaps, in early 1848, they didn't think that way—free trade, the subject of Marx's lengthy speech,[1] over 5000 words, thus around half the length of the *Manifesto*, on 9 January 1848—or the soon-to-emerge *NRZ* , in particular, or the BDA (another time-consuming Marx commitment that month, if of less significance) being no less compelling at that time.

Philipp Erbentraut and Torben Lütjen conclude, in part quoting a phrase from Thomas Kuczynski, that 'all in all, Marx evidently considered

[1] The speech was given in French, at a BDA gathering, and took over an hour to deliver.

the composition of the *Manifesto* "as one task among many", which in any event did not appear to him so pressingly important, that he had to put to one side all other obligations'.[2]

It cannot be without significance that Marx, even 11 years later, in his January 1859 *Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, writes, of the 1848 period, 'of the scattered works in which at that time we presented one or another aspect of our views to the public, *I shall mention only* the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and … a *Speech on the Question of Free Trade*'. Free trade is certainly a recurring topic for Marx and Engels in the latter half of 1847 and going into 1848 (if barely so thereafter), in general, and, in a narrower context, as an electoral totem for the Chartists. The International Congress of Economists held in Brussels on 16–18 September 1847,[3] with its focus on free trade, gets extensive coverage.

The widely accepted notion that Marx's closing *Manifesto* appeal to 'working men of all countries' crystallised its intended audience is open to challenge. Mayer's contention that Marx had 'refused to adapt the *Manifesto* to the mentality of a backward section of the proletariat' might seem overly tendentious but there is less dispute that communists in the German states of 1848, such as they existed, were more obviously Men of Letters, and that the members of the Communist League at whom the *Manifesto* was initially aimed were more likely to be, as Engels put it, 'real artisans', with no grounding in political economy. The written style of the pamphlet, while unquestionably displaying 'rhetorical brilliance', bore few similarities with those contemporary newspapers trying to reach out to actual 'working men'. With the exception of the courageous 'No More Taxes!!!' campaign of November 1848, Marx in general declined to engage deeply or productively with working-class organisations in 1848, be they the Mainz Appeal, the Communist League, the CWA or, certainly until 1849, Born's General German Workers' Fraternity. Neither the *Manifesto* nor the activities of German workers were thoroughly aired in the *NRZ*.

[2] Philipp Erbentraut and Torben Lütjen, "Eine Welt zu gewinnen" in *Geschichte und Gegenwart des politischen Appells*, eds. Johanna Klett and Robert Lorenz (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010), 82–3; Thomas Kuczynski, *Das Kommunistische Manifest* (Trier: Karl-Marx-Haus, 1995), 49.

[3] After Georg Weerth's speech on free trade on 18 September 1847, the congress organisers blocked Marx's own speech that day on the subject, which in part formed the basis of his talk to the BDA on 9 January 1848.

A further sense of otherworldliness emerges with the 10 measures of the *Manifesto*. What 'could count on the strongest support from the proletariat', Marx suggested, is his pioneering 'programme' (though certainly not pitched as one) in *The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter*, published in the *DBZ* of 5 September 1847, anteceding all other revolutionary campaigners of the time. In this piece, he anticipated five of the seven most popular German revolutionary demands of 1847–1848 (thus, trial by jury; freedom of the press; freedom of assembly; true representation; suffrage, or, here, 'a universal franchise'; omitting only free education and a people's militia). Several of the 17 *Demands* of late March 1848—votes for every German over 21, arming the people and scaling back the standing army, religious freedom, support for the unemployed and disabled—similarly echoed the agendas of multiple other German groups in the revolutionary period. In-between, of course, came the *Manifesto*, only one of whose 10 measures, free education, featured on the populist roster. A simple explanation, that the 1848 revolutionaries in the German states were just not radical enough, is supported by the fact that three of the *Manifesto* measures dropped in the 17 *Demands* were communist society-levellers. If, though, as the *Manifesto* argues, the kernel of communist theory is the 'abolition of private property', or, rather, 'bourgeois property', it is a surprise that no *Manifesto* measure directly proposes the dispossession of the means of production, to address the imbalance between capital and labour, since 'the proletarian is without property'. Social ownership of land, credit and banks, and of transport, are certainly on the *Manifesto* agenda but whereas Engels's *Principles of Communism* expected that 'a proletarian revolution … will transform existing society only gradually', Marx opted not to reprise Engels's subsequent striking phrasing, 'compelling the factory owners, as long as they still exist'. In an annotation to the first English translation of the *Manifesto* in 1850, Harney called it 'the most revolutionary document ever given to the world'. A less assured conclusion seems more in order for 1848.

Marx was scarcely alone in 1847–1848 in proposing a social, rather than economic, revolution. In the *Manifesto*, Marx observed, 'it is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society', but this was more of a generalisation on trade cycles than an 1848 acceptance that the economic crisis of 1845–1847, of which he and Engels were well aware, had so clearly been the catalyst for the 1848 revolution. Marx's conclusion in the 1850 *Class Struggles in France*, in which he did

belatedly acknowledge this catalyst, that 'a new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis', might have set off a very different train of *Manifesto* thought.

There are several other revolutionary themes, which comparative pamphleteers clearly perceived as effective levers on their target audiences, but which Marx in the *Manifesto*, and/or in the revolutionary period, chose either to ignore altogether or to treat partially or dismissively. Addressing material hardship was largely regarded as a distraction from the central task of political education. More progressive taxation was called for in both the *Manifesto* and the 17 *Demands*, and in the 'No More Taxes!!!' campaign, but was more generally treated with scepticism in 1847–1850. Suffrage is a measure in the 17 *Demands*, though not in the *Manifesto*, but otherwise attracted support from Marx and Engels for the theory, but a sense of frustration in the practice. Religion, so central a feature of 1840s' life, was shunned by Marx and Engels; as Büchner so plainly demonstrated earlier, it scarcely required personal faith on the part of the advocate, to be a usefully persuasive medium. A social or red republic was a frequent talking point (and a 17 *Demands* measure), much less obviously an action point, though the dismal outcomes to the republican uprisings of Hecker and Struve hardly inspired imitation.

