

Karl Marx and “English Socialism”

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1.

“English Socialism” was a widely used, and problematic, contemporary term for the socialism of Robert Owen (1771-1858) and the Owenite movement. (“Problematic,” not least, in using “English” as if it were equivalent to “British and Irish”) The term is used here in that contemporary sense, and *not* as a synonym for all varieties of nineteenth-century socialism in Britain.

Owen and Owenite socialism are often neglected in the literature on Karl Marx. If they are mentioned, it is typically in passing, as part of a generic “utopian” socialism that Marx is said simply to reject. Here, I venture a more nuanced and positive account of Marx’s relationship with English Socialism. More precisely: I insist on the wider importance of British politics and culture in shaping Marx’s life and work; suggest some points at which his thought is influenced by English Socialism in particular; and identify some routes by which Marx was exposed to English Socialism before he moved to England.

2.

Marx’s life can be told as the story of three “exiles.” He was born and grew up in Rhineland Prussia (Germany), but his adulthood was spent in Paris, Brussels, and London, respectively. The last of these three exiles was by far the longest, with Marx having his family home in London from late 1849 until his death in 1883. Contemporary Britain provided both a

secure haven for political refugees, and a superb vantage-point from which to observe and engage with the most advanced capitalist society of the day.¹ Despite the fact that he lived in the capital for over three decades, some familiar accounts of Marx's intellectual development leave little or no room for his work to have been significantly influenced by that British context. For some, Marx is an isolated German thinker, for whom living in Britain had minimal impact on his thought. Isaiah Berlin, for instance, depicts Marx as knowing the country only superficially, having a social milieu made almost entirely of émigrés like himself, and focusing his political and intellectual energies overwhelmingly on the continent.² We are told that Marx "remained almost totally unaffected by his surroundings, living encased in his own, largely German, world."³ That "continental" account is modestly revised by the "triadic" reading, anticipated by Moses Hess and Friedrich Engels, and given canonical expression by Lenin. Intellectually, Marx is said to have brought into "comprehensive and harmonious" synthesis three national traditions which were previously isolated from one another: German philosophy, French socialism, and British political economy.⁴ On this account of the "sources and component parts" of Marxism, Britain is allowed some influence, but it is limited to Marx's strictly economic thought. In the present article, I push back against these accounts, seeking to extend and deepen our understanding of the ways in which Marx's intellectual development is rooted in British politics and culture. In particular, I reject the various suggestions: that Britain had no real impact on Marx's thought, that Britain impacted only on Marx's strictly economic thought, and that the only significant socialist influence on Marx is French.

3.

I begin with a quick survey of some areas of British politics and culture that influenced Marx's life and work, before turning to examine one of them (English Socialism) in greater depth. First, I happily acknowledge the crucial importance of English—more accurately British

and especially Scottish—political economy to the evolution of Marx's strictly economic views. In putting together a list of British influences, the works of David Ricardo, Adam Smith, and many others have a clear and obvious place. Not least, Marx's *Capital* is a contribution to—or more accurately a critique of—this tradition of classical economic thought. The more contested point is that—*pace* the triadic reading—this British impact does not end there.

Second, this tradition of political economy had an influence well beyond the strictly economic aspects of Marx's thought. Not least, the writings of Smith, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, and John Millar, are rightly identified as probable influences on Marx's sociology and his theory of history.⁵ In early reflections on the theory of history, Marx explicitly credits these Scottish thinkers as being amongst the first to have given the study of history "a materialistic basis" by writing histories of "civil society, of commerce and industry."⁶ Subsequent historians have worried about eliding the differences between the Scottish "mode of subsistence" and the Marxian "mode of production," but this claim about possible influence can be developed in ways that avoid that error.

Third, Marx has many connections with the Chartist movement. These include political collaboration with left Chartists (for example, in the Fraternal Democrats),⁷ personal friendships with Chartist leaders (including Julian Harney and Ernest Jones), reproducing Chartist ideas in his analyses of contemporary British Politics (for example, in his account of the social impact and class basis of free trade measures),⁸ attending Chartist demonstrations (in June and July 1855, for instance),⁹ and publishing many of his own writings in Chartist journals (including *Notes to the People*, *The People's Paper*, and the *Red Republican*). For example, the first (and soon eclipsed) English translation of the *Communist Manifesto*—by the left Chartist Helen Macfarlane—appeared serially, throughout November 1850, in the *Red Republican*.¹⁰

Fourth, Marx's journalistic career includes a decade-long attempt (1852-62) to explain British politics and society to the North American

readers of the *New York Daily Tribune*, then the largest circulation newspaper in the world.¹¹ His articles on Britain variously cover: high politics (general elections, parliamentary affairs, and foreign policy), economic conditions (factory legislation, strikes, and economic crises), and wider social and cultural issues (capital punishment, class structure, and the role of the clergy). Marx wrote some 372 articles himself, and a further 15 with Engels.¹² Given “continental” claims about Marx’s Teutonic insularity, the language of Marx’s *Tribune* articles might be noted. They were initially translated from German (by Engels and Wilhelm Pieper), but from February 1853 onwards, Marx was sufficiently confident in his developing linguistic skills to write in English. Indeed, by December 1854, Marx was warning the commissioning editor of the *Neue Oder-Zeitung* that since his writing for publication for the last two years had been in English, “German may give me some trouble at the start.”¹³

Fifth, Marx’s lengthy campaign against Viscount Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister, deserves separate mention.¹⁴ Marx charged Palmerston with combining an increasingly reactionary foreign policy (promoting Russian interests to check progressive advances elsewhere), with a growing Caesarism in domestic affairs (shifting the previous constitutional balance in favor of personal power). This critique brought Marx into contact with David Urquhart, the eccentric writer, diplomat, and independent MP. Palmerston apart, Urquhart’s views—involving a heady cocktail of Turcophilia, Russophobia, and conspiracy theory—were “diametrically opposed” to Marx’s own, and their one meeting was a predictable failure.¹⁵ However, Marx used material from Urquhart’s publications, and he came to agree—by an “independent” route, he would insist—that Palmerston was in the pay of Russian absolutism.¹⁶ Endorsing that historically discredited charge was scarcely the high-point of Marx’s journalistic career.

Sixth, although Marx was never well-known in Britain during his lifetime, he did get a little late renown through his participation in the

International Working Men's Association (IWMA). A profile in *Modern Thought* (1881) confirms that it is "as one of the foremost organisers and directors of the 'International Association' that his name is most familiar to the English newspaper reader."¹⁷ Marx played little part in its foundation, but subsequently gained a leading position within the International as a result of his drafting skills, organizational abilities, and knowledge of European labor movements.¹⁸ The literature often focuses on Marx's struggles with continental anarchism, but the International was also occupied with domestic issues in Britain, including: free trade, the Irish Question, land nationalization, the length of the working day, child labor, the place of strikes, and the idea (rejected by Marx) of a "wages fund." Many of Marx's writings appeared under the auspices of the International, and *Wages, Price and Profit* (1865) originated in lectures to the General Council, which also commissioned and published his widely read pamphlet, *The Civil War in France* (1871).

