



MARX, ENGELS, AND MARXISMS



# The Life and Thought of Friedrich Engels

30th Anniversary Edition

Terrell Carver

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# Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

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*To my friends worldwide*

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# ABBREVIATIONS<sup>1</sup>

- AM Terence Ball and James Fair (eds) *After Marx* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- COND F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. and ed. W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chalenor (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958).
- CW Marx and Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2004).
- D *Friedrich Engels: Dokumente seines Lebens*, ed. Manfred Kliem (Frankfurt a.M.: Röderberg-Verlag, 1977).
- DKM The Daughters of Karl Marx, *Family Correspondence 1866–1898*, trans. Faith Evans (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984).
- EF Terrell Carver, ‘Engels’s Feminism’, *History of Political Thought*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1985) pp. 479–89.
- FE Heinrich Gemkow et al., *Friedrich Engels: A Biography* (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1972).
- H W.O. Henderson, *The Life of Friedrich Engels*, 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1976).
- IR David McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Interviews and Recollections* (London: Macmillan, 1981).
- K Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2 vols (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1972 and 1976).

<sup>1</sup>Note: Volume numbers appear in Arabic before abbreviations, and page numbers after, for example *Collected Works*, vol. 25, p. 37, appears as 25 CW 37.

In textual matters I have cited *Collected Works* for preference, and chosen other editions only where absolutely necessary.

- KM David McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1973).
- L George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1964).
- M Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester and the Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1974).
- MBM David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1980).
- MEGA<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. D. Ryazanov et al. (Frankfurt and Berlin: Marx-Engels-Archiv Verlagsgesellschaft, 1927– (series incomplete)).
- MEGA<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1972– (series in progress)).
- MEIR Terrell Carver, *Marx and Engels: The Intellectual Relationship* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983).
- MEOU Terrell Carver, ‘Marx – and Engels’s “Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy”’, *History of Political Thought*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1983) pp. 357–65.
- MEW Marx and Engels, *Werke* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1956–68 (series complete)).
- MP Alan Gilbert, *Marx’s Politics* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981).
- MST Terrell Carver, *Marx’s Social Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- R Fritz J. Raddatz, *Karl Marx*, trans. Richard Barry (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978).
- SW Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (in two volumes) (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962).
- SWOV Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (in one volume) (New York: International Publishers, 1968, repr. 1984).
- YHKM David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (London: Macmillan, 1969).



## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction to the 30th Anniversary and Engels-Bicentenary Edition

*Friedrich Engels: His Life and Thought* was first published thirty years ago in 1990. This anniversary edition—freshly titled *The Life and Thought of Friedrich Engels*—marks the bicentenary of Engels’s birth being commemorated across the world in 2020. In that light I offer some remarks about the book in context, giving today’s readers a sense of the life and thought through which the book arose. The last ten years or so have witnessed some dramatic changes in the political and intellectual context through which Engels has come alive again, so to speak. The world has changed, and so has he. Scholarship has provided a wealth of new materials, but more importantly the whole idea of what to look for, how to present it and why it matters has altered substantially. The observations below will bear witness, as the discussion unfolds, to how useful Engels has been in raising questions that trouble long-standing historical judgements. The present doesn’t sit still, so why should the past?

### WAY BACK WHEN

In the mid-1980s my gentlemanly editor at The Macmillan Press Ltd. was Tim Farmiloe, based in literary London. He was very supportive of my academic and entrepreneurial ambitions, using the first-class letter-post, typed-up text and autograph-signature methods of the time. Rather remarkably I recently retrieved the signed contract and correspondence from what I realized was a personal archive. These piles of files have all the

signs of things ‘left where they landed’, not unlike some of the archives I’ve had access to over the years.

In the mid-1980s the book was conceived as something of a companion-in-spirit to David McLellan’s much larger scholarly biography *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought*. That book was published by Macmillan, hence my overture to his publisher, though it had come out some years before in 1973. McLellan’s biography caught the crest of the post-1968 wave of student-driven interest, already stoked by his series of paperback Marx-studies, also published by Macmillan. These had begun in 1969 with his reworked D.Phil. thesis on the Young Hegelians and Karl Marx. I bought the inexpensive and colourful books as they came out, and they made a nice little collection on the shelf. The pop-art covers mimicked Andy Warhol’s 1968 repetitions of Alberto Korda’s iconic Che Guevara photo of 1960. Those were the days.