A missed opportunity, rather than a missing measure, is Marx's failure in the *Manifesto* to spell out in any detail what lay in store for communist supporters, be it a communist state (on which Engels expounded over 900 words in his *Principles*) or a class-less 'association', on which Marx was much more expansive in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, and, in particular, in his March 1852 letter to Joseph Weydemeyer.

While the revolution in the German states in 1848–1849 may have passed into history as 'the bourgeois revolution', the March events of 1848, as Schieder suggests, 'had no exclusively bourgeois character, but instead were determined by workers and peasants'.

Nonetheless—ironically, disregarding the scepticism of the bourgeois expressed by Marx bugbears such as Heinzen (in 1848), the True Socialists (denounced on this score by Engels in 1847 and by Marx in the *Manifesto*) and Gottschalk (in his 1849 related spat with Marx)—both Marx and, in particular, Engels placed their faith in the disinterested revolutionary leadership of the bourgeoisie. This was still the case as of mid-1848 in Engels's case, or even early 1849, in Marx's—long after the German bourgeoisie had realigned with the common foe, the absolute monarchy, while demonstrating palely reformist rather than boldly revolutionary credentials. It

seems cognitively dissonant that Engels could have ruled, in March–April 1847, that 'in all countries … the bourgeois is revolutionary until he himself rules' and that Marx said, no less presciently, in November 1847, 'the bourgeois gentlemen would smile at such naivety. … They are aware that in revolutions the rabble gets insolent and lays hands on things.'

Marx and Engels did not merely expect the bourgeoisie to lead the revolution unselfishly: as the *Manifesto* put it, it would eventually be 'compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help'. Communists, the *Manifesto* concludes, 'in Germany fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way', while simultaneously indoctrinating the working class in 'the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat'. Both Schapper and Wilhelm Wolff question whether proletarians were strong enough in the German states to immediately assume power. The *Manifesto*, though, discounts any German interregnum: 'the Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution … but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution'. A proletarian in 'Germany' would have done well to make sense of such mixed messages on tactics and timing.

But in any event, the *Manifesto*'s contention that 'the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class' was another case of misplaced faith. In the German states, Marx chose to target the industrial proletariat, despite its tiny size (no more than 4.1%, perhaps as little as 1.9% of the total population, even in most industrialised Prussia) and its practical irrelevance, not in the revolutionary vanguard in February–March 1848, and negligibly participating in the Berlin uprising of 18 March. Marx should have known better, his charge that German statistics were 'wretchedly compiled' not supported by either his own extensive pre-revolution citations from statisticians such as Schulz and Gülich or the clear emergence of a German statistical industry in the 1840s.

Peasants in the German states were far more numerous, more involved in revolutionary activity—for which, in the countryside, they had more scope than in garrisoned towns—and more violent, but were ignored by Marx in the *Manifesto*, only belatedly being given prominence in the 17 *Demands* and the No More Taxes!!! campaign. Within the Marx circle, Wilhelm Wolff was at this time a constant champion of peasants' interests, from 1847 into 1849, while the CWA, once Gottschalk was side-lined by imprisonment, would argue in its house journal in August 1848, that 'in the peasant and working-classes lies the revolutionary force of Germany'. That same month, Schapper would propose: 'Let us speak to the peasants

about material interests'. It would be reassuring after Engels's denunciations of peasants, in March–April 1847, as a 'helpless class', or, in October 1847, as 'that class which in our day and age is least of all capable of seizing a revolutionary initiative' to think that he too saw peasants in a different light as 1848 unfolded. Engels's comments, however, during his holiday-in-exile in France in November 1848, 'the peasant in France, as in Germany, is a barbarian in the midst of civilisation … everywhere … this same total blindness in politics', suggest otherwise.

The *Manifesto* also chose to focus geographically on the German states, despite the consistent contempt for both their revolutionary potential, and their industrial and social development, expressed by both Engels and Marx in the months before the start of the German revolution in February 1848, but also (not totally reasonably) in its aftermath. In contrast, the far more industrialised England, whose potential revolutionary leadership role is frequently highlighted by Engels, in particular, but also by Marx, is not mentioned in the *Manifesto* (other than very peripherally). England's absence from the revolutionary arena in 1848, and the Chartists' revolutionary timidity, are often highlighted by historians, but the Chartists, in their abortive rally on Kennington Common on 10 April 1848, and their English Establishment opposition, were playing for much higher stakes than was the case in Berlin on 18–19 March 1848, the central revolutionary event in the German states. Neither Marx nor Engels lost faith in the Chartists that year.

The *NRZ* is the distinctive alternative priority of 1848–1849. The 17 *Demands* might be perceived as an important pamphlet in its own right, a more usable campaigning tool than the *Manifesto*, composed for the Communist League by its newly appointed President, Marx, and fellow Central Authority member Engels. But even before the *Demands* were written, the pair had turned their attention elsewhere, to a new newspaper. The *NRZ* had many achievements—a very creditable 6000 circulation, holding parliaments in Frankfurt and Berlin to account, its international coverage—but it was a newspaper for the middle classes not the proletariat (one certainly priced as such), it made no mention of the *Manifesto*, nor did it reprint the 17 *Demands* (as did at least 12 other German newspapers)—even when it was entirely legal to do both—and it did not champion workers' rights. While Engels was away from Cologne, between 14 April and 20 May 1848, on his largely fruitless fund-raising drive for the *NRZ*, he started but did not complete an English translation of the *Manifesto*, a vital missed opportunity in 1848 (as was a French translation).

Marx and (to a degree) Engels failed to seize the revolutionary moment in the German states, the 'March days' of 1848. Marx arrived in Paris on 5 March 1848, Engels joining him on 21 March; the pair did not leave for Mainz until 6 April. For three weeks, of course, from the outbreak of its revolution on 22 February 1848, France was the centre of European attention, with Paris, from around 7 March, the base for the Central Authority of the Communist League, now led by Marx. But disillusionment in France set in quickly, with the introduction on 16 March of the '45 centime tax', paid for in particular by 'Jacques le bonhomme … in truth it hit the peasant class above all, they had to pay the costs of the February revolution', as Marx recalled in 1850, and with the major rally of 17 March viewed in some quarters as 'the last glorious day of the democratic party'. Marx was slow to grasp which way the wind was now blowing. At a meeting no earlier than 14 March, he claimed that 'in a short time, open fighting would break out in Paris between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. … He therefore insisted that the German workers remain in Paris and prepare in advance to take part in the armed struggle.' But revolution had got under way in Baden on 27 February, and revolutionary events were occurring all through the German states in the opening weeks of March. The League was weak on the ground in Paris, but, on the face of it, much stronger in many German towns. From 20 March, the mainly German League members started to make their way back to their home territories. On 21 March, Marx and Engels agreed this was appropriate, but for over two weeks, they continued to linger in Paris.