Seventh, Marx's social circle in London was not a hermetically sealed Germanic outpost. To give only one example, Marx became good friends with Edward Spencer Beesly, the English Positivist, trades unionist, and professor of history at University College London.¹⁹ Marx thought highly of the content and delivery of Beesly's speeches at trade union meetings they both attended,²⁰ of Beesly's intellectual skills as an historian "in the best sense of the word,"²¹ and of Beesly's personal character as "a very capable and brave man."²² Marx sent him the first volume of *Capital* in 1867, and later—and more helpfully since Beesly did not read German—the French translation in fascicules, as it was printed. They also collaborated on Beesly's authoritative history of the International in *The Fortnightly Review*, and worked together helping Communard refugees in London (organizing emergency relief and resisting demands for their extradition).²³

Eighth, the wider impact of British cultural life on Marx is considerable, especially perhaps in its literary dimensions. Without some appreciation of his extensive use of literary references, analogies, and

images, Marx's writings remain only partially intelligible. Literature provided a medium without which it is hard to imagine how he would have developed or articulated his theoretical ideas. Marx delighted in new literary experiences, but also built up a storehouse of texts to which he returned again and again when articulating his thoughts. Anyone sampling Marx's writings soon discovers his familiarity with, and frequent utilization of, an astonishingly wide range of literature.²⁴ British authors—including Defoe, Dickens, and especially Shakespeare—feature heavily amongst his favorites.

Ninth, Marx was critically engaged with English Socialism, a thread that is pursued in more detail across the sections that follow.

4.

The triadic account of Marx's sources suggests that, insofar as Marx is influenced by extant varieties of socialism, it is French socialism (purportedly the most advanced in Europe), and not the socialism of any other country, that is important. However, there is little support for this account in Marx's own work. Consider, for example, two pieces of evidence—one practical, the other textual—from the mid-1840s. These confirm Marx's *early* interest—before he moved to London—in English Socialism.²⁵ The practical example concerns the library of foreign socialist writers that Marx, working together with Engels and Hess, sought to have translated and published in 1845. The ambition was to help correct their German contemporaries' regrettable and culpable ignorance of foreign (non-German) variants of socialism. The difficulties of finding a publisher, amongst other factors, led to this practical project being abandoned, but not before they had determined that they would include Owen in the earliest volumes, as one of the foreign authors who—as Engels put it—“have most to offer the Germans and are closest to our principles.”²⁶ The textual example concerns those German contemporaries—in particular, the “True Socialists”—who were aware of foreign socialism, but viewed it as a wholly French phenomena. Marx

criticizes the True Socialists: first, for detaching foreign socialist literature from its social and political context, treating it as a purely philosophical construct (predictably judged to fall short of Ludwig Feuerbach's achievements); and second, for only being aware of an overly limited range of foreign socialist literature, namely French socialism (in particular, the ideas of Fourier and Saint-Simon, that Wilhelm Weitling had come across in Paris and Geneva).²⁷

Marx and Engels treat the implication that there is no socialism in Britain with ridicule, remarking that "Thomas More, the Levellers, Owen, Thompson, Watts, Holyoake, Harney, Morgan, Southwell, Goodwyn Barmby, Greaves, Edmonds, Hobson, Spence will be amazed, or turn in their graves" to hear such a suggestion.²⁸ This is an intriguing list of writers and activists, suggesting a remarkable genealogy of socialism in Britain. Especially striking is the extent to which it is dominated by Owenites and fellow travellers. Of the thirteen individuals and one group listed, some nine of them fall under that broad category: Robert Owen (1771-1858); William Thompson (1775-1833); John Watts (1818-1887); George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906); John Minter Morgan (1782-1854); Charles Southwell (c. 1814-1860); (John) Goodwyn Barmby (1820-1881); James Pierrepont Greaves (1777-1842); and Thomas Rowe Edmonds (1803-1889).²⁹ It would be unwise to build too much on an abandoned project and a largely unpublished polemic. However, both suggest that by the mid-1840s Marx regrets German ignorance of foreign socialism, appreciates the long and distinctive history of socialism in Britain, and promotes the claims of contemporary Owenites and fellow travellers within that history.

5.

In tracing Marx's relation with English Socialism, I cover elements that he criticizes and that he endorses. The motivating assumption is that influence can take both a negative and a positive form and that our views can be shaped by ideas that we react against as well as by those we

embrace. Influence and affinity are not the same. To claim *affinity* is to suggest that there exists some resemblance, a similarity of form or content, between two or more ideas or sets of ideas. To claim *influence* is to suggest that one or more of the ideas shaped or had an effect on other ideas. So understood, one might have examples of affinity but no influence, as when two authors wholly independently come up with the same or similar ideas. Less obviously, one might have influence but no affinity, as in *negative* influence, when my ideas are formed in rejection of yours. Moreover, *positive* influence occurs when affinity and influence go together, or when influence is advanced as an explanation of a relevant affinity.

First, Marx viewed Owen personally with respect as a distinguished if distant forerunner. He describes Owen as a “really reliable character,” the kind who draws “fresh strength” from any setback.³⁰ The reliability here is political as well as personal, and Marx seems largely to have shared Engels’ view that whatever their disagreements, Owen’s name is to be linked with “every real advance in England on behalf of the workers.”³¹ Marx did not know Owen personally, but heard him speak on at least two occasions. Marx attended Owen’s eightieth birthday lecture, reporting that “despite his *idées fixes* the old man was ironical and endearing.”³² (The *idées fixes* are presumably the claims about the formation of human nature repeated endlessly in Owen’s writings.)³³ And at a subsequent meeting of the Society of Arts Marx heard Owen intervene to reject the idea that philanthropic measures alone could solve the problems of class-divided society.³⁴ This generous personal evaluation is noteworthy in that Marx is often said to be fiercely unsympathetic to those that he disagrees with politically. However, this generosity fits happily with one of the structuring distinctions of Marx’s account of “utopian” socialism (of which English Socialism is a variety): namely, the *chronological* distinction between the original generation of utopian socialists (including Owen) on the one hand, and the second and subsequent generations of utopian socialists (including assorted later Owenites) on the other.³⁵ Marx thinks of these two groups as holding broadly the same views, but holds

the latter culpable in a way that the former is not. The intellectual formation of the original generation (including Owen), took place in an historical context (the cusp of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) that was sufficiently developed to provoke socialist criticism, but not sufficiently developed for that socialist criticism to escape serious misunderstandings.³⁶ However, that defense—the historical unavoidability of error—is not available as an excuse to the second and subsequent generations who, despite significantly changed circumstances, “hold fast by the original view of their masters.”³⁷ Unlike the original generation, more recent utopians ought to know better, and they merit correspondingly less generous treatment. Marx’s more *negative* remarks about English Socialism might be divided into a foundational disagreement about socialist design, and three non-foundational disagreements about the proletariat, history, and politics. I take four additional points at which Marx reacts *against* English Socialism in turn, and I list them continuously.

Second, perhaps the most significant disagreement between Marx and English Socialism is foundational—that is, it concerns an issue constitutive of their “utopianism”—namely the very need for socialist design. English Socialists subscribe to the plausible but non-Marxian view according to which, in order to achieve their goals, socialists need to develop detailed and persuasive accounts not only of the failings of the contemporary social world, but also of the institutions and ethos of any future socialist alternative. However, whilst Marx allows the need for detailed and persuasive criticism of contemporary society, he denies the need for detailed and persuasive engagement with questions of socialist design.³⁸ Three kinds of argument against the need for “blueprints” of the socialist future can be found in his writings. Very briefly, Marx maintains first, that utopian plans foreclose the future in a way that is undemocratic (a normative argument); second, that utopian plans presuppose a degree of predictive accuracy that is unobtainable (an epistemological argument); and third, that utopian plans are redundant because optimal solutions to

the social and political problems of humankind are immanent in the historical process (an empirical argument).³⁹ In the obstetric language that Marx sometimes adopts, socialists should play the role of “midwives” of history, not *designing* solutions for a future socialist society but rather *delivering* the “elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant.”⁴⁰ In short, Marx does not primarily criticize Owen and other “utopians” for the inadequate and implausible content of their “blueprints” for the future; rather, he criticizes them for supposing that we need “blueprints” at all.

