

Engels @ 200: An Introduction

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I would always say »Engels and Marx.« The big rabbit was ... Engels.¹

Paul Frölich (1884–1953),² a founding member of the German Communist Party, recognized the importance of Friedrich Engels in this quote, which he sent as a remark related to a manuscript³ by the Ukrainian Marxist Roman Rosdolsky (1898–1967).⁴ In contrast to Frölich's view, however, Engels continued to be seen as the second fiddle⁵ and is often neglected with regard to his role and influence on the course of the history in general and Marxism in particular. Engels, as German historian Jürgen Herres put it, was a »republi-

1 Letter by Paul Frölich to Roman Rosdolsky, Kew Gardens, New York, October 26, 1948, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Rosdolsky Papers 6, Correspondence with Paul and Rosi Frölich 1948 to 1950, 3. I would like to thank Riccardo Altieri for pointing me towards this source.

2 Riccardo Altieri, »Paul Frölich, American Exile, and Communist Discourse about the Russian Revolution,« *American Communist History* 17, no. 2 (2018): S. 220–231.

3 The manuscript was eventually not published before both, Frölich and Rosdolsky, were already dead. Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxschen Kapital* (Frankfurt am Main/Vienna, 1968).

4 Janusz Radziejewski, »Roman Rosdolsky: Man, Activist and Scholar,« *Science & Society* 42, no. 2 (1978): 198–210.

5 Georges Labica, »Friedrich Engels—Wissenschaftler und Revolutionär,« in *Zwischen Utopie und Kritik: Friedrich Engels—ein »Klassiker« nach 100 Jahren*, eds. Theodor Bergmann, Mario Keßler, Joost Kircz and Gert Schäfer (Hamburg: VSA, 1996), 18. Engels called himself a »second violone« in a letter to Johann Philipp Becker, October 15, 1884, in: *Marx-Engels-Werke* (Berlin: Dietz, 1956–, henceforth *MEW*), 36: 218.

can communist and a European social critic.«⁶ Thomas Kuczynski in addition called him a »young genius of social science.«⁷ A quarter century after his death, an article in *Der Wahre Jacob* claimed Engels to be the »creator of eternal intellectual works« and, at the same time, a »pioneer of German and international socialism.«⁸ Engels indeed was an intellectual giant, whose personality was so colorful and multifaceted that it is not easy to describe it accurately.⁹ Regardless of this fact, the number of biographies and works about Engels never became legion, as it did in the case of his friend Karl Marx (1818–1883).¹⁰ At the same time, however, Engels's work was much more diverse than the writings of Marx.¹¹ He was, to name just one example here, not only a philosopher and a social scientist, but also a military historian, one who realized the importance of the techno-

6 Jürgen Herres, »Friedrich Engels: Republikanischer Kommunist und europäischer Gesellschaftskritiker,« in *Friedrich Engels: Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa—Begleitband zur Engelsausstellung 2020*, ed. Lars Bluma (Wuppertal: Historisches Zentrum Wuppertal, 2020), 16–29.

7 Thomas Kuczynski, »Die zweite Violine,« in »*Die Natur ist die Probe auf die Dialektik: Friedrich Engels kennenlernen*, eds. Elmar Altwater et al. (Hamburg: VSA Verlag, 2020), 27.

8 A. Conrady, »Friedrich Engels,« *Beilage zum Wahren Jacob*, No. 887, July 30, 1920: 10027.

9 Theodor Bergmann, Mario Kefler, Joost Kirz and Gert Schäfer, »Einleitung,« in *Zwischen Utopie und Kritik: Friedrich Engels—ein »Klassiker« nach 100 Jahren*, eds. Theodor Bergmann, Mario Kefler, Joost Kirz and Gert Schäfer (Hamburg: VSA, 1996), 9; Michael Krätke, »Friedrich Engels, der erste Marxist,« in *Friedrich Engels oder: Wie ein »Cotton-Lord« den Marxismus erfand*, ed. Michael Krätke (Berlin: Dietz, 2020), 58.