The *Manifesto*'s geographic focus nevertheless was the German states, whose revolution in the spring of 1848 needed two ingredients to foster meaningful momentum: unity and leadership.

The Mainz Appeal in early April proclaimed, 'united and organised … we shall constitute an irresistible force', 'united and organised' being the precise phrase Wilhelm Wolff had used in the *Kommunistische Zeitschrift* the previous September. In Wolff's promotional tour through German towns in April, he urged League members 'to put on a united front'. Gottschalk's insincere response to the Mainz Appeal was that 'unity brings strength', while Born told Marx in his May 1848 letter, referring to the proletariat, that he was trying to 'organise all its scattered energies into one strong force'.

All these calls for unity pointed to the need for strong leadership. Engels, in his 1885 reflections on the League, described it as an 'inconsiderable fighting force', but one that 'possessed a leader, Marx, to whom all

willingly subordinated themselves, a leader of the first rank'. Marx certainly worked hard to achieve, and valued, his leadership of the League and of the CWA, but time and again, his leadership was wanting when it was needed. He personally did little to promote either the *Manifesto* or the 17 *Demands*, at their time of publication. He effectively ignored the Mainz Appeal. He was content to see the declining League dissolve. He oversaw a collapse in the support for the CWA.

None of this is to diminish the significance of Marx and the *Manifesto* to later generations. Both, though, could have had a far greater impact in and on 1848.

Appendix A

Revolution in the German States: Key Events

Date	*Place*	*State*	*Event*
1847			
12.9	Offenburg	Baden	Radical democrats urge people's army, press freedom, trial by jury, German parliament
10.10	Heppenheim	Hesse-Darmstadt	Constitutionalists call for German state, citizens' rights and freedoms
1848			
17.1	Stuttgart	Württemberg	MP Friedrich Federer repeats some Heppenheim demands
12.2	Karlsruhe	Baden	MP Friedrich Bassermann calls for representation, elected by people, in Confederation
27.2	Mannheim	Baden	Rally of 2500 demands people's army, press freedom, trial by jury, German parliament
1.3	Karlsruhe	Baden	20,000 demonstrate in front of Provincial Diet, several enter building
1–4.3	Wiesbaden	Nassau	Peasants (30,000 on 4.3) demand lifting of feudal ties, restoration of historic rights
3.3	Cologne	Prussia	Gottschalk-led rally of 5000 demands universal suffrage, press freedom, people's army

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Revolution in the German States: Key Events

Date	*Place*	*State*	*Event*
3.3	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Bundestag (Confederation Parliament) grants press freedom
3.3	Leipzig	Saxony	Politician/publicist Robert Blum demands resignation of all state ministers
4.3	Munich	Bavaria	Armoury stormed
5.3	Heidelberg	Baden	51 south-western liberals/democrats debate steps to form German pre-parliament
6.3	Munich	Bavaria	Street fighting, after citizens present demands (on 3.3)
7.3	Berlin	Prussia	Second evening rally in the Tiergarten zoological gardens draws up reform demands
9.3	Hanau	Hesse-Kassel	People's commission issues ultimatum to state electors (princes)
11.3	Berlin	Prussia	Rhineland Liberal Provincial Diet MPs' petition to King Friedrich Wilhelm IV (King FW IV)
13.3	Berlin	Prussia	10,000 stage further rally in Tiergarten
16.3	Dresden	Saxony	Liberalising measures announced 'To the People'
17–18.3	Berlin	Prussia	King FW IV makes political concessions (censorship lifted, United Diet to convene 2.4)
18.3	Berlin	Prussia	King FW IV orders army to clear palace square; 303 killed in street/barricade battles
19.3	Offenburg	Baden	20,000 attend Great People's Assembly
19.3	Berlin	Prussia	King FW IV orders withdrawal of army from palace
20.3	Munich	Bavaria	Abdication of King Ludwig I
21.3	Berlin	Prussia	King FW IV gives 'Prussia to merge into Germany' speech 'To My People, and the German Nation', promises to introduce a Constitution and other reforms
21.3		Denmark	'Schleswig-Holstein Question': Denmark vows to annexe partially German Schleswig
22.3	Berlin	Prussia	Burials of those killed on 18.3, in Friedrichshain park in Berlin
31.3–3.4	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Pre-parliament convenes, debates role of Frankfurt National Assembly (FNA)
9.4	Bov	Schleswig	First of nine battles in First Schleswig War
13.4	Konstanz	Baden	Friedrich Hecker ('Heckerzug') starts armed republican uprising (decisive defeat on 20.4 at Kandern)

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Revolution in the German States: Key Events