Third, Marx offers a (non-foundational) criticism of the “paternalistic” Owenite attitude toward the proletariat. (*Non*-foundational in that the criticism concerns views that are characteristically held by utopian socialists but are not constitutive of their very utopianism.) English Socialists are variously said to view the proletariat as only a suffering entity, to fail to appreciate its potential as an active and powerful collective agent, and perhaps consequently, to treat the proletariat as the object rather than the subject of social change.⁴¹ This complex charge has some plausibility when focused on Owen and his most loyal followers, whose politics were unashamedly “paternalistic.” At a public meeting in 1817, Owen had expressed surprise that “the ill trained and uninformed” amongst the audience should imagine that he was interested in hearing their own views about his proposals for their “relief and amelioration.”⁴² Owen tended to view government in transitional settlements as an activity requiring expertise that for the moment would be found only amongst those middle class members already “in the practice of directing extensive operations in old society.”⁴³ (By “transitional” settlements I mean those still containing members brought up under the old immoral world.) However, this charge has less purchase on the wider Owenite movement, which saw plenty of resistance to the paternalism of the “social father.” Practical examples include Manea Fen (1839-41), an Owenite community near Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, explicitly committed to democratic self-government in defiance of the dominant norms of the movement.⁴⁴

Theoretical examples include William Thompson's insistence that once underway, all working members of a community must have a say in its direction, because it is only by letting them discuss and arrange their own collective affairs that the "industrious classes" will develop the skills and dispositions for self-government.⁴⁵

Fourth, Marx offers a non-foundational criticism of Owenite socialism as "ahistorical"; that is, as failing to appreciate that the conditions for socialism are not universal, but only appear at a particular stage in human history. Utopians are portrayed as envisaging socialism not as an historical development but as the result of an individual genius who might have emerged at any time.⁴⁶ This is not entirely persuasive as a complaint about English Socialism. Owen is clear that the new moral world is only reachable because of three recent scientific breakthroughs. First, in "the science of human nature," which has discovered that the character of individuals is *wholly* formed for them by natural and social circumstances and that as a consequence the practices of punishment and reward embody a fundamental and pernicious error. Second, in "the science of society," which has discovered "the architectural materials" that might establish "a new state of human existence," the institutional and other arrangements that, embodying the principle of "union," will help form the best of human character in the new moral world.⁴⁷ And third, in "mechanics, chemistry, and other sciences," where "new inventions and discoveries" have resulted in material abundance, increasing the ability of humankind to satisfy their material wants within a new and more rational social environment.⁴⁸ These Owenite preconditions for socialism—and perhaps especially the last—go beyond the idea of an individual genius happening to come up with the right plan. Socialism is seen here as a modern phenomenon with historical conditions which have only very recently been met.

Fifth, Marx offers a non-foundational criticism of Owenite socialism as "anti-political." Politics is, as ever, a slippery concept, but the suggestion here has three main elements. Utopian authors like Owen are

variously said to stand apart from, and consider themselves as superior to, class antagonism,⁴⁹ to be unwilling to participate in struggles involving the machinery of government (hence Owenite opposition to Chartism), and to prefer ineffectual experimental means to revolutionary ones.⁵⁰ This is again a complicated charge that does not fully capture English Socialist views. After all, Owen had a record of advocating and supporting changes to the law, for instance seeking to reduce the working hours of women and children in 1819. In addition, his attitude toward Chartism is not one of wholesale opposition; in 1842, for instance, he lobbied the Convention to support a “Transition Charter.”⁵¹ And lastly, whilst Owen gives reasons to doubt the reforming efficacy of violence, the social transformation he sought was far-reaching. Owen embraces a “peaceful revolution” that distinguishes between the elements of violence and the elements of radical transformation, and he pursues the latter without the former.⁵² Again, these are complex issues, but Owenism is not accurately portrayed as embodying an otherworldly, standing-apart-from politics.

As fair-minded attempts to outline and assess certain Owenite commitments, Marx’s last three (non-foundational) complaints fall a little short. Not least, they fail to do justice to the complexity and variety of Owenite theory and practice. That might look to be an overly dry or rationalist response. After all, Marx is engaged in an ongoing political struggle with political opponents, not contributing to a university seminar. However, the truth is important, and to the extent that these criticisms misrepresent their targets they remain problematic. That said, we might perhaps read these non-foundational complaints as telling us more about Marx than they do about English Socialism. Marx exaggerates and distorts points of difference in order to draw attention to distinctive elements in his own view, in order to emphasize the importance of proletarian self-emancipation, historical understanding, and political engagement, to his own theory and practice.

Turning to Marx’s more enthusiastic remarks about English Socialism, I identify five further points (again numbered continuously) at

which Marx's views are *positively* (rather than negatively) shaped and reinforced by Owen and Owenism.

Sixth, Marx appears to value and be influenced by the critical dimension of Owen's writings, seeing the latter's attacks on existing society as full of useful materials. In some cases Owen is one of several possible sources. For instance, he is scarcely alone in identifying private property as frustrating social progress, or in attacking the selfish, instrumental character type encouraged by economic competition.⁵³ Elsewhere, however, Marx explicitly references and endorses Owen's views, for instance, recognizing their shared interest in the alienated character of contemporary work. In the *Grundrisse* (1857-58), Marx excerpts several passages in which Owen portrays workers as robbed of their health by the monotony and exhaustion of their labor, and draws attention to the desperation and intemperance of their snatched moments of leisure.⁵⁴ Marx also endorses Owen's attack on the instrumental treatment of human beings in contemporary society, in particular as Owen observes that workers are treated not merely as if they were machines, but more precisely as if they were "secondary and inferior" machines (capitalists being less protective of the bodies and minds of immediate producers than of the wood and metal of their inanimate counterparts).⁵⁵ Marx plausibly suggests that Owen's status as a former manufacturer lends these claims an additional authority.

Seventh, Marx appears to value, and be influenced by, the group of Owenites and fellow travellers—including John Francis Bray (1809-1897), John Gray, Thomas Hodgskin, William Thompson, and T.R. Edmonds—sometimes unhelpfully called "Ricardian Socialists." "Unhelpfully" since—like Smith but unlike Ricardo—their accounts of exploitation rest on "unequal exchange" (which of course Marx rejects, insisting that exploitation occurs in the sphere of production and not in the sphere of circulation or exchange). Marx appears sympathetic to several threads in Owenite political economy: first, their focus on exploitation (rather than, say, poverty or individualism alone); second, their emphasis

on the antagonism between classes (understood as grounded in ownership relations); and third, their account of the explanatory primacy of economics over politics (the distribution of property, rather than the form of government being crucial to material improvement).⁵⁶ These elements—central to the writings of Hodgskin, Thompson, and Bray—can plausibly be seen as encouraging and reinforcing similar ideas in Marx.