10 Some important biographies are Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Springer, 1920–1933); Hans Peter Bleuel, *Friedrich Engels: Bürger und Revolutionär* (Bern/Munich: Scherz, 1981); Tristram Hunt, *Friedrich Engels: Der Mann, der den Marxismus erfand*, transl. by Klaus-Dieter Schmidt, third edition (Berlin: List, 2020).

11 Bergmann, et al. »Einleitung,« 11; Conrady, »Friedrich Engels,« 10027–10028; Marcel van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft und Lebensleistung: Eine biografische Skizze,« in »*Die Natur ist die Probe auf die Dialektik: Friedrich Engels kennenlernen*, eds. Elmar Altwater et al. (Hamburg: VSA Verlag, 2020), 19.

logical development and identified the industrial-military context.¹² Engels was consequently called a »pioneer of the revolutionary-socialist military theory«¹³ as well, and one of his writings, »Po and Rhine« (1859),¹⁴ was initially considered to have been written by a member of the Prussian General Staff.¹⁵ What already becomes clear from this short introduction here is that there is more to Engels than just his friendship with Marx that makes him an important intellectual of the 19th century. Since he intellectually represented »a materialism of conditions and complex mediation, which determined the problems of scientific research for him,«¹⁶ is it not surprising that Engels got interested in other scientific fields during his life as well? While diving into all kinds of knowledge, he developed what Epifanio San Juan, Jr. called a »genius that was organized strategically.« Engels's intelligence »aimed for practice« and therefore influenced all his research.¹⁷ It was, at the same time, very much influenced by his personal life, which is essential to understanding how the young Engels turned into a radical communist.

The German historian Gustav Mayer (1871–1948), in his »ground-breaking work«¹⁸ on Engels's life, emphasized that no biography of any other important leaders of the political workers' movement initially pointed so little to such a historical course.¹⁹ Born on 28 November 1820 in Barmen, nowadays part of Wuppertal, Engels was the eldest son of a cotton manufacturer by the same name and grew up in »a family of culture« in which »nothing pointed to his later

12 Bergmann, et al. »Einleitung,« 11.

13 van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 17.

14 MEW 13:225–268. Online at http://www.mlwerke.de/me/me13/me13_225.htm. Accessed August 20, 2020.

15 Kuczynski, »Die zweite Violine,« 30.

16 Epifanio San Juan, Jr., »Was wir aus Engels's revolutionärer Ästhetik lernen können,« in *Zwischen Utopie und Kritik: Friedrich Engels—ein »Klassiker« nach 100 Jahren*, eds. Theodor Bergmann, Mario Keßler, Joost Kirz and Gert Schäfer (Hamburg: VSA, 1996), 69.

17 Ibid., 70.

18 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 13.

19 Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 4.

revolutionary interest.«²⁰ His early years were determined by »industry, trade, bourgeois duties, and loyalty to the family,«²¹ and while Engels did not face any sorrows and was surrounded by »loving parents [and] indulgent grandparents,«²² the boy would eventually suffer from »the pressure of religious, political, and social conventions.«²³ In 1837, Engels had to leave school, as his father wanted him to become part of the family business, especially since the latter had decided to expand and invest in a joint venture with the Ermen brothers' factory in Manchester.²⁴ Following this decision, the young Engels's life changed, and from then onwards, he had to subordinate his own interests to the family business.²⁵

After a year in the Barmen factory and a first trip to England with his father in the summer of 1838, Engels was sent to Bremen, where he was supposed to continue his business education in a company where he oversaw exports and was responsible for international correspondence. Regardless of the fact that he had to work in a field he very much disliked, Engels, in contrast to Marx, was never melancholic or discouraged.²⁶ He was rather »a radical romantic damned to a life in a trading post.«²⁷ After his time in Bremen, Engels served as a volunteer in the Prussian Guard Artillery Brigade in Berlin.²⁸ While officially serving in the military, the young intellectual used his time in the metropolis to intensify his studies and visited lectures at the univer-

20 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 19.