Date	*Place*	*State*	*Event*
26.4	Mannheim	Baden	Barricade erected on Rhine bridge against Federal troops
27.4	Dossenbach	Baden	Herwegh's German Democratic Legion defeated
1.5	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Elections to FNA (to meet in the *Paulskirche*, St Paul's Church)
1.5	Berlin	Prussia	Elections to the Prussian National Assembly (PNA)
18.5	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	FNA (mainly moderates/constitutionalists, 40% right/centre-right) sits for first time
22.5	Berlin	Prussia	PNA (more lower class than FNA, 53% left or centre-left) sits for first time
7.6	Berlin	Prussia	Prince Wilhelm returns from temporary exile in London, speech to PNA on 8.6; counter-revolution strengthens
28.6	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	FNA passes law to set up Provisional Central Power (basis for constitutional monarchy)
12.7	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	FNA's Imperial Regent (provisional monarch for German nation-state) takes office
15.7	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Congress of Craftsmen and Tradesmen meets, debates protectionist policies
20.7–20.9	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Master craftsmen peel off, organise own rival conference
23.8–3.9	Berlin	Prussia	Rival Workers' Congress meets, spawning General German Workers' Fraternity
26.8	Malmö	Sweden	Under British/Russian pressure, Prussia forced into humiliating Schleswig ceasefire; Treaty of Malmö concedes many Danish demands
27.8		Prussia	*Rustikalverein* (Rustic Alliance) founded in Silesia; 200,000 members by October 1848
17–18.9	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Uprising against any ratification of Treaty of Malmö by FNA, two MPs killed, Prussian troops used
19.9	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	Central Power assembles 12,000 troops in five camps, to suppress 'anarchic' uprisings
19.9	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	After FNA ratifies Treaty of Malmö, Engels writes, 'If Germany had a Cromwell … he would say: "You are no Parliament … Depart, I say … In the name of God—go!"'
21.9	Lörrach	Baden	Gustav von Struve proclaims anti-FNA 'German Republic', suppressed 25.9

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Revolution in the German States: Key Events

Date	*Place*	*State*	*Event*
26.9–4.10	Cologne	Prussia	State of Siege imposed, *NRZ* and three other newspapers suspended, along with March 1848 freedoms
31.10	Berlin	Prussia	Mass meeting over crushing of Vienna uprising ended by Berlin civic militia; triggers appointment of hardline General Brandenburg as prime minister on 2.11
7.11	Cologne	Prussia	Marx, in *NRZ*, says FNA has 'betrayed Vienna'
9.11	Vienna	Austria	FNA deputy Robert Blum executed by Austrian imperial troops
9.11	Berlin	Prussia	PNA expelled to Brandenburg on the Havel, then continually hounded
12.11	Berlin	Prussia	General Wrangel imposes martial law (12.11–14.11), eight newspapers and free assembly suspended
15.11	Berlin	Prussia	PNA finally adopts motion, 'So long as the National Assembly is not at liberty to continue its sessions in Berlin, the Brandenburg Ministry has no right … to collect taxes'
22.11	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	FNA refuses to back PNA on tax refusal; Marx, in *NRZ*: FNA 'has declared decision illegal'
23.11	Berlin	Prussia	FNA commissioners try to broker resolution of conflict between PNA and Crown, but FNA stance on PNA and tax refusal renders FNA intervention ineffectual
5.12	Berlin	Prussia	PNA dissolved by royal decree; new Constitution limits suffrage, gives King wide powers
27.12	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	'Declaration of Basic Rights of German People' proclaimed by FNA
1849			
26.2	Berlin	Prussia	Convening of Second Chamber of the Prussian Diet (*Landtag*), created via imposed Constitution of 5.12.48, but limited suffrage, effectiveness; dissolved 27.4.49
2.3	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	FNA decrees common, equal and secret male suffrage for Imperial Constitution (IC)

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Revolution in the German States: Key Events

Date	*Place*	*State*	*Event*
27.3	Frankfurt	Frankfurt	FNA passes vote on IC, an attempt to create a unified German nation-state, including government by constitutional monarchy, fundamental rights, bicameral parliament; King FW IV designated 'Emperor of the Germans'; most Princes of states resist idea of IC. A popular IC refrain called on revolutionary leaders to 'slay the German princes'
3.4	Berlin	Prussia	King FW IV effectively declines imperial crown (12.48: 'with its whorish smell of revolution')
3.4		Schleswig	Resumption of hostilities in Schleswig war; several battles until further truce on 10.7
14.4		Germany	28 State governments (several major ones missing) formally authorise IC
24.4		Württemberg	Württemberg also signs up to IC, as does Saxony's provisional government on 4.5
27.4	Berlin	Prussia	Displaced Left MPs of dissolved Second Chamber gather in Dönhoff Sq; people fired on
28.4	Berlin	Prussia	King FW IV formally declines 'Emperor of Germans' crown, further weakening FNA
28.4	Dresden	Saxony	Second Chamber of Provincial Diet in Saxony dissolved by King Friedrich August II (Hanover's too, in time)
3–9.5	Dresden	Saxony	IC Campaign, King/ministers flee city (4.5), Saxon/Prussian troops suppress revolt (9.5)
1.5–19.6		Palatinate	IC Campaign, revolutionaries take over province, defeated by Prussian troops
6.5–21.5		Rhineland	IC Campaign fighting in Elberfeld, Düsseldorf, Iserlohn and Prüm ended by Prussian troops
12.5–23.7		Baden	IC Campaign fighting, starting and finishing in Rastatt Fortress, ended by Prussian troops
31.5	Stuttgart	Württemberg	FNA decides to retreat to Stuttgart as 'Rump Parliament' (in place, 6.6)
6.6	Stuttgart	Württemberg	FNA appoints Imperial Regency as new Provisional Central Power
18.6	Stuttgart	Württemberg	Forcible dissolution of Stuttgart Rump Parliament by Württemberg military forces, led by Friedrich Römer
23.7	Rastatt	Baden	Surrender of 6000 revolutionary fighters in Rastatt marks end of German states' revolution; 600 executed

Appendix B

What Marx Did in the European Revolutions

Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
1847		
1.1–1.4	Brussels	Marx writes *Poverty of Philosophy*, adds short foreword 15.6
20.1	London	Joseph Moll authorised to ask Marx to join 'League of the Just' ('Communist League' from 2.6)
5.8	Brussels	Marx sets up (and chairs) Brussels 'community' of the Communist League (CL)
30.8	Brussels	Marx and Engels found German Workers' Society, for political education
5.9	Brussels	Marx starts writing regularly for *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung* (*DBZ*)
15.11	Brussels	Marx appointed vice-president of Brussels Democratic Association (BDA)
27.11	Ostend	Marx meets Engels, en route to their both attending 2nd CL Congress
29.11–8.12	London	2nd CL Congress meets, mandates Marx and Engels to write *Communist Manifesto*
8–13.12	London	Marx and Engels work together on *Manifesto*
13–16.12	Brussels	Marx works alone on *Manifesto*

