

The Death of Karl Marx

Frederick Engels

Marx was was laid to rest in Highgate Cemetery on Saturday, March 17 1883, in the same grave as his wife, Jenny, buried 15 months earlier.

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Frederick Engels' Speech at the Grave of Karl Marx

Highgate Cemetery, London. March 17, 1883

(Transcribed by Mike Lepore, 1993)

On the 14th of March, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep -- but for ever.

An immeasurable loss has been sustained both by the militant proletariat of Europe and America, and by historical science, in the death of this man. The gap that has been left by the departure of this mighty spirit will soon enough make itself felt.

Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case.

But that is not all. Marx also discovered the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production, and the bourgeois society that this mode of production has created. The discovery of surplus value suddenly threw light on the problem, in trying to solve which all previous investigations, of both bourgeois economists and socialist critics, had been groping in the dark.

Two such discoveries would be enough for one lifetime. Happy the man to whom it is granted to make even one such discovery. But in every single field which Marx investigated -- and he investigated very many fields, none

of them superficially -- in every field, even in that of mathematics, he made independent discoveries.

Such was the man of science. But this was not even half the man. Science was for Marx a historically dynamic, revolutionary force. However great the joy with which he welcomed a new discovery in some theoretical science whose practical application perhaps it was as yet quite impossible to envisage, he experienced quite another kind of joy when the discovery involved immediate revolutionary changes in industry, and in historical development in general. For example, he followed closely the development of the discoveries made in the field of electricity and recently those of Marcel Deprez.

For Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival. His work on the first Rheinische Zeitung (1842), the Paris Vorwarts (1844), the Deutsche Brusseler Zeitung (1847), the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848-49), the New York Tribune (1852-61), and, in addition to these, a host of militant pamphlets, work in organisations in Paris, Brussels and London, and finally, crowning all, the formation of the great [International Working Men's Association](#) -- this was indeed an achievement of which its founder might well have been proud even if he had done nothing else.

And, consequently, Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time. Governments, both absolutist and republican, deported him from their territories. Bourgeois, whether conservative or ultra-democratic, vied with one another in heaping slanders upon him. All this he brushed aside as though it were a cobweb, ignoring it, answering only when extreme necessity compelled him. And he died beloved, revered and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow workers -- from the mines of Siberia to California, in all parts of Europe and America -- and I make bold to say

that, though he may have had many opponents, he had hardly one personal enemy.

His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work. On the 14th of March, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep -- but for ever.

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His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work.

Draft of a Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx

Published in the newspaper *La Justice*, March 20, 1883

Scarcely 15 months ago most of us assembled round this grave, then about to become the last resting place of a grand and noble-hearted woman. Today we have it reopened, to receive what remains of her husband.

Karl Marx was one of those pre-eminent men of whom a century produces not many. Charles Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature upon our planet. Marx is the discoverer of the fundamental law according to which human history moves and develops itself, a law so simple and self-evident that its simple enunciation is almost sufficient to secure assent. Not enough with that, Marx had also discovered the law [which] has created our actual state of society with its great class-division of capitalists and wages-labourers; the law according to which that society has become organised, has grown until it [has] almost outgrown itself, and according to which it must ultimately perish like all previous historical phases of society. Such results render it all the more painful that he should have been taken from us in the midst of his work, and that, much as he did, still more he left uncompleted.

But science, though dear to him, was far from absorbing him entirely. No man could feel a purer joy than he when a new scientific progress was secured anywhere, no matter whether practically applicable or not. But he looked upon science above all things as a grand historical lever, as a revolutionary power in the most eminent sense of the word. And as such he used, to such purpose he wielded that immense knowledge, especially of history in all its branches of which he disposed.

For he was indeed, what he called himself, a Revolutionist. The struggle for the emancipation of the class of wages-labourers from the fetters of the present capitalistic system of economic production, was his real element. And no more active combatant than he ever existed. The crowning effort of this part of his work was the creation of the International Working Men's Association of which he was the acknowledged leader from 1864-72. The Association has disappeared, as far as outward show goes; but the fraternal bond of union of the working men of all civilised countries of Europe and

America is established once for ever, and continues to live even without any outward, formal bond of union.