21 Ibid., 22.

22 Ibid., 19.

23 Narihiko Ito, »Realismus und Utopismus,« in *Zwischen Utopie und Kritik: Friedrich Engels—ein »Klassiker« nach 100 Jahren*, eds. Theodor Bergmann, Mario Keßler, Joost Kircz and Gert Schäfer (Hamburg: VSA, 1996), 23. On Engels's early years in Wuppertal see Reiner Rhexus, *Friedrich Engels im Wuppertal: Auf den Spuren des Denkers, Machers und Revolutionärs im »deutschen Manchester«* (Hamburg: VSA, 2020).

24 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 38; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 8.

25 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 15.

26 Ibid., 19.

27 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 47.

28 Ibid., 64; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 10.

sity, where he got particularly interested in philosophy, especially the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).²⁹ The latter, although he had already been dead for a decade, would always remain an »authority of the history of science«³⁰ for Engels, who considered philosophy to be the root of German communism.

The young intellectual was consequently further radicalized in Berlin. In 1842, when he visited the editorial staff of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne, he met Marx for the first time. However, the beginning of their more intense cooperation had not yet developed.³¹ Instead, Engels spent time in England again—between November 1842 and August 1844—where, working as an assistant for the management at Ermen & Engels, he began to understand the rules of modern capitalism. In his writings, which resemble those of an »elegant novelist,«³² especially since Engels wrote much more lightly and clearly than Marx,³³ he criticized capitalism and its consequences for the working class early on. Already in 1839, Engels had anonymously published some »Letters from Wuppertal«³⁴ in which he had criticized pietism, Calvinism, and authentically described the bad condition of the workers in his home region.³⁵ His time in England and his relationship with Mary Burns (1821–1863), a factory worker, however, further radicalized Engels, and when he returned, he was dedicated to changing the fate of the working class.³⁶ In 1845 he published his first major work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*,³⁷ in

29 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 66; Ito, »Realismus und Utopismus,« 23.

30 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 38.

31 van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 11.

32 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 50.

33 Kuczynski, »Die zweite Violine,« 32.

34 *Telegraph für Deutschland*, nos. 49, 50, 51, 52, 57 and 59 in March and April 1839. Online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1839/03/telegraph.htm>. Accessed Augsut 20, 2020.

35 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 54; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 9.

36 Bergmann, et al. »Einleitung,« 10; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 12.

37 For a more detailed discussion of the work see Regina Roth, »Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England: von Engels im Spiegel ihrer Zeit (1845–1892),« in

which he not only prophetically announced a near revolution³⁸ but also provided an early study of empirical social research. The study is still considered today to be a »pioneer work«³⁹ in this field and »classic of urban sociology.«⁴⁰

In August 1844, after his time in England, he met Marx again for ten days in Paris, where both intensively discussed their views and laid the foundation for their following and intensive cooperation.⁴¹ In Marx, Engels had finally found somebody who understood him and did not have a problem with him being a »private scholar,« having previously been criticized by academics and confronted with their classist views.⁴² Both intellectuals would be further influenced by historical events. While Engels had predicted a revolution in the early 1840s that would happen in accordance with a theoretical model in relation to the French Revolution of 1789,⁴³ the reality would be a disappointment and demand some reflections about revolutionary processes as such.⁴⁴ Engels had been actively involved in the revolution, first as a journalist and then as a barricade fighter, but he

Friedrich Engels: Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa—Begleitband zur Engelsausstellung 2020, ed. Lars Bluma (Wuppertal: Historisches Zentrum Wuppertal, 2020), 84–99.

38 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 30.

39 van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 16.

40 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 32.

41 van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 13.