With the full-scale biography of Marx, as a contemporary reviewer remarked, McLellan had reached his ‘Finland Station’. At the time many readers would have caught the reference there to Lenin’s history-making arrival in St Petersburg in 1917 and to Edmund Wilson’s classic of that title, first published in 1940 and still in print today. Wilson’s ‘Study in the Writing and Acting of History’ was for many years a standard introduction to the great revolutions and great ideas version of history. For students in liberal arts programmes it was an intellectual landmark, hence required reading, as it was for me, an undergraduate at Columbia University in New York, 1964–8.

McLellan’s full-length biography similarly became standard reading for much the same reasons, and in a vein pioneered by his supervisor at Oxford University, Isaiah Berlin. Berlin’s first published work was a short, biographical study in 1939, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*—note the subtitle mimicry going on here. Berlin’s was the first scholarly treatment in English of the then Soviet—and earlier Bolshevik—supposed founding father. The book, originally published in a London-based Home University Library, is now in its 5th edition and has never been out of print. And rather similarly, McLellan’s biography, updated in 1995, has joined the ranks of standard works.

So by the later 1980s the admixture of ideas with history, and the vision of intellectuals as history-makers, was already well established. It was also possible by then to consider the life and thought of a highly politicized, and famously contentious, figure of the past ‘in context’, rather than as

immediately toxic. Remember that in the mid- and even late 1980s no one had any evidence-based theory, or even very credible supposition, that the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union itself, would collapse so spectacularly.

Thus at that point, and in impeccably academic settings, with Marx we had a man of ideas, indeed revolutionary ones, without which—so it was argued—we couldn't really understand the mass political turbulence of the twentieth century: world wars, communist wars, cold wars, ideological wars. The common point of origin for these studies was the French Revolution of 1789–95, from which came many of the political ideas that had activated Marx.

These were also the ideas that activated the histories through which Berlin, Wilson, McLellan and many others understood their later times. However bumpy and uneven the contradictions and cataclysms, from the revolutionary wars of 1790s to the Iron Curtain of the 1950s through to the 1980s, Marx's thought was an obvious and necessary first step for anglophones in understanding Marxism.

### MARX AND MARXISM

This understanding of Marxism as a historical topic worked in two ways. There were hostile treatments that saw little if any good in the ideas, and only subversion and destruction in self-styled 'Marxist' regimes. And there were sympathetic treatments that found some virtues in at least some of Marx's ideas, if not in most or sometimes any 'Marxist' political practices. The political salience of Marxism provided the opportunity for intellectuals to explore such writings as were then available, taking advantage—from the 1950s—of deliberately cheap Soviet/East German editions and translations. And after 'the fall of the [Berlin] wall' in late 1989, they were even cheaper.

Rather fortunately for these academic, intellectual enterprises, there was relatively little to say about Marx's own record in hands-on political practice, since that was not where and how he made his name in his lifetime. Marx was a revolutionary of the pen, a journalist, pamphleteer, political economist and prolific correspondent. It was thus rather hard to praise or blame him for uprisings and regime-changes, massacres and murders, political progress or regress, in any very direct way—though some very lengthy studies rose to the challenge. Alternatively those who saw him as

a politically potent great revolutionary, precisely because of his great ideas, had to say—as they did at length—just how this worked, that is, how Marx’s ideas were ‘translated’ into notable actions by others.

One central European intellectual in particular enabled academic writers to rise over and above, rather than staying strictly within, the polarizing political terms of the time. Karl Mannheim’s *Ideologie und Utopie* of 1929 became, in a translation of 1936, a classic in anglophone sociology of knowledge, not least because it gave an objective neutrality to the study of contentious political topics and eponymous political contenders. Marx thus became a ‘life’ to be recovered and his thought became an ‘ideology’. Society became an ongoing arena of ideas, linking individuals to politics, generating systems not just events, posing puzzles in intellectual terms and needing intellectuals to unravel them. Mannheim’s book, or at least the framing idea of ‘ideology’, was also on my liberal arts curriculum, where great men, great ideas and great events were the stuff of survey courses. And Marx also fitted the utopianizing aspect of ideas-in-action that Mannheim drew attention to.