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What Marx Did in the European Revolutions		
Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
17–30.12	Brussels	Engels joins Marx, jointly work on *Manifesto* until Engels's return to Paris; Marx separately gives several lectures on political economy to German Workers' Society, including on wages
1848		
1–31.1	Brussels	Marx alone writes *Manifesto*, sent to London to be printed at end of January
9.1	Brussels	Marx gives speech to BDA on free trade
17.1	Ghent	Marx spends several days in Ghent setting up new branch of BDA
13.2	Brussels	BDA and Marx exchange 'fraternal salutations' with London Fraternal Democrats
24.2	London	*Manifesto* published in London
25.2–1.3	Brussels	Marx (with own funds) and Engels support republican movement in Belgium
27.2	Brussels	BDA demands arming of Brussels' workers
1.3	Paris	Marx free to return to France after new French government lifts expulsion order
3.3	Brussels	Marx given 24 hours to quit Belgium
3.3	Brussels	Brussels Central Authority of CL asks Marx to set up new CL Central Authority in Paris
4.3	Brussels	Marx and wife Jenny arrested, expelled from Belgium
5.3	Paris	Marx arrives in Paris
6.3	Paris	Marx takes part in rally of German workers
6.3	Paris	Marx starts to contest sending of armed German émigré volunteer 'legion' to German states
8.3	Paris	Marx tasked with drawing up draft statute for (a) German Workers' Club
8.3–11.3	Paris	CL Central Authority now based in Paris, elects Marx as president
18.3	London	London circle of CL sends CL Central Authority in Paris 1000 copies of *Manifesto*
18.3–19.3	Paris	Karl or Jenny Marx reveals plan to launch *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to Lina Schöler
21.3	Paris	Marx and Engels commit to advising German workers to return singly to states
15.3–1.4	Paris	CL Central Authority helps accelerating return of 300–400 mainly CL members to German homesteads

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What Marx Did in the European Revolutions		
Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
21–24.3	Paris	Marx and Engels write *Demands of Communist Party in Germany*, days after *NRZ* instigated; *Demands* published around 25.3
30.3	Paris	Marx makes plans for return to Prussia, not immediately enacted
1.4	Paris	German Democratic Legion sets off from Paris
5.4	Mainz	CL-led Mainz Appeal calls for national mass movement of German workers
6.4	Paris	Marx and Engels leave Paris; first destination: Mainz
8–9.4	Mainz	Marx and Engels stop off in Mainz, discussions with CL members
10–11.4	Cologne	Marx and Engels move on to Cologne, continue planned launch of *NRZ*
13.4	Cologne	Cologne City Council grants Marx 'right to reside' in Cologne and (provisional) citizenship
24.4	Cologne	Prospectus for *NRZ* published
6.5	Elberfeld	Marx spends several days with Engels, discussing publication of *NRZ*, CL activity; both attend Political Club dinner (8.5)
11.5	Cologne	Marx attends Cologne CL meeting confirming Gottschalk's resignation and allegedly 'dissolves' CL
1.6	Cologne	First issue of *NRZ*, 'the Organ of Democracy'
23.6	Cologne	Cologne Democratic Society (CDS) appoints Marx to democratic groups' commission; Marx's first engagement with CDS
24.6	Cologne	Marx attends meeting of Cologne democratic groups
3–6.7	Cologne	Marx 'indignant' at arrest of Gottschalk on 3.7, but Moll soon takes over (6.7) as head of Cologne Workers' Association (CWA)
9.7	Cologne	CDS meeting tells PNA to declare German Ministry 'divested of the confidence of the country'
21.7	Cologne	At CDS general meeting, Marx chosen as representative of committee of three democratic groups, criticises Hermann Becker for inviting Weitling and soon after tells Becker the purpose of 17 *Demands* was to 'counter' Gottschalk
3.8	Cologne	Cologne Police Superintendent Geiger refuses to approve Marx's Prussian citizenship
4.8	Cologne	In a speech at next CDS meeting, Marx denounces arguments of Weitling at 21.7 meeting

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What Marx Did in the European Revolutions		
Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
4.8	Cologne	Engels tells same meeting that Marx could be expelled 'at any time' as a result of citizenship dispute; in fact, Marx does not leave Germany until 3.6.49
11.8	Cologne	At CDS meeting, Marx attacks FNA (Poland partition), Prussian government (citizenship)
13.8–14.8	Cologne	Marx at first Rhenish Democratic Congress; representatives told to stir up factory workers, peasants
22.8	Cologne	Marx demands of Prussian Interior Minister Kühlwetter that his citizenship be restored
23.8–11.9	Various	Marx travels to Berlin, Vienna, to shore up resistance to counter-revolution, fund-raise for *NRZ*
25–26.8	Berlin	Marx meets several democratic leaders
27.8–6.9	Vienna	In Vienna, Marx meets local democrats, gives his views on Austrian political events
7–10.9	Berlin	Marx deems it expedient to return to Cologne, via Berlin, secures Polish funds for *NRZ*
10.9	Cologne	*Demands of the Communist Party in Germany* reprinted as pamphlet, distributed in several districts in Rhine Province, by CWA members
11.9	Cologne	Marx returns to Cologne
11–25.9	Cologne	Marx, Engels, other *NRZ* editors try to build popular resistance to counter-revolution
12.9	Cologne	Prussian Interior Minister Kühlwetter tells Marx that refusal to restore his citizenship is 'legal'
13.9	Cologne	*NRZ*, CWA and CDS organise rally, attended by 6000, set up Committee of Public Safety (CPS)
20.9	Cologne	Mass meeting held by CPS and CDS; CWA condemns FNA over Treaty of Malmö ceasefire in First Schleswig War; FNA MPs are 'traitors to the people'
25.9	Cologne	Cologne Prosecutor given go-ahead for prosecution of CPS, CWA and CDS
25.9	Cologne	Second Democratic Congress of Rhine Province and Westphalia aborted after arrest of local democratic leaders; Marx warns CWA members against armed uprising
26.9–4.10	Cologne	State of Siege imposed in Cologne forces suspension of *NRZ* and three other democratic papers
30.9–15.10	Cologne	Marx commits personally and financially to continuing publication of *NRZ*