42 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 19 and 23. That classism is still a problem in academia is discussed in some recent publications: Riccardo Altieri and Bernd Hüttner, eds. *Klassismus und Wissenschaft. Erfahrungsberichte und Bewältigungsstrategien* (Marburg: BdWi-Verlag, 2020) and Julia Reuter, Markus Gamper, Christina Möller and Frerk Blome, eds. *Vom Arbeiterkind zur Professur: Sozialer Aufstieg in der Wissenschaft. Autobiographische Notizen und soziobiographische Analysen* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2020).

43 Ito, »Realismus und Utopismus,« 25.

44 For Engels's evaluation of the Revolution of 1848, see Friedrich Engels, »Das Jahr 1848 war das Jahr der Enttäuschung, 17.III.[1849],« IISH, Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Papers, ARCH00860, H_8.

could not change its historical course and had to witness its failure.⁴⁵ The experience would, however, influence the further work of Marx and Engels, who tried to scientifically prepare another revolution in the future while their politics were determined by a »revolutionary reservation« (*Revolutionsvorbehalt*).⁴⁶ Both consequently conceptualized the process of a revolution of the 19th century in their work, and they made it clear that it would be important to have access to the full power of a purposeful party *and* an enlightened mass of the people to really secure the success of a future revolution.⁴⁷ Engels, who considered history to be a process without any final or absolute truth, emphasized the role of crises in awakening the revolutionary potential of a particular time.⁴⁸ Engels's and Marx's reflections about revolutions, nevertheless, were consequently products of their own experiences of the 1840s and must be considered as such when taken into consideration today.⁴⁹

What is important to understand is that Engels already realized in the 1840s that a revolution was like an inevitable natural event, forced into being by pressure from suppressed people who demanded change. It could therefore not be made or planned by a small minority—as such revolutions would fail like the revolutions of 1848/49—but was the expression of a popular demand by the masses.⁵⁰ The failure of the revolution also meant an end for Engels's dream to leave the business world and to help with creating a new, better world.⁵¹ Due to his

45 Kuczynski, »Die zweite Violine,« 28; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 16.

46 Georg Fülberth, *Friedrich Engels* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2018), 68.

47 *Ibid.*, 69.

48 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 73; Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 28.

49 Marjan Britovšek, »Die slawischen Nationalbewegungen und die Perspektiven der Revolution,« in *Zwischen Utopie und Kritik: Friedrich Engels—ein »Klassiker« nach 100 Jahren*, eds. Theodor Bergmann, Mario Keßler, Joost Kircz and Gert Schäfer (Hamburg: VSA, 1996), 140.

50 Conrady, »Friedrich Engels,« 10028.

51 Kuczynski, »Die zweite Violine,« 28; Detlef Vonde, *Auf den Barrikaden: Friedrich Engels und die »gescheiterte Revolution« von 1848/49* (Wuppertal: Köndgen, 2019), 7–8.

active role, he was forced into exile, »expatriated by the bourgeois revolution.«⁵² In the following years, Engels tried to better understand what had happened in 1848 and therefore studied historical cases as well. His work on *The Peasant War in Germany* (1850)⁵³ was »a small but nice attempt to interpret the central European peasant rebellions of the 16th century in a materialist way.«⁵⁴ Regardless of these approaches and the wish to understand revolutions much better, Engels, like Marx as well, was not in favor of so-called revolutionaries by profession.⁵⁵ In their works, the two men rather addressed questions of their times, which is why German political scientist Georg Fülberth correctly called them »operative intellectuals.«⁵⁶ Regardless of his many works, while in exile, Engels also had to work for the company of his father, which he could not leave before 1869 due to financial necessities; consequently, until then, he had to live a double life as a businessman and an intellectual.⁵⁷ However, between 1870 and 1895, he could focus on the latter.⁵⁸ Regardless of his personal condition, Engels worked relentlessly to develop a socialist science, although he remained a passionate utopian at the same time.⁵⁹ He remained a believer in revolution as the only way to achieve the final liberation of mankind, and in 1892 assumed that the socialist party would be in

52 Ibid., 8.

53 Friedrich Engels, »The Peasant War in Germany« (1850). Accessed August 20, 2020. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/peasant-war-germany/index.htm>.