Eighth, Marx appears to value and be influenced by the content of Owen's vision of socialism. That might seem unlikely given Marx's recommendation that socialists refrain from writing recipes "for the cookshops of the future."⁵⁷ However, Marx does occasionally hint at the shape of a future socialist society, and in doing so recommends certain features of Owen's own substantive vision. (The interesting issue of whether in doing this he acts with consistency is not pursued here.) Owen's account of socialism may lack the poetry and imagination of Fourier but still embodies a "visionary expression of a new world."⁵⁸ Two examples of possible influence might be picked out: first, the aim that Owen articulates and sought to realize in his proposed settlements of overcoming the "antithesis between town and country" that capitalist development has created;⁵⁹ and second, perhaps more strikingly since it involves more institutional detail, the practices at Owen's experimental school in New Lanark, which Marx describes as revealing "the germ of the education of the future" (combining instruction, physical exercise, and for older children some limited participation in the world of work).⁶⁰ In these and other ways, Marx's vision of socialism embodies certain Owenite goals and institutional means.

Ninth, Marx appears to value and be influenced by Owen's role in the history of "materialism." In abbreviated remarks in *The Holy Family* (1845), Marx identifies a conceptual affinity between what he calls "materialism" and "English socialism and communism."⁶¹ In particular, Marx draws a connection between the standpoint of socialism and a broadly realist view of scientific knowledge as drawn "from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it."⁶² So understood, materialism

and socialism are said to share views “on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment.”⁶³ Marx emphasizes the affinity between a certain type of French “materialism,” which emphasizes the impact of “education” in shaping human beings, and certain forms of British socialism, which seek to make the social environment more “human.”⁶⁴ Education here refers not merely to schooling but to the wider formative impact of the social circumstances in which we are placed.⁶⁵ Marx identifies the influence here as running historically from Helvétius (French materialism), through the mediating impact of Jeremy Bentham, to Owen. English Socialism inherited this focus on the importance of the social and developed these “materialist” insights into an explicitly socialist direction.

Tenth, Marx appears to value and be influenced by Owen’s role in the history of the cooperative movement. In the “Inaugural Address” of the First International (1864), Marx bemoans certain trends in recent British social and political history, including the decline of Chartism and of working-class militancy more generally. Against that backdrop, he identifies two brighter hopes: certain legislative victories for the “political economy of the working class” (including the Ten Hours Bill and English Factory Act); and, more importantly, the growth of the cooperative movement (especially of producers’ cooperatives). Marx’s view of cooperatives is complicated: they manage to “represent in the old form the first sprouts of the new.”⁶⁶ On the one hand, Marx does not think that socialism could come about as a result of the gradual spread of producers’ cooperatives, and he maintains that left to the initiative of individual workers, the latter will play only a marginal role in capitalist economies. On the other hand, Marx insists that “the value of these great social experiments cannot be over-rated.”⁶⁷ In particular, he maintains that by “deed” rather than “argument” they demonstrate that productivity is not dependent on class-division, “that production on a large scale, and in

accord with the behests of modern science, may be carried on without the existence of a class of masters employing a class of hands.”⁶⁸ Co-operatives, even in their present limited form, are thus a kind of proof of concept. They demonstrate practically that efficient non-capitalist economic arrangements are feasible, and they confirm that “wage labour” is an historical phenomenon “destined to disappear” in due course.⁶⁹ In this context, Marx is keen to acknowledge the movement’s origins, insisting that “the seeds of the co-operative system were sown by Robert Owen.”⁷⁰

6.

I have suggested that Marx is influenced by English Socialism, and that this influence starts early. Marx’s acerbic remarks about the ignorance of German True Socialists, for instance, confirms that, already in the mid-1840s he prided himself on his own knowledge of English Socialism. That raises a tricky question about timing which I seek to answer in what follows.

For suggestions of influence to be plausible, it is not enough to locate affinities between the ideas of Marx and English Socialism. It is necessary to identify the potential “mechanism” of influence, the “conduits” by which Marx was or could have been exposed to those Owenite ideas. Once Marx is living in London (from 1849) there is no real puzzle to solve (he was surrounded by opportunities to learn about English Socialism). However, in the mid-1840s—when Marx is living in the Belgian capital—matters look very different.

Marx’s Brussels exile is both an especially formative stage in his intellectual development, and perhaps the least well-understood phase of his life. The three-year period, between February 1845 and March 1848, has been described as “positively a black hole” in our knowledge.⁷¹ Indeed, it is sometimes completely forgotten, with commentators writing of “Marx’s second exile, in Britain” after Paris.⁷² (That omission is perhaps encouraged by the triadic reading, according to which Belgium—

unlike Germany, France, and England—leaves no mark on Marx's intellectual formation.)

There are three strands in my own answer to this particular puzzle. The most important conduits of information about English Socialism during Marx's Brussels exile are his close friendship with Friedrich Engels, his Manchester study trip, and his friendship with Georg Weerth (1822-1856).

7.

The first and perhaps most obvious contemporary conduit of information about English Socialism is Engels. Because of that obviousness and because I have written about Engels' interest in English Socialism elsewhere, I can be brief.⁷³ However, that brevity is no reflection of the importance of this possible influence, which remains considerable. "Possible" is still required here because of the evidential difficulties created by Engels' domestic proximity to Marx at this time. When Marx and Engels are living at a distance from each other, we typically learn more about their intellectual interaction through their extensive surviving correspondence than when they are living alongside each another. During Marx's Brussels exile they lived in the same street, and the material record is correspondingly much reduced. Most will accept that Engels is a potential influence on Marx in this period. Less appreciated is the extent and significance of the young Engels' familiarity with English Socialism.

Of crucial importance here is Engels' first extended stay (between December 1842 and August 1844) in "Cottonopolis," that contemporary neologism that combines cotton and metropolis and pays tribute to both Manchester's recent growth and its primary cause. In principle, he was pursuing a commercial training at Ermen & Engels, specialists in cotton thread for sewing (whose Manchester mill and offices were partly owned by his father). In practice, Manchester was the center of the industrial revolution in the most industrialized country in the contemporary world, and it provided Engels with an unprecedented opportunity to pursue his

interests in the social impact of emergent capitalism and the political resistance that it provoked. Engels' interest in English Socialism was serious and sustained. Indeed, during this period, he might be described as a fellow traveller, an engaged participant, with personal and political sympathies with the Owenite movement.