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What Marx Did in the European Revolutions		
Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
1.10	Cologne	Cologne Prosecutor investigates Marx, Engels, other *NRZ* editors regarding *NRZ* piece, 20.9 meeting
12.10	Cologne	In funds again, *NRZ* able to resume publication (though State of Siege lifted 4.10)
16.10	Cologne	Marx accepts invitation of CWA to become its president 'until Gottschalk set free'
22.10	Cologne	Marx chairs CWA meeting, delegate to be sent to Berlin Democratic Congress on 26.10
6.11	Cologne	Marx chairs CWA meeting, argues Vienna only fell due to betrayal by bourgeoisie
11.11–7.12	Cologne	Marx runs 30 *NRZ* articles in increasingly combative 'No More Taxes!!!' tax refusal campaign
11.11	Cologne	Marx writes in *NRZ* that 'refusal to pay taxes is the primary duty of the citizen'
13.11	Cologne	Marx attends CDS meeting, reads out telegram regarding Vienna judicial execution of Robert Blum
14.11	Cologne	Marx, for Rhenish District Committee of Democrats (RDCD), rejects violent resistance on tax
14.11	Cologne	Marx receives summons over 14.10.48 *NRZ* article 'libelling' by Public Prosecutor Hecker
14.11	Cologne	Marx, for RDCD, urges mass meetings demanding tax refusal
18.11	Cologne	Marx, in *NRZ*, says, 'forcible collection [of taxes] must be resisted in every way'
21.11	Cologne	Marx summoned by Examining Magistrate over 'public incitement to rebellion' over tax
23.11	Cologne	Marx attends Rhenish Democratic Congress; tax refusal tactics, peasants' overall role raised
2.12	Cologne	Marx again before Examining Magistrate regarding series of *NRZ* articles
7.12	Cologne	'No More Taxes!!!' campaign ends, failure due to loyalty of Prussian army, 5.12 dissolution of PNA
19.12	Cologne	Advert appears to subscribe to *NRZ*, 'organ not only of German, but of European democracy'
21.12	Cologne	Marx summoned by Examining Magistrate regarding *NRZ* article on 26.11; trial of Gottschalk and Anneke (arrested 3.7) and Esser (arrested 4.7) begins; all acquitted on 23.12 and released

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What Marx Did in the European Revolutions		
Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
1849		
15.1	Cologne	Marx attends CWA committee, urges workers to support democrats in Second Chamber vote
29.1	Cologne	Marx attends CWA committee; CWA paper *Freiheit, Brüderlichkeit, Arbeit* to resume (on 8.2) to counter Gottschalk's *Freiheit, Arbeit* (launched 14.1)
31.1–1.2	Cologne	Marx and Engels meet Stephan Born, leader of General German Workers' Fraternity
1–28.2		Marx and Engels debate reorganisation of CL with Moll
4.2	Cologne	CWA meeting announces members should receive regular, free lectures on social themes
7.2	Cologne	Trial of *NRZ*, accused of insulting Chief Prosecutor Zweiffel in *NRZ* article (5.7.48) regarding Gottschalk arrest on 3.7.48
8.2	Cologne	Trial of RDCD, accused of incitement to revolt with respect to tax refusal, on 18.11
11.2	Mühlheim	Marx attends workers' banquet, gives speech on German workers in European revolutions
24.2	Cologne	Marx and Engels attend banquet for anniversary of February 1848 revolution in France
2–3.3	Cologne	Two officers of Cologne Garrison call at Marx's flat regarding *NRZ* article authorship
19.3	Cologne	Banquet for ca. 6000 commemorates anniversary of Berlin barricades' deaths on 18.3.48
29.3	Koblenz	Rhine Province Lord Lieutenant Eichmann deems suggestion of Prussian Minister of Interior Manteuffel that Marx be expelled premature; could spark unrest in Cologne
7.4	Berlin	Manteuffel says, 'grave suspicion of treasonable activities' by Marx, 'very recently', but leaves decision to expel Marx up to Cologne authorities
14.4	Cologne	Marx, Schapper, Wolff and Anneke resign from RDCD, target uniting of workers' associations
14.4–9.5	Various	Marx travels through NW Germany, Westphalia, meets with communists, fund-raises for *NRZ*
17.4	Cologne	Marx to represent CWA at 6.5 Congress of Rhine Province/ Westfalian Workers' Associations
19.4	Cologne	Ministry of Interior puts Marx on final notice of expulsion on next 'unequivocal offence'

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What Marx Did in the European Revolutions		
Date	*Place*	*Activity (not including regular journalism)*
		From 1/6/1848 to 19/5/1849, Marx wrote many articles for the Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
29.4	Cologne	CWA's 'official' newspaper *Freiheit, Brüderlichkeit, Arbeit* publishes earlier ruling of CWA Branch No 1 condemning *Freiheit, Arbeit*, Gottschalk's attacks on Marx
11.5	Berlin	Prussian government orders expulsion of Marx from Prussia, to hinder publication of *NRZ*
16.5	Cologne	Marx receives expulsion order to quit Prussia
17.5	Cologne	Arrest warrant against Engels for his part in recent Elberfeld uprising, must leave Cologne
19.5	Cologne	*NRZ* forced to close, final edition printed in red
19–20.5	Frankfurt	Marx and Engels travel to Frankfurt, try unsuccessfully to get FNA MPs to back uprisings
20–21.5	Baden	Marx and Engels move on to Baden, try unsuccessfully to have revolutionary army of Baden sent to Frankfurt, to give revolution pan-German character
24–26.5	Pfalz	Marx and Engels move on to Pfalz, but local uprising 'petit-bourgeois'
29.5	Cologne	Marx cleared by police court of libel action brought regarding 14.9.48 *NRZ* article
31.5	Bingen	Marx and Engels in Bingen (Hesse-Darmstadt), arrested on suspicion of uprising involvement
2–3.6	Paris	For Central Authority, Marx, expecting decisive developments in France, heads for Paris
3–7.6	Paris	Marx links up with French Democrats/workers, updates Engels (in Kaiserslautern) on France
19.7	Paris	Marx advised of expulsion order from Paris but his demand to remain temporarily upheld
1.8	Paris	Marx writes to Engels, tells him of plans for 'politico-economic monthly'
23.8	Paris	Marx loses bid to stay in Paris, opts to go to London, instead of 'French exile' in Brittany

Appendix C

The Revolutions of 1848–1849 Around Europe: The Springtime of Peoples

The European Revolutions started in Italy, with the insurrection in Palermo on 12 January 1848, and finished there also with the surrender of Venice on 28 August 1849 (some commentators begin events with the Swiss civil war in late 1847). Between these two dates, across the whole of Europe, citizens campaigned for democratic reforms, peacefully and violently, kings and governments granted and withdrew concessions, constitutions were proclaimed, new parliaments emerged and fell, regular troops fought against their fellow citizens or those of other countries and ultimately helped their counter-revolutionary leaders to prevail.