54 van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 18.

55 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 59.

56 Fülberth, *Friedrich Engels*, 12.

57 Paul Lafargue, »Persönliche Erinnerungen,« in *Friedrich Engels oder: Wie ein »Cotton-Lord« den Marxismus erfand*, ed. Michael Krätke (Berlin: Dietz, 2020), 185; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 18. Engels had saved sufficient money for his later life, and when he died his fortune still counted for more than 30,000 Pounds (approximately more than 4 million Euro today).

58 Georg Fülberth, »Endlich angekommen: Friedrich Engels's Londoner Jahre 1870–1895,« in *Friedrich Engels: Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa—Begleitband zur Engelsausstellung 2020*, ed. Lars Bluma (Wuppertal: Historisches Zentrum Wuppertal, 2020), 182–195.

59 Ito, »Realismus und Utopismus,« 32.

power in the next decade.⁶⁰ At the same time, however, he declared a year later that this was not *the* final goal for German socialism, as one would rather have to consider the socialists to be revolutionaries who were not intending to dictate the future of human society but wanted to achieve freedom for the masses so that they could decide this for themselves.⁶¹

The impact of the political ideas of Friedrich Engels is, at the same time, important to understand the development of his friend Karl Marx,⁶² as it was their friendship⁶³ and intellectual cooperation that would be responsible for a new interpretation of human history and progress alike. The lives and works of the two friends eventually became so interwoven that it is quite challenging to separate them.⁶⁴ However, Engels not only supported Marx intellectually, he also supported the latter and his family financially, and in 1851 even accepted fatherhood for the child Marx had had with Helene Demuth, the family's maid, and thereby saved Marx's marriage.⁶⁵ With regard to their intellectual cooperation,⁶⁶ Engels played an equally important role, as both only seemed to accept each other as critics of their own

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- 60 Friedrich Engels, »Interview mit dem Korrespondenten der Zeitung *L'Éclair* am 1. April 1892,« in *Friedrich Engels oder: Wie ein »Cotton-Lord« den Marxismus erfand*, ed. Michael Krätke (Berlin: Dietz, 2020), 158.
- 61 Friedrich Engels, »Interview mit dem Korrespondenten der Zeitung *Le Figaro* am 8. Mai 1893,« in *Friedrich Engels oder: Wie ein »Cotton-Lord« den Marxismus erfand*, ed. Michael Krätke (Berlin: Dietz, 2020), 164.
- 62 Eike Kopf, »Marx ohne Engels—das wäre kaum eine halbe Sache geworden,« in »*Die Natur ist die Probe auf die Dialektik: Friedrich Engels kennenlernen*, eds. Elmar Altvater et al. (Hamburg: VSA Verlag, 2020), 69–89.
- 63 On the friendship of the two men see Jürgen Herres, *Marx und Engels: Porträt einer intellektuellen Freundschaft* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2018).
- 64 Lafargue, »Persönliche Erinnerungen,« 187.
- 65 Kuczynski, »Die zweite Violine,« 29; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 17.
- 66 Georg Fülberth, »Wie zwei ein Compagniegeschäft betrieben: Friedrich Engels's Beitrag zum Werk von Karl Marx,« in »*Die Natur ist die Probe auf die Dialektik: Friedrich Engels kennenlernen*, eds. Elmar Altvater et al. (Hamburg: VSA Verlag, 2020), 54–68.

works,⁶⁷ and as German political scientist Michael Krätke emphasized, »Both were arrogant, each in his own way, but together they could be obnoxious.«⁶⁸ Regardless of Engels's intellectual capacity and expertise in many different fields,⁶⁹ which often even surpassed Marx, the former would never achieve similar authority.⁷⁰ In the early 1850s, Engels wrote all of their works on military issues and foreign affairs, including the English articles Marx would publish under his own name in the *New York Daily Tribune*.⁷¹

