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## KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS

## SELECTED WORKS IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II



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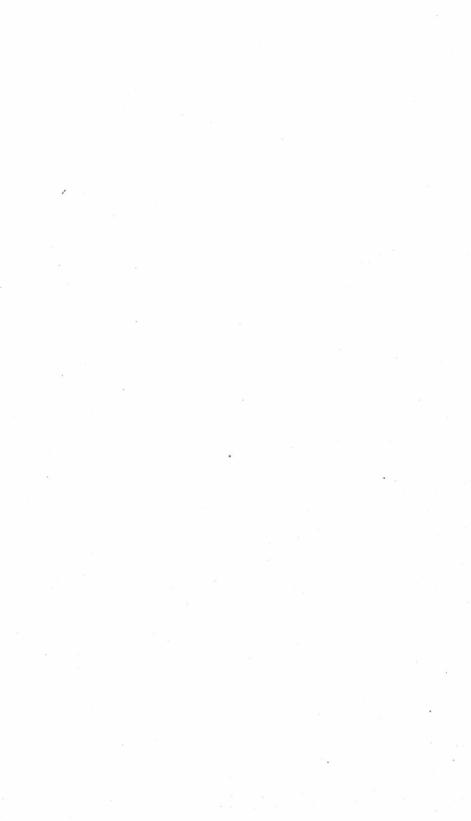
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# KARL MARX AND FREDERICK ENGELS

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VOLUME II



#### Karl Marx

### CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAM

#### FOREWORD¹ BY FREDERICK ENGELS

The manuscript published here—the covering letter to Bracke as well as the critique of the draft program—was sent in 1875, shortly before the Gotha Unity Congress,2 to Bracke for communication to Geib, Auer, Bebel and Liebknecht and subsequent return to Marx. Since the Halle Party Congress has put the discussion of the Gotha Program on the agenda of the Party, I think I would be guilty of suppression if I any longer withheld from publicity this important-perhaps the most important-document relevant to this discussion.

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

The ruthless severity with which the draft program is dissected here, the mercilessness with which the results obtained are enun-

<sup>2</sup> At the Gotha Congress (May 22-27, 1875) the two then existing German workers' organizations-the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (the socalled Eisenachers) led by Liebknecht and Bebel, and the Lassallean organization headed by Hasenclever, Hasselmann and Tölcke (the General Association of German Workers)-combined to form a single party, the Socialist

Workers' Party of Germany.-Ed.

Marx's Kritik des Gothaer Programms [Critique of the Gotha Program] was published by Engels contrary to the wishes of the opportunist leadership of the German Social-Democratic Party. From Engels' letter to Kautsky (see pp. 42-45 of this volume) it appears that Engels also had to overcome the opposition of the latter and agree to moderate some of the more incisive passages before he could get the Critique of the Gotha Program published in the Neue Zeit [New Time]. In our edition the ms. text, which has been preserved, is completely restored.—Ed.

ciated and the shortcomings of the draft laid bare—all this today, after fifteen years, can no longer give offence. Specific Lassalleans now exist only abroad as isolated ruins, and in Halle the Gotha Program was given up even by its creators as altogether in-

adequate.1

Nevertheless. I have omitted a few sharp personal expressions and judgments where these were immaterial, and replaced them by dots. Marx himself would have done so if he had published the manuscript today. The violence of the language in some passages was provoked by two circumstances. In the first place, Marx and I had been more intimately connected with the German movement than with any other; we were, therefore, bound to be particularly perturbed by the decidedly retrograde step manifested by this draft program. And secondly, we were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the International, 2 engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists, who made us responsible for everything that happened in the labour movement in Germany; hence we had to expect that we would also be saddled with the secret paternity of this program. These considerations do not now exist and so there is no necessity for the passages in question.

For reasons arising from the Press Law, also, a few sentences have been indicated only by dots. Where I have had to choose a milder expression this has been enclosed in square brackets.