First, Engels attended Owenite lectures and other events. The Manchester Hall of Science had been opened by Robert Owen in January 1840 and was a ten-minute walk from his workplace. We know that he regularly attended meetings, including the popular Sunday lectures, and very early on he identified John Watts as a lecturer of particular importance.⁷⁴ Second, Engels read widely in English Socialist literature. For instance, it was from the Owenite *New Moral World*—and John Finch's letters in particular—that Engels gained most of his knowledge of communitarian settlements in North America. Indeed, he assembled an extensive collection of hard to locate (subsequently “no longer obtainable”) Owen texts, which unfortunately went missing in the political and personal upheavals of 1848-1849.⁷⁵ Third, during this stay, Engels wrote regularly for the *New Moral World*, mainly providing information to an Owenite audience about sympathetic forms of continental socialism. His contributions include news items, as well as more substantial pieces such as “Progress of Social Reform on the Continent” (October and November 1843), and “Rapid Progress of Communism in Germany” (December 1844, March and May 1845). Fourth, Engels had some interaction with leading Owenites outside of Manchester. For instance, it was as a result of a private exchange with Goodwyn Barmby in which the latter provided information about the views of the Abbé Constant that Engels was able to enter a scholarly correction to his earlier article in the *New Moral World* criticizing an article in *The Times* on continental communism (in which Engels had misidentified the “Constant” in question).⁷⁶ Fifth, Engels promoted English Socialism to German-speaking audiences. For example, “Letters From London” (May-June 1843) in the *Schweizerischer Republikaner* describes Owenites as “more

principled and practical" than their French counterparts.⁷⁷ Engels recommends Owenite publications, especially the "striking economic tracts," and he notes their thirst for translations of literature (Rousseau, Holbach, and Strauss are mentioned) that "respectable" publishers shun.⁷⁸ English Socialism is said to be strongest amongst the "lower middle class and the proletarians," and alongside their energy and good humor Engels praises Owenite determination to go beyond mere republicanism to the "reform of society."⁷⁹ Sixth, Engels' contemporary albeit soon abandoned communitarian enthusiasms attached particular importance to Owenite settlements. At this time, Engels held—not unproblematically—that the success of contemporary communitarianism demonstrates the feasibility of socialism. Owenite settlements are said to prove that communitarian success was independent of the religious foundations characteristic of the better-known communities in America (Shakers and Rappites in particular).⁸⁰

8.

The second contemporary conduit of information about English Socialism is what has been called Marx's "*Studienreise* [study trip]" to Manchester in 1845.⁸¹ That label sounds a little too like a school excursion, but it does capture the intense research dimension of Marx's first visit to the city. In the summer of 1845, arriving on 12 July and probably leaving on 21 August, Marx and Engels visited England together. The trip was bookended by stays in London, but they spent most of the six-week period in Manchester. Manchester interested Marx for at least three reasons: first, its location at the epicentre of the industrial revolution; second, as home to excellent library facilities (with holdings in his current interests); and third, the availability of a hugely knowledgeable local guide (the city dominates *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, the book that Engels had just published and had so impressed Marx).

Marx and Engels mainly worked at Chetham's Library, possibly supplementing its holdings with materials from the Manchester

Athenaeum and the Subscription Library. Chetham's Library—named after its founder Humphrey Chetham (1580-1653), a fustian merchant and philanthropist—is situated in Long Millgate, Manchester. The original chained library is on the first floor of the large medieval house, and it claims to be the oldest public library in the English-speaking world. Its manuscript and archival collections in theology and science were considerable, but in the nineteenth century it was also the most important repository of printed books in the region. (The library would subsequently specialize in the history and topography of northwest England.) Marx and Engels spent a considerable amount of time at the library. Some details emerge from much later correspondence when, in May 1870, Engels was back in Manchester. He had just spent an enjoyable few days working at Chetham's, and was reminded of that earlier stay, which he now recalled in a letter to Marx: "In the last few days I have often been sitting at the quadrilateral desk in the small bow-window where we sat twenty-four years ago; I like this place very much; because of its coloured window the weather is always fine there. Old Jones the librarian is still around, but he is very old [...] and [...] I haven't yet seen him."⁸² The letter thus confirms that in 1845 they had worked together in the alcove of the reading room, a tiny space with windows on three sides full of natural light. (The same alcove and desk are still there today, although the stained glass was damaged by a storm in 1875 and has been replaced by plain glass.)

Throughout his adult life, it was Marx's scholarly practice to make and preserve extensive notes on the material he was reading, for his own later use. Many of the resulting notebooks survive and are now being published more fully as part of the fourth part of the *Gesamtausgabe* project. They have enormous scholarly value, providing insights into the timing and content of Marx's reading, and sometimes of his initial and unmediated response. They are crucial resources for any serious account of Marx's intellectual development and should lead to the revision of many earlier assumptions about that process. In the present case, the *Studienreise*

generated nine "Manchester Notebooks," which take up the best part of two volumes of the *Gesamtausgabe*. They reflect Marx's interest in classical political economy—including excerpts from Thomas Tooke, John Ramsay McCulloch, John Stuart Mill, and others—but also confirm his growing interest in and knowledge of English Socialism. It is that latter thread that is emphasized here. Marx read and made notes on the following nine items written by Owen, Owenites, and fellow travellers. Notes on eight of them are in the Manchester Notebooks; the ninth is from a Brussels Notebook made in the same year (on an item either brought back from Manchester or already belonging to Engels). All of the notes are in an admixture of German and English (Marx usually translating into German at this time, but sometimes not).

(i) "Manchester Notebook 2" contains a fragment note from (the last third of) Thomas Rowe Edmunds, *Practical Moral and Political Economy* (London 1828).⁸³

(ii) "Manchester Notebook 4" contains notes on all six chapters of William Thompson, *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conductive to Human Happiness* (London 1824).⁸⁴

(iii) "Manchester Notebook 6" contains (comparatively very extensive) notes on John Francis Bray, *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy* (Leeds 1839).⁸⁵

(iv) "Manchester Notebook 6" contains notes on Robert Owen, *Essays on the Formation of the Human Character* (London 1840), an authorized reissue of four essays first published in 1812.⁸⁶

(v) "Manchester Notebook 6" contains notes on Robert Owen, *Lectures on the Marriages of the Priesthood* (Leeds 1840), which includes Owen's 1835 lectures and an appendix of extracts on the marriage system of the New Moral World (emphasizing that his critique of marriage is a critique only of marriage without affection).⁸⁷

(vi) "Manchester Notebook 6" contains notes on Robert Owen, *Six Lectures Delivered in Manchester* (London 1837), which variously discuss his views on the formation of character, elements of his critique of

the old immoral world, and his account of the character and ranks of future persons formed under superior arrangements.⁸⁸

(vii) “Manchester Notebook 6” contains notes on Robert Owen, “Address to the Association of all classes of all nations” delivered May 1837. This latter was published as an appendix to item (vi) and these notes are continuous with those on the earlier item.⁸⁹

(viii) “Manchester Notebook 7” contains notes on Robert Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World*, a somewhat dry and lengthy compendium of Owen’s system in seven parts. Marx made notes on the first four: (a) Robert Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World, containing the rational system of society, founded on demonstrable facts, developing the constitution and laws of Human Nature and Society*, Part I (Glasgow 1840);⁹⁰ (b) Robert Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World, explanatory of the Elements of the science of society, or the social state of Man*, Part II (London 1842);⁹¹ (c) Robert Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World, explanatory of the Conditions requisite for human happiness, which will ultimately be secured to all under the rational system of society*, Part III (London 1842);⁹² and (d) Robert Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World, explanatory of the rational religion*, Part IV (London, 1844).⁹³

(ix) “Brussels Notebook 6” contains notes on John Watts, *The Facts and Fictions of Political Economists* (Manchester and London 1842).⁹⁴ These notes were made in Brussels in 1845 and are included here because of their association with materials collected in Manchester.⁹⁵

The Manchester Notebooks were published in 2015 and await a full critical response. Matthias Bohlender has offered an engaging and plausible account of their interest, but I want to nuance his reading a little. In particular, Bohlender is perhaps too quick to make two interpretative moves.⁹⁶ First, he downplays the Owenite character of many of these items. For instance, he separates out Owen (who is contextualized as part of an emerging rejection of utopianism) and treats the crucial subset of the others—Thompson, Gray, and Bray—as “so-called Ricardian Socialists” (rather than Owenites).⁹⁷ Second, he subsumes these latter into a governing

narrative about Marx's education in political economy, their importance being that they offer Marx a model combining political struggles against the capitalist class, with theoretical struggles against classical political economy (using the tools of "bourgeois" political economy against the bourgeoisie).⁹⁸ The Manchester Notebooks are thereby presented as "a starting point" of Marx's unfinished and perhaps unfinishable *Capital* project.⁹⁹ I do not deny that they form part—although, as Lucia Pradella insists, not the very start—of the story of Marx's critique of political economy.¹⁰⁰ However, the selection of only a subset of these authors and the focus on political economy narrowly construed risk neglecting the wider story of Marx's interest in Owen and Owenite literature in this period.