No man can fight for any cause without creating enemies. And he has had plenty of them. For the greater part of his political life he was the best hated and best slandered man in Europe. But he scarcely ever noticed calumny. If ever man lived calumny down, he did, and at the time of his death he could look with pride upon the millions of his followers, in the mines of Siberia as well as in the workshops of Europe and America; he saw his economical theories adopted as the undisputed creed of universal socialism, and if he still had many opponents, there was scarcely one personal enemy left.

La Justice adds its own editorial note:

"What Marx was in his private life, for his family and his friends - I have no force to express it at the moment. And there is no need to do so, because all of you who have come here to tell him your last farewell know this.

"Farewell, Marx! Your work and your name will endure through the ages."

Karl Marx's Funeral

Der Sozialdemokrat, March 22, 1883

On Saturday, March 17, Marx was laid to rest in Highgate Cemetery, in the same grave in which his wife had been buried fifteen months earlier.

At the graveside *Gottlieb Lemke* laid two wreaths with red ribbons on the coffin in the name of the editorial board and dispatching service of the *Sozialdemokrat* and in the name of the London Communist Workers' Educational Society.

Frederick Engels then made the following speech in English:

"On the 14th of March, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep-but forever.

"An immeasurable loss has been sustained both by the militant proletariat of Europe and America, and by historical science, in the death of this man. The gap that has been left by the departure of this mighty spirit will soon enough make itself felt.

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"His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work!"

Then Marx's son-in-law Longuet read the following addresses which had been received in French.

I. On the Grave of Karl Marx from the Russian Socialists

"In the name of all Russian socialists I send a last farewell greeting to the outstanding Master among all the socialists of our times. One of the greatest minds has passed away, one of the most energetic fighters against the exploiters of the proletariat has died.

"The Russian socialists bow before the grave of the man who sympathised with their strivings in all the fluctuations of their terrible struggle, a struggle which they shall continue until the final victory of the principles of the social revolution. The Russian language was the first to have a translation of Capital that gospel of contemporary socialism. The students of the Russian universities were the first to whose lot it fell to hear a sympathetic exposition of the theories of the mighty thinker whom we have now lost. Even those who were opposed to the founder of the International Working Men's Association in respect of practical questions of organisation were obliged always to bow before his comprehensive knowledge and lofty power of thought which penetrated the substance of modern capital, the development of the economic forms of society and the dependence of the whole history of mankind on those forms of development. Even the most vehement opponents that he found in the ranks of the revolutionary socialists could not but obey the call that he and his lifelong friend sent into the world 35 years ago:

"Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!"

"The death of Karl Marx is mourned by all who have been able to grasp his thought and appreciate his influence upon our time.

"I allow myself to add that it will be still more deeply mourned by those who associated closely with Marx, especially by those who loved him as a friend.

"P. Lavrov."

Paris, March 15, 1883.

II. Telegram

"The Paris branch of the French Workers' Party expresses its grief at the loss of the thinker whose materialist conception of history and analysis of capitalist production founded scientific socialism and the present revolutionary communist movement. It also expresses its respect for Marx as a man and its complete agreement with his doctrines.

"The Secretary, Lipine."
Paris, March 16, 1883.

III. Telegram

"In my own name and as a delegate of the Spanish Workers' Party (Madrid Branch), I share the immense grief of the friends and daughters of Marx at the cruel loss of the great Socialist who was the master of us all."

Jos? Mesa y Leompart.
Paris, March 16, 1883.

Then Liebknecht made the following speech in German:

"I have come from the heart of Germany to express my love and gratitude to my unforgettable teacher and faithful friend. To my faithful friend! Karl Marx's greatest friend and colleague has just called him the best-hated man of this century. That is true. He was the best-hated but he was also the best-loved. The best-*hated* by the oppressors and exploiters of the people, the best-*loved* by the oppressed and exploited, as far as they are conscious of their position. The oppressed and exploited people love him because he loved them. For the deceased whose loss we are mourning was great in his love as in his hatred. His hatred had love as its source. He was a great *heart* as he was a great *mind*. All who knew him know that.

"But I am here not only as a pupil and a friend, I am here as the representative of the *German Social-Democrats* who have charged me with expressing their feelings for their *teacher*, for *the* man who *created* our party, as much as one can speak of creating in this connection.