Thus to unravel the puzzling imbrications of incendiary words and ubiquitous gunfire in Europe post-1917, and succeeding decades of ideological warfare, we needed specialists in the history of ideas, that is, intellectuals who weren’t exactly philosophers and weren’t exactly historians. And to make the enterprise go, we needed biographers to provide the narrative arc: birth and family, youthful ambitions and scrapes, slings and arrows of fortune, great works and recognition (or lack of it) and life-after-death in posthumous publication and reception. McLellan’s work has stood the test, and is only recently succeeded in the genre by Gareth Stedman Jones’s *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, published in 2016, at something like twice the length. While not the only biography of Marx published in the intervening period, by any means, this is the one that best fits the mould as a history of ideas by a highly qualified intellectual in a suitably large, ‘door-stop’-size volume.

### LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER

My own biographical study of Engels wasn’t conceived on that scale or in quite that way. The publishers didn’t seem to mind the differences in size and scope from McLellan’s, or the mimicry involved in the subtitle. In a generous, though not uncritical review, McLellan didn’t comment on the coat-tails ploy with ‘His Life and Thought’. The book was somewhat



rebellious, with a self-consciously Germanizing ‘Friedrich’ in the title, rather than the more anglicizing ‘Frederick’. He appeared that way in most English-language editions and selections of his works, almost always published in conjunction with Marx’s.

Even in the then rare exceptions to this rule Engels is always stalked by Marx’s spectre, and together in English translations the two became rather thoughtlessly anglicized. In those English words that they came to speak, they have contributed a number of stock quotes and phrases to the language—sometimes via mistranslation and misattribution, for example the ‘spectre’ that ‘haunts’, ‘all that is solid melts into air’, social existence ‘determines’ consciousness, ‘withering away of the state’ and so on. For me, however, this easy familiarity often helped to erase the context that, so I thought, good historians of ideas, and therefore good political theorists, should be aiming for.

In other ways my biographical study didn’t sit easily alongside further intellectual biographies of the time. W.O. Henderson’s two-volume biography of Engels, published in 1976, was then on the library shelves wherever I went. It seemed rather pointless to go over that much detail, given that the source materials a decade later were very much the same. Henderson’s volumes were angled in line with biographical expectations towards the later Engels, which is the usual way that intellectual biographies explain great persons and their times to readers. Few biographical subjects arrive at their fame in their earliest days, just as—at least prior to family photography—few ‘great men’ and (via misogyny, far fewer) ‘great women’ lend us portraits or images from their youth. Moreover archival materials increase exponentially with age, usually, and Engels is no exception. He really got into his stride, quantitatively speaking, only in the 1870s when he joined the over-50s.

Engels retired at age 49 from his day-job as a Manchester-based businessman, reluctantly but lucratively employed at his family’s overseas textile enterprise, and then handsomely pensioned off. After that move to London he got into a revitalized career working on Marx-like projects and political schemes, publicizing his friend very fulsomely and then carrying on mightily after Marx’s death in 1883. As literary executor he was, perforce, curating his own archive of publications and correspondence, handing the boxes on in 1895 via his will to his literary executors. These were Marx’s daughter Eleanor together with long-time socialist *confrères* August Bebel and Eduard Bernstein. Henderson was thus not short of materials, thanks to the efforts of German socialists who had saved vast quantities of

papers from the Nazis, and of later Soviet and East German scholars and archivists who kept or located many other relevant items.

### WHAT'S NEW?

Why not do something different and out-of-the-box? By the mid-1970s the English-language *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* was just underway, edited in conjunction with the revived *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* ('Complete Works'). This huge undertaking was jointly produced between the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in Moscow and the Socialist Unity Party of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in East Berlin. Studying the revolutionary thought of foundational communists was a bit of a thrill at the time, though quite safely done at Oxford University, where such enquiries represented just one project in intellectual history among many others.

I was thus enjoying the heritage of Berlin's work—he was still in residence at All Souls College. And I was following, albeit unknowingly so, in McLellan's footsteps, but in a different college and with a different supervisor. Moreover my D.Phil. study was methodological, looking to see what was new about Marx in the so-called *Grundrisse* manuscripts, then untranslated into English and only available in a post-war West German reprint of the very rare wartime double volume. Contextualizing the past meant exactly that as an academic enterprise, which is what I was doing. Studying the contemporary politics of the Cold War was something else. And those taking Marxism into the class wars of 1970s Britain were something else yet again. Sometimes all three crossed over in Balliol College's common rooms.