9.

The third and final contemporary conduit of information about English Socialism is Georg Weerth, a German-born poet, writer, commercial agent, and communist who first met Marx in 1845 and joined him (and Engels) in Brussels the following year. The lazy, but not inaccurate, biographical cliché is that Weerth lived a short but eventful life. Best-known for his poetry and satirical prose, he worked as a commercial agent throughout Europe, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. He was an active participant in the events of 1848, imprisoned for three months in Cologne's Klingelpütz prison for his satirical portrayal of the famous knight "*Schnapphahnski*" (an insufficiently disguised account of the conservative politician Felix Lichnowsky). After the failures of 1848, Weerth recognized that his own politics were out of sympathy with those of the times, suffered something of a creative crisis, and increasingly concentrated his energies on his commercial career and personal life. Weerth was only thirty-four years old when he caught cerebral malaria in Haiti and died in Havana (Cuba) in July 1856. Weerth's body of work quickly disappeared from public view. He had produced only one book, done little to preserve his poetry and other writing, and published mainly in radical periodicals that had an ephemeral existence.¹⁰¹

It would be a hundred years before he was properly “rediscovered”—initially in a manner distorted by the Cold War context—as a result of the landmark publication in 1957, in East Germany, of the five volume *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Bruno Kaiser.

Even those who have heard of Weerth are often unaware of the extent of his knowledge of, and engagement with, English Socialism. In this context, the period in which Weerth first worked as a commercial clerk in Bradford, Yorkshire—then the center of the global worsted industry—is crucial. Weerth was both repelled and attracted by what he memorably calls this “terrible-wonderful [*schrecklich-wunderbare*] town,” where the constant hum of millions of spindles formed the backdrop to the poverty and suffering of the first generation of industrial workers.¹⁰² Weerth lived there between December 1843 and April 1846, but subsequently kept close connections with the town and returned regularly. He was part of a wave of German immigrants, drawn by the economic opportunities of the burgeoning textile trade, but he quickly came to see Bradford as the perfect vantagepoint from which to understand the human costs of early industrialization and the struggles of workers to escape them.

Weerth’s interest in the working-class inhabitants of Bradford was not a bookish one. He would subsequently remark that it was English workers “amongst whom I spent several of the most fruitful years of my life, and whose memory is close to my heart.”¹⁰³ Two local figures in particular facilitated his participatory education. A local doctor, John Little McMichan, allowed Weerth “backstage” on his rounds, where he experienced at first hand some of the social costs of contemporary industrialization, witnessing births in the grimmest of hovels, serious injuries from drunken brawling, and the remorseless pattern of infant mortalities.¹⁰⁴ Weerth developed great respect for “Mac,” describing him as “one of the few men with a decent coat on his back for whom I came to feel affection.”¹⁰⁵ Weerth also became a close friend of the local Chartist, John Jackson (1795-1875), a woolcomber, gardener, and ex-Paineite radical. Weerth appreciated Jackson’s humor and conversation, as well as

his understanding and experience. They became very close and joined together in the social and political life of workers throughout the West Riding. "Friend Jackson" appears in some of Weerth's prose pieces and was once falsely thought to be a fictional character.¹⁰⁶

Weerth's knowledge of and engagement with English Socialism was considerable. Bradford was a center of Owenism, as well as a Chartist stronghold, and he attended meetings of the Rational Society and read *The New Moral World*. Moreover, he arranged a visit to Harmony, the flagship Owenite settlement in Hampshire, and he arranged to meet Owen himself in London. The full extent of Weerth's interest and understanding is revealed most clearly in two manuscripts (only published fully in 1958) on the history of radicalism between 1780 and 1832, and the history of Chartism from 1832 to 1848. The latter contains an especially extensive and interesting discussion of English Socialism, ranging across Owen's life, his character, his ideas, his reforms at New Lanark, and his settlement at Harmony. Weerth's description of his visit to Harmony, probably in the summer of 1844, nicely balances generous reportage and fair-minded criticism, whilst his portrait of Owen is of a dignified and sympathetic character. However, it is Weerth's theoretical observations that are of greatest interest in the present context. Two elements stand out: Weerth's critique of Owen's naïveté about political means (and especially the latter's belief that rational argument and moral appeal always win out); and Weerth's sophisticated explanation of the failure of communitarian experiments (portraying capitalism as a system of structural domination, whose economic imperatives cannot be evaded by non-autarchic settlements).

Weerth is not much discussed in the Marx literature,¹⁰⁷ yet Weerth and Marx were good friends, and Weerth is a likely conduit of information about English Socialism during Marx's Brussels exile. Indeed, a surviving letter from Weerth dated 25 December 1845 confirms that they discussed Owenism.¹⁰⁸ Marx met Weerth in 1845, presumably introduced by Engels, who had become friends with Weerth when they were working in

Manchester and Bradford, respectively. The following year, Weerth negotiated a move from Bradford to the Brussels agency of his employer, the Hamburg firm Emanuel und Sohn, in order to live alongside Marx and Engels in the Belgian capital between 1846 and 1848. Weerth was part of the Communist Correspondence Committee and then the Communist League, and in his commercial travelling often acted as a courier for those groups.¹⁰⁹ In 1848 Weerth became part of Marx's Cologne-based editorial board—with responsibility for the *feuilleton* of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* from June 1848 to May 1849.¹¹⁰ Weerth's satirical output in this period had two main targets: the modern commercial world and the Prussian Junker class. After 1848 and the adjustment of his political and non-political life, Weerth and Marx remained friends, meeting up when Weerth returned to Europe, and spending time together in London in 1852 and again on Weerth's last visit in 1855.¹¹¹

In September 1856 Marx reported that “I was terribly affected by the news of Weerth's death, which I found hard to believe.”¹¹² Marx tried unsuccessfully to place an obituary in the German press, and he tried to help Weerth's family collect his literary fragments, which Weerth's brother Karl hoped to publish. A year later, Marx told a correspondent, “We still lament the loss of Weerth.”¹¹³ Marx was not much given either to insincerity or to written expressions of emotion, making no exceptions for the dead. Thus it is striking to find his correspondence over the next decade or so dotted with references to Weerth as a “dear friend” whose death was “an *irreplaceable* loss”;¹¹⁴ to “our never-to-be-forgotten and irreplaceable friend Weerth”;¹¹⁵ to Weerth as an “old comrade”;¹¹⁶ to “our friend Weerth, who unfortunately died too early”;¹¹⁷ and so on.

10.