Marx personified the pan-European dimension to the Revolutions. While based in Prussia (or other German states, for the final fortnight) from early April 1848 till early June 1849, thus the majority of the revolutionary period, he also had spells in the early days of the revolutions living in Brussels, and then in the critical month of March 1848 in Paris. During the revolutionary months, he undertook visits, from late August to early September 1848, first to Berlin but then to Austria, seeking financial backing for the *NRZ* (a contribution ultimately coming on 18 September from the Poles), with an interlude after his eviction from Prussia in Paris, in

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June 1849, before finally heading for London just before the fall of Venice in August 1849.

His main journalistic vehicle, the Cologne-based *NRZ* (of which he was Editor-in-Chief), ran from 1 June 1848 till 19 May 1849. For the *NRZ*'s successor, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue*, in 1850, Marx wrote a detailed retrospective analysis of the revolutionary events in France and their outcome, *The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850*. From August 1851 to September 1852, in his series *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany*, this time for the *New York Daily Tribune*, Engels surveyed the German Confederation, the FNA, 'Poles, Tschechs and Germans' and 'Panslavism and the Schleswig-Holstein War' before revisiting the Paris of 23 June 1848, concluding, '[I]t became evident to everyone that this was the great decisive battle, which would, if the insurrection were victorious, deluge the whole continent with renewed revolutions'.[1] Engels also addressed the 'Betrayal of Vienna' and the overthrow of the PNA. Written at approximately the same time (1851–1852), Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* was 'a profound post-mortem on the 1848 Revolution, a dissection of its failure at the very centre of European-wide revolutionary aspirations',[2] in Sperber's words, or, as Marx saw it, a French saga of the 'shamelessly simple domination of the sabre', the state's 'answer to the *coup de main* of February 1848 given by the *coup de tête* of December 1851'.[3]

Given the dates of its launch and demise, the *NRZ* could not report or comment on the whole 1848–1849 revolutionary period. Marx and Engels—either through the *NRZ* or through a variety of other European newspapers at the outset, the *DBZ* in Brussels, *The Northern Star* in London, *La Réforme* in Paris or in the aftermath for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue* and then the *New-York Daily Tribune*—provided comprehensive immediate coverage and subsequent analysis of the majority of the key events of the European Revolutions.

This coverage took several forms, ranging from on-the-spot reportage to more reflective analysis, either via the *NRZ*'s foreign correspondents or via domestic or foreign newspapers.[4] Engels provided a gripping,

[1] *The Paris Rising. MECW 11*, 51.

[2] Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, 287.

[3] Marx refers to Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état of 2 December 1851; *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. MECW 11*, 106.

[4] *The 23rd of June. MECW 7*, 133.

eye-witness account, moment-by-moment, of the uprising in Paris which started on 23 June 1848: '[O]nly seven men and two women, two beautiful young *grisettes*, remained at their post. One of the seven mounts the barricade carrying a flag. The others open fire. The national guard replies and the standard-bearer falls. Then a *grisette*, a tall, beautiful, neatly-dressed girl with bare arms, grasps the flag, climbs over the barricade and advances … the national guard shoot down the girl just as she has come close to their bayonets.'[5] The vividness of the reporting makes it hard to believe that Engels was actually writing from a vantage point over 300 miles away in Cologne.

27 January 1848: Paris. Alexis de Tocqueville predicts in speech to French Chamber of Deputies 'the most terrifying of revolutions', since the working classes believe 'that all the people above them are incapable and unworthy to rule them. That the division of property in the world up to now is unjust.'

8 February 1848: Italy. Grantings of Constitution in Piedmont, followed by Naples (10 February) and Tuscany (17 February).

22–24 February 1848: Paris. Street demonstrations, barricades erected; Prime Minister Guizot resigns; 52 people killed; King Louis-Philippe forced to abdicate.

27–28 February to 2 March 1848: Mannheim. Rally/demands; uprisings in Baden, Wiesbaden, Württemberg.

March 1848: German states. 'March Demands' ('Märzforderungen') as well as more individualised demands in many German states.

2 March 1848: France. Universal male suffrage declared.

3 March 1848: Pozsony. Hungarian nationalist Lajos Kossuth delivers 'baptismal speech of the Austrian Revolution', calling for Austrian constitutional reforms.

12–13 March 1848: Vienna. Student uprisings, followed by resignation of Chancellor Prince Klemens von Metternich.

14 March 1848: Rome. 'Secular' constitution granted by Pope Pius IX.

15–31 March 1848: Hungary. Hungarian autonomy, liberalisation measures.

18 March 1848: Berlin. Street fighting, 303 killed.

18–22 March 1848: Milan/Venice. 'Five Glorious Days' revolt in Milan against Austrian troops; Venice declares republic.

[5] *The 23rd of June*. *MECW 7*, 133.

18–19 March 1848: Stockholm. Short-lived bids/riots ('Marsororoligheterna') for reforms.

20 March–9 May 1848: Poznan. Uprising of Polish forces, campaigning for free and united Germany and against Russia; supressed by Prussian troops; Prussian government subsequently rejects any autonomy.

20 March 1848: Bavaria. Ludwig I, King of Bavaria, abdicates.

21 March–26 August 1848: Schleswig-Holstein. First Schleswig War, culminating in the Treaty of Malmö ceasefire, granting most Danish demands, humiliating Prussia and eventually FNA.

24–27 March 1848: Amsterdam. Mass meetings, rioting. King concedes new constitution.