"It would be out of place here to indulge in fine speeches. For nobody was a more vehement *enemy of phrase-mongering* than

Karl Marx. It is precisely his immortal merit that he *freed* the proletariat, the working people's party, *from phrases* and gave it the solid foundation of *science* that nothing can shake. A revolutionary in science and a revolutionary *through* science, he scaled the highest peak of science in order to come down to the people and to make science the common good of the people.

"Science is the liberator of humanity.

"The *natural* sciences free us from *God*. But God in heaven still lives on although science has killed him.

"The science of *society* that Marx revealed to the people kills capitalism, and with it the idols and masters of the *earth* who will not let God die as long as they live.

"Science is not *German*. It knows no barriers, and least of all the barriers of nationality. It was therefore natural that the creator of *Capital* should also become the creator of the *International Working Men's Association*.

"The basis of science, which we owe to Marx, puts us in a position to resist all attacks of the enemy and to continue with ever-increasing strength the fight which we have undertaken.

"Marx changed the Social-Democracy from a *sect*, a *school*, into a *party*, the party which is now fighting undaunted and which will be victorious.

"And that is true not only of us *Germans*. Marx belongs to the *proletariat*. It was to the proletariat of all countries that his life was dedicated. Proletarians who can think and do think in all countries have grateful reverence for him.

"It is a heavy blow that has fallen on us. But we do not mourn. The deceased is not dead. He lives in the *heart*, he lives in the *head* of the proletariat. His memory will not perish, his doctrine will be effective in ever broader circles.

"Instead of mourning, let us act in the spirit of the great man who has died and strive with all our strength so that the doctrine which he taught and for which he *fought will be put into practice as soon as possible*. That is the best way to honour his memory!

"Deceased, living friend, *we shall follow to the final aim you showed us. We swear it on your grave!*"

Besides those mentioned there were also present at the grave, among others, Karl Marx's other son-in-law, *Paul Lafargue*, *Friedrich Lessner*, who was sentenced at the Cologne Communist Trial in 1852 to five years' imprisonment in a fortress, and *G. Lochner*, also an old member of the Communist League. The natural sciences were represented by two celebrities of the first magnitude, the zoologist Professor *Ray Lankester* and the chemist Professor *Schorlemmer*, both members of the London Academy of Sciences (Royal Society).

Signed: *Fr. Engels*

On the Death of Karl Marx

I. *Der Sozialdemokrat* May 3 1883

I have subsequently received several further announcements on the occasion of this bereavement which demonstrate how widespread people's sympathy has been, and of which I have to render an account.

On 20th March Miss Eleanor Marx received the following telegram, written in French, from the Editorial Office of *The Daily News*:

"Moscow, 18th March. Editorial Office *Daily News*, London. Please be so kind as to convey to Mr. Engels, author of *The Working Classes in England* and intimate friend of the late Karl Marx, our request that he lay a wreath on the coffin of the unforgettable author of *Capital* bearing the following inscription:

"In memory of the defender of workers' rights in theory and their implementation in practice the students of the Petrovsky Agricultural Academy in Moscow.

"Mr. Engels is requested to tell us his address and the cost of the wreath. The amount due will be forwarded to him without delay.

"Students of the Petrovsky Academy in Moscow."

The dispatch was at any event too late for the funeral, which took place on 17th March.

In addition to that, our friend *P. Lavrov* in Paris remitted me an order on 31st March for 124.50 frs (£4.18s.9d.), sent in by students of the Technological Institute in Petersburg and by Russian student women, also for a wreath to go on the grave of Karl Marx.

Thirdly, last week the *Sozialdemokrat* announced that Odessa students also wished for a wreath in their name to be placed on Marx's grave.

As the money received from Petersburg is easily enough for all three wreaths, I have taken the liberty of paying for the Moscow and Odessa

wreaths from that as well. The preparation of the inscriptions, a somewhat unfamiliar practice here, has caused some delay, but the wreaths will be placed on the grave at the beginning of next week, and I shall then be able to render an account, in the Sozialdemokrat of the money received.