Remarkably, and fortunately for me, publication of the first volumes of the *Collected Works* in the mid-1970s preceded the early volumes of the MEGA<sup>2</sup> series, as the post-war revival of the *Gesamtausgabe* project was generally known. This latter series was directed towards publishing original-language transcriptions, corresponding to the languages of the original works and letters, which were not always in German.

And MEGA<sup>2</sup> was *variorum*, that is, establishing copy-texts and genealogical *stemmata* with great care and erudition-to-the-letter, right down to the watermarked paper. The published text-of-the-last hand (i.e. the author's final intention at the point of publication, or last state of a manuscript work) was framed with historical guidance on earlier manuscripts and/or later published editions, and presented with admirable

thoroughness. The differences, or ‘variants’, were signalled telegraphically line-by-line in a separate volume of *apparatus criticus*, as per scholarly method and bibliographical science. And it included third-party letters to Marx or Engels, not just the Marx-Engels interchanges.

Obviously that scholarly process would take a long time per text per volume, and the MEGA<sup>2</sup> volumes didn’t come out in a particularly orderly way. But what was fresh in print by the mid-1980s were materials from Engels’s youthful career, previously overlooked as self-evidently unremarkable. The relevant English-language volumes in the *Collected Works* dated already from 1975, and were based to an extent on the ongoing scholarship of the MEGA<sup>2</sup> teams. The relevant MEGA<sup>2</sup> volumes date from about a decade later, which was just in time for some fact- and translation-checking by me.

The English-language volumes, in the early days of the project, were thus somewhat ahead of the definitive, *variorum* treatment, but notably benefiting from pre-publication researches. These had collected up texts quite thoroughly in rigorous chronology, rather than very selectively in order to make a handy canon, as with previous English-language collections. And the new volumes provided historical information in readable, highlighting modes, and most importantly, the full correspondence between the two great men as collected to date. Unusually, and most usefully, it provided very full indexing.

The previous set of German-language *Marx-Engels-Werke* volumes, highly visible on university library shelves, dated from the 1950s, and is still in use today, given that the MEGA<sup>2</sup> project is incomplete. But that series was quite light—as an East German artefact—on the ‘early’ Engels. In this rather large 39-volume set of works and letters the important author was Marx, and the important texts and ideas were ‘known-knowns’ about him in relation to Marxism. But ‘known-knowns’ were not what interested me. Nonetheless in the mid-1980s the *Werke* volumes were the only readily available source for German-language texts of most works by Marx and Engels, and for letters between the two not yet included in selections or volumes of English translations.

The *Werke* set, published 1956–1968, showcased Marxism rather than the two men as writers, so the editorial selection and commentary necessarily excluded what, from that perspective, wasn’t immediately necessary. And indeed it admitted, but only with obvious reluctance, certain texts by Marx and Engels that didn’t suit the purpose. The theoretical principles and canonical texts of Marxism were the most sacred of ‘known knowns’.

Outside that zone of doctrinal certainty and political orthodoxy, deriving from the circumstances and exigencies of the 1890s through to the 1930s and beyond, lay a number of texts that are now very familiar. From the late 1940s through to the late 1950s they became canonical to non-Soviet Marx-studies and to post-war variants of ‘Western’ Marxism.

Marx’s so-called Paris or 1844 or Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, for instance, had been published in 1932, as an editorial compilation, in the original MEGA series, which was cut short by World War II. That project was originally convened at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow in 1923, as a Bolshevik enterprise, but with the cooperation of German socialists in Berlin and Frankfurt-am-Main. For Soviet orthodoxy of the 1950s those ‘early’ works by Marx were not canonical, since they did not reinforce the dialectical and historical materialisms, and therefore communist party political triumphs, of the pre-war and post-war years of Soviet struggle.

And indeed from that Soviet and ‘Iron Curtain’ or pro-Moscow perspective, ‘early’ works by either author could sometimes be disturbing. Some of those works were thus selectively published only in a remote pair of supplementary volumes to the *Werke* set, parked way down at the end of the library bookshelf and way out of chronological order. They were thus not quite apocrypha, but then not really reliable, and so not properly canonical, hence physically marginalized. Moreover they were becoming, from the 1950s onwards, far too popular among Marxist ‘revisionists’, particularly in France and in the anglophone world, and even in what was then ‘non-aligned’ Yugoslavia. The ‘early’ Engels was thus bifurcated, too, between the opening and closing volumes of the *Werke* set, though not at all for the same reasons. He was a ‘known unknown’, and not worth a look.