It is safe to say, to quote Michael Krätke once more, »that there would not have been Marxism without Engels,«⁷² as the latter was the first who sought, especially after his friend's death, to make Marx's writings known to a wider public. It was probably the humbleness of Engels—who always would refer to himself as the second fiddle, a talent, and to Marx as a genius—that made the rise of Marx and his legacy possible. The two men might have appeared like an »inseparable duo,«⁷³ yet Engels, often intentionally, tended to stand in the shadow of his friend.⁷⁴ Regardless of his humbleness, Engels was important for Marx in many ways. He, according to Krätke, was a »guide, stimulator, a source of ideas, a thought leader and a critic«⁷⁵ alike and pretty heavily influenced the latter's economic works.⁷⁶ It was also Engels who actually repeatedly insisted that Marx publish his works while providing his friend with the necessary time and financial security to do so.⁷⁷ Engels would help Marx, according to the latter's own statement, at any time

67 Lafargue, »Persönliche Erinnerungen,« 189.

68 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 13.

69 Lafargue, »Persönliche Erinnerungen,« 191.

70 Ibid., 187–188.

71 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 9.

72 Ibid., 10.

73 Ibid., 11.

74 Ibid., 12.

75 Ibid., 25.

76 Conrady, »Friedrich Engels,« 10027; Herres, *Marx und Engels*, 46; Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 29.

77 Conrady, »Friedrich Engels,« 10027; Fülberth, *Friedrich Engels*, 69.

and in any condition.⁷⁸ This support was essential for Marx's works and, therefore, one cannot omit the Engelsian influence when talking about these important writings of the 19th century. In addition, in the years after Marx's death, Engels worked relentlessly for the Marxian legacy and, after 1883, he became the spiritual head of international socialism.⁷⁹ He edited volumes 2 and 3 of *Capital*, an undertaking for which he was criticized because some people argued that he had not only changed but falsified parts of the work.⁸⁰ Engels had attempted to make the work more appealing to the masses, although he could not complete it either, and *Capital* remained »an incomplete masterpiece.«⁸¹ He might have therefore been the »first Marxist,« although he did not consider it to be an orthodoxy but rather a work in progress that needed to be reframed according to the historical and existent circumstances.⁸²

Marxism was not a doctrine for Marx and Engels, but rather

1. a historical-materialist analysis of economy and class relations,
2. a political theory based on this analysis, and
3. a political practice that demands the end of a capitalist society.⁸³

It is hard to understand this by a divided analysis of the works of Marx and Engels, which must rather be seen as a compendium in which the single works relate to each other. This, however, should also not deny some kind of intellectual individualism, especially since too often the two men were pressed into an almost religious duality.⁸⁴ There were also attempts to divide them, even to antagonize them. Marx was considered the universal thinker, and Engels the one responsible for

78 *MEW* 28:596.

79 Labica, »Friedrich Engels,« 17–19.

80 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 39–41; van der Linden, »Friedrich Engels's Herkunft,« 23–24.

81 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 43.

82 Bergmann, et al. »Einleitung,« 12; Fülberth, *Friedrich Engels*, 8; Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 54–56.

83 Fülberth, *Friedrich Engels*, 9.

84 Bergmann, et al. »Einleitung,« 9; Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 13.

the flattening of his friend's ideas that could then be corrupted by totalitarian systems, e. g. Stalinism.⁸⁵

In contrast to such arguments, it is important to understand Engels as an intellectual who tried to practically apply his thoughts to change society.⁸⁶ His experiences in English factories, his participation in the Revolution of 1848, and his almost endless hunger for knowledge helped to forge his and Marx's intellectual work. He must therefore be considered an equal to Marx, and nothing less. The negative or anti-Engelsian attitude does not take into account that Engels, despite being in steady contact with the SPD leadership since the 1880s, i. e. August Bebel (1840–1913) or Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932), never gave up his belief in a better future, which could only be achieved by a revolution of the masses.⁸⁷ It is this belief, next to his many works that seem to have never lost their actuality, that makes Engels important for the 21st century as well.