Reflecting on the purported lack of impact of British politics and culture on Marx's life and work, Isaiah Berlin once remarked, “So far as his intellectual development was concerned, Marx might just as well have spent his exile on Madagascar.”¹¹⁸ It is a characteristically brilliant quip,

but as intellectual history it leaves much to be desired. The current essay supports the opposing conviction: that British politics and culture had a significant impact on Marx's life and work and that his engagement with English Socialism in particular is more extensive and more positive than is usually suggested. The temptation to collapse Owen and Owenism into a generic "utopian socialism," which Marx is then said to reject out of hand, should be resisted. Marx's personal respect for Owen is striking and in keeping with the "chronological" distinction that structures his account of utopian socialism. The negative influence of English Socialism on Marx's thought includes a foundational disagreement about the need for socialist design, and non-foundational disagreements about proletarian agency, historical conditions for socialism, and engagement in class struggle. In this context, Marx exaggerates points of difference and neglects counterexamples, presumably in order to emphasize the distinctiveness of his own views on these issues. The positive influence of English Socialism on Marx's thought includes his acknowledgement of the interest in and value of Owenite social criticism (including Owen's account of alienated work), Owenite political economy (including their emphasis on exploitation, class antagonism, and the primacy of property), Owenite visions of socialism (including Owen's educational recommendations and ambition to overcome the divide between town and country), Owenite materialism (Owen's socialist spin on the formative import of social circumstances), and Owenite support for the cooperative movement (which provides a practical demonstration of the feasibility of productive non-capitalist arrangements).

As early as the mid-1840s—that is, before moving to London—Marx prided himself on his knowledge of English Socialism and criticized German contemporaries for their comparative ignorance. During his Brussels exile, the three most likely conduits through which Marx obtained that knowledge are his friendship with Engels, his Manchester study trip, and his friendship with Weerth.

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Notes

¹ See, for example, Rosemary Ashton, *Little Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

² See David Leopold, "Isaiah Berlin, Karl Marx, and the Enlightenment," in *Isaiah Berlin and the Enlightenment*, ed. Laurence Brockliss and Ritchie Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 21-34.

³ Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*, Second Edition (London: 1948), 17.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Component Parts of Marxism," *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 19 (Moscow: 1977), 23.

⁵ See, for example, Robert Pascal, "Property and Society: The Scottish Historical School of the Eighteenth Century," *The Modern Quarterly* (March 1938), 167-79; and R.L. Meek, "The Scottish Contribution to Marxist Sociology," in *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays. Studies in the Development of Economic Thought* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1967), 34-50.

⁶ Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, MECW 5:42.

⁷ See, for example, Fabrice Bensimon, "Continental Exiles, Chartists and Socialists in London (1834-1848)," *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2021), 271-84.

⁸ Miles Taylor, "The English Face of Karl Marx," *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 1, No.2 (March 1996), 238-40.

⁹ See Marx, "Agitation over the Tightening-up of Sunday Observance," MECW 14:323-27; and Marx, "Demonstration in Hyde Park," MECW 14:302-7.

¹⁰ See David Leopold, "Macfarlane, Helen (1818-1860)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780198614128.013.100743>

¹¹ J. Ledbetter, "Introduction," Karl Marx, *Dispatches for the New York Tribune. Selected Journalism of Karl Marx* (London: Penguin, 2007), xviii.

¹² These figures from Hal Draper, "NYDT Checklist," *The Marx-Engels Register* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), 160-72.

¹³ Marx to Elsner (20 December 1854), *MECW* 39:507.

¹⁴ L. Hutchinson, "Introduction," in Karl Marx, *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century* and *The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston* (London: International Publishers, 1969), 13-47 and 139-65; and Miles Taylor, "The English Face of Karl Marx," *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1996), 240-43.

¹⁵ See Marx to Lassalle (1 June 1854), *MECW* 39:455; and Marx to Engels (9 February 1854), *MECW* 39:412-13.

¹⁶ Marx to Engels (2 November 1853), *MECW* 39:395; and Marx to Engels (22 April 1854), *MECW* 39:440.

¹⁷ E.B. Bax, "Leaders of Modern Thought XXIII—Karl Marx," *Modern Thought*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (1881), 349.

¹⁸ See H. Collins and C. Abramsky, *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement. Years Of the First International* (London: Macmillan, 1965).

¹⁹ See R. Harrison, "E.S. Beesly and Karl Marx," *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 4 (1959), 22-59, 208-38; R. Harrison, *Before the Socialists. Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965); and R. Harrison, "Professor Beesly and the Working-Class Movement," in *Essays in Labour History*, ed. A. Briggs and J. Saville (London: Macmillan, 1967), 205-241.

²⁰ See Marx to Engels (26 June 1869), *MECW* 43:298.

²¹ Marx to Beesly (12 June 1871), *MECW* 44:150.

²² Marx to Kugelmann (13 December 1870), *MECW* 44:92.

²³ See *The English Defence of the Commune, 1871*, ed. R. Harrison (London: Merlin Press, 1971).

²⁴ Brilliantly captured by S.S. Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

²⁵ The main text here glosses some thorny terminological issues. Speaking very roughly: Marx initially uses the terms "socialism" and "communism" synonymously, or he differentiates them according to local

practice (hence “communism” in Germany, and “socialism” in Britain), but later uses “communism” to designate a movement that (compared to “socialism”) is more proletarian and committed to a more fundamental break with contemporary capitalism.

²⁶ Engels to Marx (17 March 1845), *MECW* 36:27.

²⁷ Marx and Engels, “The German Ideology,” *MECW* 5:461 (where Herman Semmig’s “*Communismus, Socialismus, Humanismus*” is treated as representative). The implication that Weitling himself was ignorant of these English socialists is mistaken. Goodwyn Barmby shared Weitling’s views on the affinity of socialism and Christianity, and they had met during Weitling’s visit to England.

²⁸ Marx and Engels, “The German Ideology,” *MECW* 5:461.

²⁹ Those *not* falling into that broad Owenite category are: Thomas More (1478-1535); the Levellers; (George) Julian Harney (1817-1897); Joshua Hobson (1810-1876); and Thomas Spence (1750-1814).

³⁰ Marx to Johann Philipp Becker (9 April 1860), *MECW* 41:114.

³¹ Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *MECW* 25:251.

³² Marx to Engels (21 May 1851), *MECW* 38:360; see also C. Tsuzuki, “Robert Owen and Revolutionary Politics,” *Robert Owen. Prophet of the Poor*, ed. S. Pollard and J. Salt (London: 1971), 32.

³³ See, for instance, R. Owen, “A New View of Society,” *Selected Writings of Robert Owen*, Volume 1, ed. G. Claeys (London: William Pickering, 1993), 33-35.

³⁴ Marx, “Blue Books,” *MECW* 12:612.

³⁵ See David Leopold, “The Structure of Marx and Engels’ Considered Account of Utopian Socialism,” *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2005), 443-66.

³⁶ See G.A. Cohen, *If You’re an Egalitarian, How Come You’re So Rich?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 63.

³⁷ Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, *MECW* 6:516.

³⁸ See Marx, *Capital* I, *MECW* 35:17.

³⁹ For reconstruction and rejection of Marx’s arguments, see David

Leopold, "On Marxian Utopophobia," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2016), 111-34.

⁴⁰ Marx, *The Civil War in France*, MECW 22:335.

⁴¹ See Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, MECW 6:515.

⁴² Owen, "Development of the Plan," *Selected Writings of Robert Owen*, Vol. 1: *Early Writings*, ed. G. Claeys (London: William Pickering, 1993), 214.