### YOUNG FRIEDRICH/OLD ENGELS

From my perspective what was freshly to hand in the mid-1980s was the ‘early’ Engels, accessible in the initial volumes of the *Collected Works* series in English and backed up by the widely spaced volumes of the *Werke* set in German. This focus was heralded by Steven Marcus’s *Engels, Manchester and the Working Class*, published in 1974. Rather surprisingly this study was the work of an American literary scholar and—as it happens—faculty member at Columbia University when I was an undergraduate, though as a Government and History major I didn’t cross-register for any of his classes. His main text was Engels’s full-length book, *The Condition of the*

*Working Class in England*, composed during the latter part of Engels's Manchester years in 1844 and—back home in familial isolation—early 1845.

Marcus's book is rather unusually both a meditation and a polemic. The meditation was on English urbanism of the very first years of the industrial revolution, though the analysis and presentation were well outside the bounds of Marxist orthodoxies and canon-construction. For him Engels's book was an intellectual and imaginative vision, with unexplored links to literary figures, such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Carlyle and so forth. But he was also intrigued by structural links with modern industrial societies of his own time, since many of his American university colleagues were assuming that 'social problems' had been resolved by capitalism, or would be.

And Marcus's work was a polemic, pushing the bounds of anglophone literary studies into non-fiction writing and class-conflictual politics. He was evidently concerned to irritate conservative literary critics, many of whom were taking a formalist, objective approach that defined literature as in-and-of-itself. Engels had never been considered literary, in anglophone or German circles either one, and from the American perspective he was not interesting as a writer in any sense.

Even in Marxist orthodoxies Engels's full-scale book was 'early', marginal and non-canonical because it was pre-Marx, since the two had at that point barely met, and were not yet collaborating closely, nor yet co-resident, or by any means exclusively associated. And Engels's other 'early' works were also sometimes embarrassingly juvenile and effusively 'romantic' as *belles lettres*, so not really foreshadowing what was—after teaming up with Marx—to come.

Outside those circles of Marxist orthodoxy, the 'early' Engels was also of little historical interest, figuring as some very minor local curiosity in Lancashire mill-town studies, perhaps. Or equally rarely he could be glimpsed as a young, forgettable romantic, typical of so many in the *Vormärz* run-up to the European revolutions of 1848.

Thus Engels's masterwork, as it is now regarded, is not properly part of the Marx-Engels partnership story. And it was never made canonical, because it is not obviously theoretical or anything very like that in content. And, anyway, it couldn't be interestingly theoretical, so it was assumed, for both reasons. This was because—with teleological hindsight—the sole author of the breakthrough theories of Marxism could only have been Marx alone. Hence a book not by Marx, or not conceived in association

with him, moreover a book that was not properly theoretical, and was by the ‘early’ Engels alone, could not qualify as importantly Marxist. In the Marxist world the book was lucky to get a passing reference, which is what it got from Marx, whereas Marcus had made quite a highlight of it, and had truly got it out of its box.

Marcus challenged himself by making a German communist—and the runner-up foundational Marxist—a model for a literary study. Obviously the book had no novel-like characters in it and couldn’t qualify as stylistically influential, and it seemed to be boringly descriptive and irritatingly *engagé* with proletarian struggle. Struggle was certainly in the air 1960s America, but few conceptualized it as working class and economic, rather than as racial and civil rights. Moreover the text wasn’t even in English, other than in an unremarkable translation, with which Engels himself had had issues.

Particularly in the American context—which encouraged a ‘dream’ of upward *individual* mobility—Engels’s book was politically suspect to a very high degree, and almost incomprehensible in trumpeting a politics that was pre-war and *passé*. Class, never mind class struggle, was obviously a Marxist and therefore Soviet Russian perspective of communist subversion. Senator Joseph McCarthy’s witch-hunts and blacklists were well within living memory, and—anecdotally—most people I spoke to at the time in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, thus assumed that Marx was Russian, so obviously Engels was, too. The Marx-Engels-Lenin iconic banners—from all those parades in Red Square, and from similar communist displays—were ubiquitous in cinema newsreels and TV broadcast news. They had really had an impact.