8 April 1848: Prague. Czechs promised a constituent assembly.

8 April 1848: Moldavia. Start of unsuccessful Moldavian (Romanian) revolution.

10 April 1848: London. Abortive mass gathering of 20–50,000 Chartists on Kennington Common, easily contained by authorities.

11 April 1848: Pozsony. Hungarian Diet approves Kossuth's 'April' (also known as 'March') Laws, comprising Twelve Points of reform, but also antagonising loyalist Croatia and Slavonia, as well as Romanians and Serbs.

20 April 1848: Kandern. Defeat of Hecker ('Heckerzug') Republican uprising by Hessen/Baden troops.

23–24 April 1848: France. General election elects Constituent Assembly of the new Republic, over nine-million voters entitled to vote under new male universal suffrage.

25 April 1848: Austria. Short-lived 'Pillersdorf' constitution proclaimed.

27 April 1848: Dossenbach. Defeat of Herwegh's German Democratic Legion by Württemberg troops; Herwegh escapes, his deputy Bornstedt captured.

15–17 May 1848: Vienna. Demonstrations, Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria flees Vienna for Innsbruck.

18–22 May 1848: Frankfurt/Berlin. First sittings of, respectively, the Frankfurt National Assembly (FNA) and the Prussian National Assembly (PNA).

30 May 1848: Goito/Peschiera. Rare Italian victories against Austrians, forced to retreat at Goito, lose fortress of Peschiera.

2 June 1848: Prague. Pan-Slav Congress (Poles, Czechs, Serbs, Slovenes) convenes.

12–17 June 1848: Prague. City bombarded, Pan-Slav Congress dissolved, city surrenders, military dictatorship.

7 July 1848: Moldavia. Russian troops enter Moldavia to avert a revolutionary government, similarly entering Wallachia on 27 September.

14 July 1848: Srbobran. Hungarian forces besiege town but driven back by Serbs. Hungarians waging war on three fronts, also against Romanians and Serbs in Banat, and Romanians in Transylvania.

22 July 1848: Vienna. Vienna Reichstag convenes; of 383 deputies, 25% 'peasants'.

23–26 June 1848: Paris. June Days Insurrection by workers, followed by authoritarian backlash; Paris remains under martial law until October 1848.

24–25 July 1848: Custoza. Victory (if higher losses) for Austrian army over Piedmont forces.

6 August 1848: Milan. Austrian troops take control of Milan.

21 August 1848: Vienna. Wage cuts for women provoke first-ever women's demonstration.

26 August 1848: Treaty of Malmö grants Denmark most of its demands; Prussia, and in due course, FNA humiliated.

17 September 1848: Hungary. Invasion by Austrian (Croatian) army.

21–25 September 1848: Lörrach. Proclamation in Baden by Gustav von Struve of German republic, subsequent suppression by Baden troops.

25–27 September 1848: Budapest occupied by Ottoman and then Russian forces.

6–31 October 1848: Vienna. Uprising or October Revolution.

7 October 1848: Vienna. Having returned to Vienna in August, Emperor Ferdinand I once more flees to Olmütz.

12–18 October 1848: Transylvania. Civil war between Hungarian and Romanian nationalists.

23 October 1848: Paris. National Constituent Assembly finishes drafting new constitution; elections set for 10 December.

26–31 October 1848: Vienna. Austria, Croatian and Montenegrin troops first bombard, then storm city. All resistance leaders, bar Polish General Bem, executed. Three thousand Viennese citizens and 1300 soldiers killed.

2 November 1848: Berlin. Hardliner General Brandenburg appointed Prussian prime minister; subsequently, State of Siege declared in Berlin.

24–25 November 1848: Rome. Pope Pius IX flees to Gaeta in Kingdom of Naples.

2 December 1848: Olmütz. Abdication of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria; succeeded by nephew Franz Joseph I; Austrian General Windischgrätz at end of December forces Hungarian government to flee Budapest for Debrecen.

5 December 1848: Berlin. Forcible dissolution of PNA.

10 December 1848: Paris. Louis-Napoléon comfortably wins election (74% of votes cast) as president of France; elected 20 December.

27 December 1848: Frankfurt. 'Declaration of Basic Rights of German People', proclaimed by FNA.

9–15 February 1849: Rome/Tuscany. Roman, Tuscan Republics declared. Ancona, Bologna, subsequently join Roman republic, but forced to surrender to Austrian troops; Florentine republic.

7 March 1849: Kremsier. Relocated Austrian Reichstag dissolved.

22–23 March 1849: Novara. Carlo Alberto's Piedmontese army defeated by Austrians; he abdicates.

27 March 1849: Frankfurt. Imperial Constitution voted through by Frankfurt National Assembly, ratified (but not by all major German states) on 14 April 1849; King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia designated 'Emperor of the Germans' (he declines role effectively on 3 April, formally on 28 April).

13–15 April 1849: Hungary. Declaration of independence; General Artur Görgei's tactically smarter campaign leads to recapture of Budapest from Austrian forces.

24 April 1849: Italy. French army lands in Papal States; Giuseppe Garibaldi enters Rome on 27 April, helps repel French pro tem.

3 May–23 July 1849: German states. Campaigns for the Imperial Constitution in Dresden (Saxony)—Wagner proclaims the 'sublime goddess REVOLUTION'—Palatinate, Rhineland, Baden, usually suppressed by Prussian troops.

13–14 May 1849: Paris. Elections for National Assembly, won by coalition of conservatives.

11 June 1849: Paris. Socialists and radical republicans under Ledru-Rollin attempt to overthrow Louis-Napoléon; easily suppressed.

17 June 1849: Hungary. Russian troops invade.

18 June 1849: Stuttgart. Württemberg March Minister Friedrich Römer orders violent dissolution of FNA rump parliament.

2 July 1849: Rome. Surrender of Roman Republic to French troops.

23 July 1849: Rastatt. Surrender of 6000 revolutionary fighters in fortress of Rastatt; 600 executed.

13 August 1849: Hungary. Hungary capitulates, Görgei preferring to surrender to Russian troops; 13 of his generals executed on 6 October; he is spared.

28 August 1849: Venice. City surrenders to Austrian troops.

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