⁴³ Owen, *New Moral World*, 11 July 1838, 595.

⁴⁴ See John C. Langdon, *Pocket Editions of the New Jerusalem: Owenite Communitarianism in Britain 1825-1855*, DPhil thesis, University of York, 2000; and Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem. Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Virago, 1983), 253-58.

⁴⁵ William Thompson, "Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities," *Owenite Socialism: Pamphlets and Correspondence*, ed. Gregory Claeys, volume III (Abingdon, 2005), 246-47.

⁴⁶ Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, MECW 6:515.

⁴⁷ Robert Owen, "Book of the New Moral World," *Selected Writings of Robert Owen*, Vol. 3, ed. G. Claeys (London: Routledge, 1993), 85.

⁴⁸ Robert Owen, "A Development of the Principles and Plans on Which to Establish Self-Supporting Home Colonies," *Selected Writings of Robert Owen*, Vol. 2, ed. G. Claeys (London: William Pickering, 1993), 347 and 390.

⁴⁹ Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, MECW 6:515-16.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 517.

⁵¹ C. Tsuzuki, "Robert Owen and Revolutionary Politics," *Robert Owen. Prophet of the Poor*, ed. S. Pollard and J. Salt (London: Macmillan, 1971), 17.

⁵² Robert Owen, "A Peaceful Revolution of Society," *New Moral World*, 22 October 1842, 133.

⁵³ Robert Owen, "From the Manifesto of Robert Owen," *A New View*

of *Society and Other Writings*, ed. G. Claeys, 358-64 (London: Penguin Classics, 1991), 358.

⁵⁴ Marx, *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*, MECW 29:99.

⁵⁵ Marx, *Capital* I, MECW 35:406; and *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*, MECW 29:97.

⁵⁶ See Noel Thompson, *The Real Rights of Man: Political Economies for the Working Class 1775-1850* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), chapters 5-6, and 8.

⁵⁷ Marx, *Capital* I, MECW 35:17.

⁵⁸ Marx to Kugelmann (9 October 1866), MECW 42:326.

⁵⁹ Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, MECW 6, 505.

⁶⁰ Marx, *Capital* I, MECW 35:486.

⁶¹ Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, MECW 4:130.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 130-31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁶⁶ Marx, *Capital* III, MECW 37:438.

⁶⁷ Marx, "Inaugural Address," MECW 20:11.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Peter Ghosh, "Constructing Marx in the History of Ideas," *Global Intellectual History*, Vol. 2, No.2 (2017), 134.

⁷² G.A. Cohen, "The Three Sources and Component Parts of Marxism," In *Marxism, Mysticism and Modern Theory*, ed. Suke Wolton (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 3.

⁷³ See David Leopold, "'All Tell the Same Tale': The Young Engels and Communal Settlements in America and England," *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch* (2009), 7-47; and David Leopold, "Socialist Turnips: The Young Friedrich Engels and the Feasibility of Communism," *Political Theory*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2012), 347-78.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Engels, "Letters from London," *MECW* 3:387 and 385.

⁷⁵ Engels to Liebknecht (12 February 1873), *MECW* 44:477. See also Engels to Schlüter (12 March 1886), *MECW* 47:422.

⁷⁶ Engels, "The Times on German Communism," *MECW* 3:412-13, corrected in "To the Editor of the *New Moral World*," *MECW* 3:414.

⁷⁷ Engels, "Letters from London," *MECW* 3:385.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 380.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 389.

⁸⁰ For sceptical commentary, see David Leopold, "Socialist Turnips: The Young Friedrich Engels and the Feasibility of Communism," *Political Theory*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2012), 362-64.

⁸¹ *Karl Marx Chronik seines Lebens in Einzeldaten* (Moscow: Marx-Engels-Lenin Institut, 1971), 29

⁸² Engels to Marx (15 May 1870), *MECW* 43:518. Thomas Jones (1810-1876) was appointed Librarian in 1845 and kept the position until his death.

⁸³ Marx, "Manchester Notebook 2," *MEGA*², IV/4:180-81.

⁸⁴ Marx, "Manchester Notebook 4," *MEGA*², IV/4:237-46.

⁸⁵ Marx, "Manchester Notebook 4," *MEGA*², IV/5:5-59.

⁸⁶ Marx, "Manchester Notebook 6," *MEGA*², IV/5:60-79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 80-103.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 104-27.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 127-28.

⁹⁰ Marx, "Manchester Notebook 7," *MEGA*², IV/5:170-92.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 193-207.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 208-225.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 226-33.

⁹⁴ Marx, "Brussels Notebook 6," *MEGA*², IV/3:430-33.

⁹⁵ See reference to "fresh material collected in England" in Marx to Leske (1 August 1846), *MECW* 38:51.

⁹⁶ Matthias Bohlender, "Marx Meets Manchester. The Manchester

Notebooks as a Starting Point of an Unfinish(ed)able Project?” in *Marx’s Capital, An Unfinishable Project?* ed. Marcel van der Linden and Gerald Hubmann (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 228-49.

⁹⁷ See *Ibid.*, 241 n. 44.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 228-49.

¹⁰⁰ Lucia Pradella, “Marx’s Itineraries to *Capital*: on Matthias Bohlender’s ‘Marx Meets Manchester,’” in *Marx’s Capital, An Unfinishable Project?* ed. Marcel van der Linden and Gerald Hubmann (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 250-65.

¹⁰¹ See Engels to Bernstein (29 June 1884), *MECW* 47:160.

¹⁰² Georg Weerth, “Die englische Mittelklasse,” *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1956-57), Band III, 165.

¹⁰³ Georg Weerth, “Rede auf dem Freihandelskongreß in Brüssel,” *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1956-57), Band II, 128.

¹⁰⁴ Georg Weerth, “Die englischen Arbeiter,” *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1956-57), Band III, 196.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 493 n. 196.

¹⁰⁶ Georg Weerth, “Das Blumenfest der englischen Arbeiter,” *Sämtliche Werke*, Band III, 232.

¹⁰⁷ For example, there is a single passing reference to Weerth (in a list of German radicals), in Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx, A Nineteenth-Century Life* (New York: Liveright, 2013), 159-60.

¹⁰⁸ Georg Weerth, “Briefe an Karl Marx” (25 December 1845), *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1956-57), Band V, 193.

¹⁰⁹ See Terrell Carver and Daniel Blank, *A Political History of the Editions of Marx and Engels’s “German Ideology Manuscripts”* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 147; and Harney to Engels (30 March 1846), *The Harney Papers*, ed. Frank Gees Black and Renee Métivier Black (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1969), 243.

¹¹⁰ The *feuilleton* was a newspaper supplement containing reviews of literature, theatre, and art, alongside often humorous sketches of

contemporary social and political culture.

¹¹¹ Marx to Lassalle (8 November 1855), *MECW* 39:556.

¹¹² Marx to Engels (22 September 1856), *MECW* 40:68.

¹¹³ Marx to Lassalle (21 December 1857), *MECW* 40:226.

¹¹⁴ Marx to Weydemeyer (1 Feb 1859), *MECW* 40:374.

¹¹⁵ Marx to Lassalle (25 February 1859), *MECW* 40:392.

¹¹⁶ Marx to Engels (13 February 1863) *MECW* 41:453.

¹¹⁷ Marx to Kugelman (11 January 1868), *MECW* 42:521.

¹¹⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939), 24.

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