However, Marcus’s careful framing of his subject and object as literary got Engels noticed for novelty, and he managed to get Engels on the map as someone of intellectual interest, at least for historians of ideas. And crucially for me it was the almost forgotten and otherwise disavowed ‘early’ Engels. Marcus had constructed a claim-to-fame for a work that didn’t feature at all in the Marxist canon, other than when—on only a few occasions—Marx himself had mentioned it.

Marcus had thus produced the ‘early’ Engels as an object for intellectual study, and a life evidently worth revisiting. He did it with minimal reference to Marx, and without taking Marxism to be the sole point of relevance. Engels’s quite substantial masterwork really had nothing very much to say for readers wanting an ‘ism’, but for Marcus this was a huge advantage. Here was something fresh.



## BIOGRAPHERS AND STRUCTURES

Notably, and at almost exactly the same time, Henderson's biography trashed Engels's book for its factual inaccuracies, with and without hindsight, and—horror of horrors—having any politics at all, never mind so far left-wing. From that perspective—Henderson was an American historian of European politics—the work was ideological and therefore distorted, unreliable and out-of-genre. Far from wanting an 'ism', Henderson wanted 'just the facts', and he wanted them properly referenced.

The genre that Henderson had in mind was an academic study, recording history from documents, and adopting an objective, scrupulously non-partisan, studiously 'non-political' role in the transmission of truth. Normative judgements and revolutionary prognostications were not, therefore, required, and indeed, they were forbidden. Henderson visited the wrath of critique upon his subject, particularly in considering that work. Engels's later forays into theories of history and materialist dialectics got even shorter shrift, and even less comprehension.

So I was reading between these two lines, that is, quite contrasting ways of approaching Engels, one taking him up for literary and biographical interest, and the other taking him down for factual inaccuracy. And I wanted to avoid the 'known knowns' of standard intellectual biography, which is almost always weighted towards the Grand Old Man. In that way I embarked on a biographical study that, so I thought, would do something different.

The English-language volumes covering Engels's 'early' archive were as yet unstudied, and those works had been absent from previous English-language sets of *Selected Works* in one, two and three volumes, which were the cheaply published standard for Marx- and Marxism-studies of the time. Those 'early' works apparently had little to do with Marxist orthodoxies, and didn't figure very much at all in the Marx biographies, because from that perspective, the 'early' Engels didn't really exist as an intellect. So I angled my book in that direction, seeing what might emerge.

What I discovered, in focusing at first on the 'early' Engels—as one would conventionally in a biographical work—was that he was a politicizing writer of politicizing texts. But rather than select and analyse those manuscripts and works as either foreshadowing Marxist 'known knowns', or alternatively failing to head in that very direction, I was gripped by the politics and enthused by the writing. And rather than presuming that Engels always was, or always had to be, 'second fiddle' to the obviously

greater man, I decided to look into his strengths, contextually, to see—possibly—what Marx saw in him.

And conversely I decided that—possibly—something was lost, to Engels and to us, when the partnership got going in the way that it did. Without the supposed benefit of teleological hindsight, we can see the two—Engels and Marx—variously involved in overlapping association with a number of other German radical democrats, and perforce revolutionaries, given the authoritarian monarchical regimes of the time. These radical thinkers and writers were all, variously, just getting acquainted with, and working their way through, the diverse and unsorted socialisms/communisms of the mid-1840s, largely derived from French sources.

Overall I took the methodological decision that, yes, the spectre of Marx would always shadow our view of Engels, but began to wonder about the reverse line of enquiry. And I took the further decision that, no, the later Engels, understood as ‘junior partner’, did not have to be the focus of a biographical study, at least in the opening chapters.

Moreover the opening chapters could haunt Marx, I learned as the research progressed, since Engels’s accomplishments as a politicking writer of politicizing texts far outweighed Marx’s accomplishments in what was supposed to be the same mode over the same period. The ‘early’ Engels was thus interesting in himself as an intellect, and in relation to his only slightly older—by two and a half years—*later* comrade and collaborator. I went for it.

But it also followed, methodologically, that wanting the reader to stay ‘fresh’ with this view, the later Engels could not, by page-weight within the volume, crush his youthful self. And by his own decisions and self-characterizations, post-1845, Marx would haunt those years anyway.