Otherwise the text has been reproduced word for word.

London, January 6, 1891

Written by Engels Published in the journal Neue Zeit for 1891

Printed according to the text of the journal

Translated from the German

<sup>2</sup> The Hague Congress of the First International, held in September 1872, was dominated by the struggle against the Bakunists. The majority of the Congress supported the General Council, which was under the leadership of Marx. Bakunin was expelled from the International.—Ed.

<sup>1</sup> The congress of the German Social-Democrats at Halle—the first congress after the abrogation of the Anti-Socialist Law—decided on October 16, 1890, on the motion of W. Liebknecht, the main author of the Gotha Program, to prepare a draft of a new program for the next Party congress. The new program (the Erfurt Program) was adopted at the Erfurt Congress in October

#### Karl Marx

#### LETTER TO W. BRACKE

London May 5, 1875

Dear Bracke,

When you have read the following critical marginal notes on the Unity Program, would you be so good as to send them on to Geib and Auer, Bebel and Liebknecht for them to examine. I am exceedingly busy and have already overstepped the limit of work allowed me by the doctor. Hence it was anything but a "pleasure" to write such a lengthy screed. It was, however, necessary so that the steps to be taken by me later on would not be misinterpreted by our friends in the Party for whom this communication is intended.

After the Unity Congress has been held, Engels and I will publish a short declaration to the effect that our position is altogether remote from the said program of principles and that we have nothing

to do with it.

This is indispensable because the opinion—the entirely erroneous opinion—is held abroad, assiduously nurtured by enemies of the Party, that we secretly guide from here the movement of the so-called Eisenach Party. In a Russian book that has recently appeared, Bakunin still makes me responsible, for example, not only for all the programs, etc., of that party but even for every step taken by Liebknecht from the day of his cooperation with the People's Party.

Apart from this, it is my duty not to give recognition, even by diplomatic silence, to what in my opinion is a thoroughly ob-

jectionable program that demoralizes the Party.

Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programs. If, therefore, it was not possible—and the conditions of the time did not permit it—to go beyond the Eisenach program, one should simply have concluded an agreement for action against the common enemy. But by drawing up a program of principles (instead of postponing this until it has been prepared for by a con-

siderable period of common activity) one sets up before the whole world landmarks by which it measures the level of the Party movement. The Lassallean leaders came because circumstances forced them to come. If they had been told in advance that there would be no bargaining about principles, they would have had to be content with a program of action or a plan of organization for common action. Instead of this, one permits them to arrive armed with mandates, recognizes these mandates on one's part as valid and thus surrenders unconditionally to those who are themselves in need of help. To crown the whole business, they are holding a congress again before the Congress of Compromise, while one's own party is holding its congress post festum. One had obviously had a desire to stifle all criticism and to give one's own party no opportunity for reflection. One knows that the mere fact of unification is satisfying to the workers, but it is a mistake to believe that this momentary success is not bought at too high a price.

For the rest, the program is no good altogether, even apart from

its sanctification of the Lassallean articles of faith.

I shall be sending you in the near future the last part of the French edition of Capital.<sup>2</sup> The continuation of the printing was held up for a considerable time owing to the ban of the French government. The thing will be ready this week or the beginning of next week. Have you received the previous six parts? Please let me have the address of Bernhard Becker, to whom I must also send the final parts.

The bookshop of the *Volksstaat*<sup>3</sup> has peculiar ways of doing things. Up to this moment, for example, I have not been sent a single copy of the publication on the Cologne Communist Trial.

With best wishes, Yours,

Karl Marx

<sup>2</sup> The French translation of the first volume of Capital, edited by Marx

himself, appeared in parts in 1872-75 in Paris.—Ed.

<sup>1</sup> Post festum: after the feast, that is, belatedly.

<sup>3.</sup> The reference is to the publishing house of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party. It was situated in Leipzig and operated under the direction of the editorial board of the Volksstaat (People's State—1869-76), the central organ of the Party.—Ed.