A beautiful, large wreath has reached us from Solingen via the Communist Workers' Educational Society here, "for the grave of Karl Marx from the workers of the scissors, knife and sword industry at Solingen". When we placed it on the grave on 24th March, we found that the long ends of the red silk bows on the wreaths from the Sozialdemokrat and the Communist Workers' Educational Society had been cut off and stolen by people desecrating the grave. Complaining to the trustees was to no avail, but will no doubt mean that the grave will be protected in future.

A Slavonic association in Switzerland expresses the hope "that a special memorial will be established to Karl Marx through the setting-up of an international fund bearing his name in support of the victims of the great emancipation struggle and for the furtherance of that struggle itself", and has sent an initial contribution which I have retained for the time being. Of course, the fate of this suggestion depends primarily on whether there is a response to it, and that is why I am publishing it here.

In order to counter the false rumours which are being circulated in the press with some actual facts, I am passing on the following brief details concerning the illness and death of our great theoretical leader.

Having been almost totally cured of an old liver complaint by three periods of treatment at Karlsbad, Marx was left suffering only from a chronic stomach complaint and nervous exhaustion, which took the form of headaches and, mainly, persistent insomnia. Both complaints disappeared more or less after a visit to a seaside or health resort in the summer, and did not return, with more troublesome effects, until after the New Year. Chronic throat complaints and coughing, which also contributed to the insomnia, and chronic bronchitis were, on the whole, less troublesome. But it was to those very complaints that he was to succumb. Four or five weeks before the death of his wife' he was suddenly seized by a severe bout of pleurisy, complicated by bronchitis and incipient pneumonia. The affair was very dangerous, but it turned out well. He was then sent first of all to the Isle of

Wight (early in 1882), and following that to Algiers. The journey was a cold one and he arrived in Algiers suffering from a renewed attack of pleurisy. In normal circumstances that would not have made so much difference. But in Algiers the winter and the spring were colder and rainier than ever. In April vain attempts were made to heat the dining room! The final result was that his overall condition became worse instead of better.

Having been sent from Algiers to Monte Carlo (Monaco), Marx arrived there, after a cold and damp voyage, suffering from a third but milder attack of pleurisy. On top of that constant bad weather, which he seemed to have brought with him specially from Africa. So here too he had to fight against a fresh bout of illness rather than have the opportunity to restore himself. Towards the beginning of summer he went to visit his daughter Madame Longuet at Argenteuil, and used his stay there to go to the sulphurous springs in the neighbouring town of Enghien to treat his chronic bronchitis. Despite the continued wet summer the treatment was a success, slow but to the satisfaction of the doctors. They now sent him to Vevey on Lake Geneva, and there he recovered most, so that he was allowed to spend the winter, not in London, it is true, but on the south coast of England. Here he wanted at last to take up his work again. When he came to London in September, he looked well and often climbed Hampstead Hill (about 300 feet above his lodging) with me, without complaint. When the November fogs threatened to descend he was sent to Ventnor, the southern tip of the Isle of Wight. Immediately he was subjected again to wet weather and fog. The inevitable consequence was a fresh cold, coughing and so on; in short, weakening through confinement to his room when he should have been restoring himself by moving about in the fresh air. Then Madame Longuet died. The next day (12th January) Marx came to London, clearly suffering from bronchitis. This was soon complicated by laryngitis, which made it almost impossible for him to swallow. Able to bear the greatest of pain with the most stoic equanimity, he preferred to drink a litre of milk (which he had loathed his whole life long) rather than eat the appropriate solids. In February an ulcer developed in his lung. The medicaments had no effect on his body, surfeited as it was with medicines administered over the previous fifteen months; at most they weakened his appetite and inhibited his digestion. He became visibly thinner, almost by the day. All the same, the

illness was taking a relatively favourable course overall. His bronchitis was almost cured and it became easier for him to swallow. The doctors were full of hope. Then, visiting him between two and three o'clock -- the best time to see him -- I suddenly found the whole house in tears: he was so ill that they thought it was probably the end. And yet that very morning he had taken wine, milk and soup with relish. Faithful old Lenchen Demuth, who had raised all his children from the cradle and has been with the household for forty years, went up to him and came straight back down: "Come with me, he's half asleep." When we went in, he was completely asleep, but forever. One cannot wish to die an easier death than Karl Marx did in his armchair.