I decided that the later Engels was already a very well ‘known known’ and could just be surveyed in my later chapters. Those chapters of my book could simply pose questions, rather than recapitulate materials easily available elsewhere. The ‘later’ Engels had been read into Marx by many writers concerned to ensure that the ‘junior partner’ stayed in line with his senior, and vice versa, so those ideas were already familiar in Marx-biographies, and certainly standard stuff in studies of Marxism. My later chapters would therefore work thematically, with internal chronologies, surveying his personal life, political activisms and *émigré* positioning. The opening chapters on the ‘early’ Engels, by contrast, would be

chronological, detailed and exciting. The aim was to have balanced but contrasting novelties.

I hope that for today's readers this still works as a way into *The Life and Thought of Friedrich Engels*.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Thirty years later the political and intellectual landscape has certainly changed out of all recognition. The English-language *Collected Works* in fifty volumes was completed in 2004, providing a huge amount of published and manuscript materials, as well as correspondence in copiously annotated and usefully indexed form. There is thus more readily accessible Marx-Engels available to English readers than in any other language, including German.

The weighty double volumes of MEGA<sup>2</sup> are the ultimate resource for scholarly work, but there are still many volumes missing, and they are not individually indexed. At present, of the thirty-two volumes planned to cover works of all kinds—other than Marx's *Capital* manuscripts and publications—only twenty-three have appeared. Notably for those interested in Engels, the volumes covering *The Condition of the Working Class in England* and *The Communist Manifesto*, for instance, have yet to be published. Overall, though, the gain so far is not so much in surprises and discoveries suddenly revealed in these monumental publications, but rather in the way that the English-language set, in particular, has facilitated the reinvention of Marx and Engels as political interlocutors and cultural icons, which was certainly unexpected.

That set of books has enabled different kinds of writers in further genres of anglophone communication to find something to say about the duo. This then poses the question why interest in Marx and Engels has suddenly expanded in ways quite different from former treatments. Political demonology and hagiography, commonplace during the Cold War era, and deriving from the pre-war years back to 1917, have given way to a broader range of academic researches and other uses. Some of these were more, rather than less, immersed in political practice. Early off the mark we have feminism, and in particular Marxist feminism.

Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* post-dated Marx's death, though the author—for political as well as personal reasons—was keen to credit him as a contributor, and thus to make it easy for readers to align the contents with his own popularizations of Marx's

life and thought, which were already circulating. Nonetheless the book—and Engels as sole author—suited Marxist feminists quite well, given the lacunae in Marx’s works on the subject of women at all, or in relation to politics, or in relation to what they and others, then and now, understand as women’s issues, or as issues particularly relevant to women. Marx’s comments in this area were very much in passing or mere hints not taken up. With Engels, feminists found a whole book starting, as per the title, with ‘the family’ as a crucial area of political concern and controversy.

The more conventionally Marxian and Marxist starting points had been in public life and economic activities, as indeed had virtually all commonplace relegations of women to ‘the private sphere’. This long-standing knowledge-practice left domestic spaces, persons and issues aside as apparently unrelated to knowledge at all and standardly bracketed off. For feminists, Engels appeared to bridge the gap, or at least to have wanted to bridge the gap, between the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation, and the emancipation of women from the oppressions visited on them by men and by male-dominated institutions, ‘the family’ in particular. In that work he had what was understood to be a historical approach consistent with the Marxist premise that ‘history is the history of class struggles’, producing a developmental typology of social structures. And he firmly declared that women were not just an oppressed class, but the first!

Moreover Engels had notably revised ‘the materialist interpretation of history’, later taken to be the founding principle of Marxism, by adding the ‘reproduction of life’ to the material production of goods and services. Putting the focus on Engels as author helped to displace the instant dismissal through which Marxist activisms were often marginalized and persecuted. Highlighting reproduction as an enduring element of human social organization was notably woman-friendly, given that male writers on the subject had largely taken it for granted, and marginalized or excluded women who wanted to write about it. And the historical approach was in itself liberating and inspiring, not to mention the delineation of men as class-oppressors, though also arguing that, with collective effort, the future for women and men could be different.

However, the proliferation of oppressions and identities within anglo-phone politics—considering the intersections of race/ethnicity with sexualities and able-ism, moving on to ‘trans’ and queer critiques, and taking in de-colonizing and indigenous perspectives—has taken its toll on Engels’s work, and hence on his centrality, even to Marxist feminisms.