While Marx is—also academically—*en vogue* again since criticisms of global hyper-capitalism have gained ground,⁸⁸ especially during the COVID-19 crisis, which due to its impact threatens the further existence of capitalism as such, Engels has still not received the necessary attention. Those in circles on the left, especially those who call themselves Marxists today, still tend to make him responsible for the failures of regimes that used supposedly Marxist doctrines to legitimize their rule⁸⁹ and use Engelsism as a derogative term.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the 200th birthday of Engels stimulated some interest,

85 Bergmann, et al. »Einleitung,« 10.

86 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 16.

87 Fülberth, *Friedrich Engels*, 72. For Engels's relation with and impact on German Social Democracy also see Detlef Lehnert and Christina Morina, eds. *Friedrich Engels und die Sozialdemokratie: Werke und Wirkungen eines Europäers* (Berlin: Metropol, 2020).

88 Especially the 200th birthday of Marx in 2018 stimulated some public and academic interest again. For one of the recent surveys on problems and thoughts related to his legacy see Martin Endreß and Christian Jansen, eds. *Karl Marx im 21. Jahrhundert: Bilanz und Perspektiven* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2020).

89 Hunt, *Friedrich Engels*, 8; Labica, »Friedrich Engels,« 20.

90 Krätke, »Friedrich Engels,« 58.

especially in Wuppertal, where many events commemorated his legacy.⁹¹ Regardless of such events, it is more than timely to bring Engels back into the spotlight and to re-read his writings, especially since they offer so many insights into a variety of problems our society still struggles with and will have to deal with in the 21st century. It is time to draw him out of Marx's shadow⁹² and to emphasize his actuality, e. g. with regard to questions of housing,⁹³ family theory,⁹⁴ or gender-related discussions.⁹⁵ As was already argued 25 years after his death, Engels »must not be a simple name for the current generation,« but must become a »role model and teacher.«⁹⁶ instead. Engels never feared to learn something new or to be critical with regard to his own views either.⁹⁷ We should be as critical and try to learn from Engels's experiences in the 19th century for our own benefit in the 21st century. There is much to learn, and, if applied, the knowledge Engels provides us with might be decisive for formulating our own revolutionary dream that can become a reality if the global masses share it.

91 Rainer Lucas, Reinhard Pfriem and Hans-Dieter Westhoff, »Einleitung der Herausgeber,« in *Arbeiten am Widerspruch: Friedrich Engels zum 200. Geburtstag*, eds. Rainer Lucas, Reinhard Pfriem and Hans-Dieter Westhoff (Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 2020), 13.

92 Ibid., 14.

93 Burghard Flieger, »Engels's Stellungnahme zur Wohnungsfrage: Anstöße für zukunftsfähige wohnungsbaugenossenschaftliche Konzepte?« in *Arbeiten am Widerspruch: Friedrich Engels zum 200. Geburtstag*, eds. Rainer Lucas, Reinhard Pfriem and Hans-Dieter Westhoff (Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 2020), 335. An essential text by Engels related to this question is Friedrich Engels, »Zur Wohnungsfrage,« in *MEW* 18, 5: 209–287.

94 Gisela Notz, »Auseinandersetzung mit Friedrich Engels's ›Ursprung der Familie ...: ... und was er uns heute noch zu sagen hat,« in *Arbeiten am Widerspruch: Friedrich Engels zum 200. Geburtstag*, eds. Rainer Lucas, Reinhard Pfriem and Hans-Dieter Westhoff (Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 2020), 398–404.

95 Adelheid Biesecker, Frigga Haug und Uta von Winterfeld, »Nachdenken mit Friedrich Engels: Über Geschlechterverhältnisse und gesellschaftliche Naturverhältnisse,« in *Arbeiten am Widerspruch: Friedrich Engels zum 200. Geburtstag*, eds. Rainer Lucas, Reinhard Pfriem and Hans-Dieter Westhoff (Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 2020), 417–438.

96 Conrady, »Friedrich Engels,« 10027.

97 Labica, »Friedrich Engels,« 21.