And now, to close with, a piece of good news:

The manuscript of the second volume of *Capital* has been preserved completely intact. Whether it can be printed in its present form I am not yet in a position to say. There are more than 1,000 pages of folio. But "the process of circulation of capital" and "the forms of the process as a whole" are complete in a version dating from the years 1867-1870. There is the beginning of a later version and copious material in the form of critical extracts, particularly on Russian landownership, a good deal of which may yet be put to use.

His oral instruction was that his youngest daughter Eleanor and I should be his literary executors.

London, 28th April 1883

Frederick Engels

II. *Der Sozialdemokrat*, May 17 1883

A beautiful wreath bearing an inscription on red ribbons was sent to Argenteuil by the Social-Democrats of Erfurt; fortunately someone happened to be available to bring it across; when it was laid on the grave, it was noticed that the red silk ribbons of the Solingen wreath had again been stolen.

Meanwhile the three wreaths for *Moscow, Petersburg and Odessa* were completed. To prevent the ribbons from being stolen, we were obliged to make it impossible for them to be used again by making little incisions on the edges. They were laid on the grave yesterday. A shower of rain had so affected the ribbon on the Erfurt wreath that it could not be used for anything else, and thus escaped being stolen.

These three wreaths cost £1.1s.8d. each, a total of £3.5s.0d. I therefore have £1.13s.9d. left from the £4.18s.9d. that was sent to me, and I shall send that back to P. Lavrov in order to comply with the wishes of the donors.

The death of a great man provides a first-rate opportunity for small people to make political, literary and actual capital out of it. Here just a few examples which should be made public, not to speak of the many which have occurred in private correspondence.

In a letter dated 2nd April Philipp van Patten, Secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York, wrote to me as follows:

"In connection with the recent demonstration in honour of the memory of Karl Marx, when ... all factions united in testifying their regard for the deceased philosopher, there were very loud statements made by *John Most* and his friends to the effect that he, Most, was upon intimate terms with Karl Marx, that he had made his work *Das Kapital* popular in Germany and that Marx was in accord with the propaganda conducted by him.

"We have a high appreciation of the talents and the achievements of Marx but cannot believe that he was in sympathy with the anarchistic, disorganising methods of Most and I would like to obtain from you an expression of opinion as to Karl Marx's position upon the question of Anarchy versus Social-Democracy.

Too much mischief has already been done here by the untimely and imprudent talk of Most and it is rather disagreeable for us to learn that so high an authority as Marx endorsed such tactics."

I replied to him in a letter on 18th April:

"My statement in reply to your inquiry of the 2nd April as to Karl Marx's position with regard to the Anarchists in general and Johann Most in particular shall be short and clear.

"Marx and I, ever since 1845, have held the view that one of the final results of the future proletarian revolution will be the gradual dissolution and ultimate disappearance of that political organisation called *the State*; an organisation the main object of which has ever been to secure, by armed force, the economical subjection of the working majority to the wealthy minority. With the disappearance of a wealthy minority the necessity for an armed repressive State-force disappears also. At the same time we have always held, that in order to arrive at this and the other, far more important ends of the social revolution of the future, the proletarian class will first have to possess itself of the organised political force of the State and with its aid stamp out the resistance of the Capitalist class and re-organise society. This is stated already in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, end of Chapter II.

"The Anarchists reverse the matter. They say, that the Proletarian revolution has to begin by abolishing the political organisation of the State. But after the victory of the Proletariat, the only organisation the victorious working class finds readymade for use, is that of the State. It may require adaptation to the new functions. But to destroy that at such a moment, would be to destroy the only organism by means of which the victorious working class can exert its newly conquered power, keep down its capitalist enemies and carry out that economical revolution of society, without which the whole victory must end in a defeat and in a massacre of the working class like that after the Paris Commune.

"Does it require my express assertion, that Marx opposed these anarchist absurdities from the very first day that they were started in their present form by Bakunin? The whole internal history of the International Working Men's Association is there to prove it. The Anarchists tried to obtain the lead of the International by the foulest means, ever since 1867 and the chief obstacle in their way was Marx. The result of the five years' struggle was the expulsion, at the Hague Congress, September 1872, of the Anarchists from the International, and the man who did most to procure that expulsion, was Marx. Our old friend *F. A. Sorge* of Hoboken, who was present as a delegate, can give you further particulars if you desire.

"Now as to Johann Most. If any man asserts that Most, since he turned anarchist, has had any relations with, or support from Marx, he is either a dupe or a deliberate liar. After the first No. of the London *Freiheit* had been published, Most did not call upon Marx and myself more than once, at most twice. Nor did we call on him or even meet him accidentally anywhere or at any time since his newfangled anarchism had burst forth in that paper. Indeed, we at last ceased to take it in as there was absolutely nothing in it'. We had for his anarchism and anarchist tactics the same contempt as for that of the people' from whom he had learnt it.

"While still in Germany, Most published a 'popular' extract of *Das Kapital*. Marx was requested to revise it for a second edition. I assisted Marx in that work. We found it impossible to eradicate more than the very worst mistakes, unless we re-wrote the whole thing from beginning to end, and Marx consented his corrections being inserted on the express condition only that his name was never in any way connected with even this revised form of Johann Most's production.

"You are perfectly at liberty to publish this letter in the *Voice of the People*, if you like to do so."

From America to Italy.

About two years ago a young Italian, one Signor *Achille Loria* from Mantua, sent Marx a copy of a book he had written on ground-rent together with a letter written in German in which he proclaimed himself to be a disciple and admirer of Marx. He also corresponded with him for some time after that. In the summer of 1882 he came to London and visited me twice. The second time I had occasion seriously to tell him my opinion about the fact that, in a pamphlet' which had appeared in the meantime, he had accused Marx of having deliberately misquoted.

Now this puny fellow, who got his wisdom from the German academic socialists, has written an article on Marx in *Nuova Antologia* and has the effrontery to send me, "his most worthy friend" (!!), a separate offprint. What constituted this effrontery will be clear from the following translation of my reply (I wrote to him in his language, for his German is even shakier than my Italian):

"I received your piece on Karl Marx. You are at liberty to subject his teachings to your most searching criticism and even to misunderstand them if you wish; you are at liberty to draft a biography of Marx which is a work of pure fantasy. However, what you are not at liberty to do, and it is a privilege I shall never grant to anybody, is to slander the character of my late friend.

"Already, in an earlier work, you have presumed to accuse Marx of having deliberately misquoted. When Marx read that, he compared his quotations and yours with the original texts and told me that his quotations were correct, and if anyone was deliberately misquoting, then it was you. And when I see how you now quote Marx, how you shamelessly have him speak of 'profit' where he speaks of 'surplus value' -- especially in view of the fact that he was constantly at pains to avoid the error of assuming that the two things were the same (which incidentally Mr. Moore and I explained to you orally when you were in London) -- then I know whom to believe and who is deliberately misquoting.

"But that is a mere trifle by comparison with your 'firm and deeply held conviction ... that they' (the teachings of Marx) 'are all dominated by a *conscious sophism*'; that Marx did not allow

himself to be held up by incorrect conclusions, knowing full *well that they were* incorrect; that 'he was often a sophist who, *at the cost of the truth*, wished to arrive at the negation of the existing society', and that, as Lamartine says, 'he played with lies and truth as children play with knucklebones'.

"In Italy, a land of ancient civilisation, that may be regarded as a compliment. Among the academic socialists too such a thing may be regarded as great praise, since, of course, those fine professors would never have been able to accomplish their numerous systems except 'at the cost of the truth'. We revolutionary communists regard the matter differently. We consider such assertions to be defamatory accusations, and since we know them to be fabrications, we hurl them back at their author who has defamed no one but himself with such inventions.

"It seems to me that you had a duty to inform the public as to the nature of that famous 'conscious sophism', which you say dominates all the teachings of Marx. But I have looked for it in vain. Nagott!" (Lombardic swearword for: nothing at all.)

"It takes a puny soul to imagine that a man like Marx 'always threatened his opponents with a second volume' which 'he never for one moment thought of writing'; that that second volume was nothing more than 'a crafty expedient of Marx's to avoid scientific arguments.' That second volume is on hand and will shortly be published. Then at last you may perhaps learn to grasp the distinction between surplus value and profit.

"A German translation of this letter will appear in the next edition of the Zurich *Sozialdemokrat*.

"In closing, the sentiments I am gratified to express are no more than those you deserve."

That should suffice for today.

London, 12th May 1883

Frederick Engels

