

FREDERICK ENGELS
PAUL AND LAURA LAFARGUE

CORRESPONDENCE

VOLUME

2

1887-1890

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Editorial notes follow the French edition, except for certain notes found unnecessary for the English reader.

Footnotes by the translator are marked *Tr.*

CONTENTS

Page

1887

211. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris, Jan. 28, 1887	17
212. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [Feb. 1], 1887	19
213. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Feb. 7, 1887	22
214. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, Feb. 24, 1887	24
215. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, March 10, 1887	27
216. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [March 16, 1887]	28
217. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, March 21, 1887	29
218. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris, Apr. 11, 1887	32
219. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris, Apr. 13, 1887	32
220. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [Apr. 24, 1887]	34
221. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, Apr. 26, 1887	37
222. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 11, 1887	40
223. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, May 21, 1887	42

	<i>Page</i>
224. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, June 7, 1887	44
225. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, June 11, 1887	47
226. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 11, 1887	48
227. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, July 15, 1887	50
228. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 20, 1887	51
229. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July [22], 1887	51
230. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels at East- bourne, July 28, 1887	54
231. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, Aug. 9, 1887	55
232. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels at East- bourne, Aug. 10, 1887	58
233. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels at East- bourne, Aug. 16, 1887	60
234. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Aug. 24, 1887	61
235. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, Oct. 11, 1887	62
236. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris [end of Oct. 1887]	65
237. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [beginning of] Nov. 1887	66
238. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, Nov. 12, 1887	69
239. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris, Nov. 22, 1887	72
240. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 25, 1887	72
241. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 27, 1887	75
242. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [Dec. 5, 1887]	77

	<i>Page</i>
243. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris, Dec. 5, 1887	80
244. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue in Paris, Dec. 24, 1887	81
245. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue in Paris, Dec. 29, 1887	82

1888

246. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Jan. 16, 1888	86
247. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Jan. 25, 1888	89
248. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels, Feb. 5, 1888	90
249. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Per- reux, Feb. 7, 1888	92
250. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [about Feb. 8, 1888]	94
251. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Per- reux, Feb. 25, 1888	96
252. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Feb. 25, 1888	98
253. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Feb. 29, 1888	101
254. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, March 18, 1888	104
255. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Per- reux, March 19, 1888	106
256. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, March 21, 1888	109
257. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 8, 1888	111
258. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 13, 1888	113
259. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 24, 1888	116
260. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 27, 1888	118

	<i>Page</i>
261. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 9, 1888	120
262. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [May 12, 1888]	123
263. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 14, 1888	126
264. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [May 22, 1888]	127
265. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 27, 1888	127
266. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, June 3, 1888	130
267. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 5, 1888	133
268. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 17, 1888	135
269. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 22, 1888	137
270. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 26, 1888	138
271. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 6, 1888	139
272. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 15, 1888	140
273. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, [July 18, 1888]	143
274. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 23, 1888	144
275. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 25, 1888	146
276. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 30, 1888	148
277. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 31, 1888	149
278. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Aug. 3, 1888	150
279. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Aug. 6, 1888	151

280. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Aug. 8, 1888	152
281. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 9, 1888	155
282. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Oct. 13, 1888	157
283. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 15, 1888	159
284. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 5, 1888	161
285. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 9, 1888	162
286. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Nov. 24, 1888	164
287. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 24, 1888	165
288. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 27, 1888	168
289. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 6, 1888	171
290. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 19, 1888	174
291. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 21, 1888	175
292. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 27, 1888	177

1889

293. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Jan. 2, 1889	180
294. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Jan. 2, 1889	183
295. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Jan. 3, 1889	186
296. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Jan. 14, 1889	187
297. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, [Jan. 15, 1889]	189

	<i>Page</i>
298. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Feb. 1, 1889	190
299. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Feb. 4, 1889	192
300. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Feb. 11, 1889	195
301. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, March 5, 1889	197
302. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, March 12, 1889	200
303. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, March 21, 1889	202
304. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, March 23, 1889	204
305. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, March 23, 1889	207
306. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, March 25, 1889	209
307. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, March 27, 1889	211
308. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Apr. 1, 1889	214
309. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Apr. 10, 1889	216
310. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 14, 1889	220
311. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 16, 1889	222
312. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Apr. 26, 1889	224
313. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 1, 1889	225
314. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 2, 1889	227
315. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 3, 1889	231
316. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 6, 1889	233

317. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 7, 1889	236
318. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 11, 1889	239
319. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 12, 1889	243
320. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 14, 1889	245
321. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 14, 1889	247
322. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 16, 1889	250
322a. Draft of the Circular Convening the 1889 Congress with Engels' Annotations	252
323. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 17, 1889	253
324. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 20, 1889	255
325. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [May 20, 1889]	257
326. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 24, 1889	259
327. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 25, 1889	262
328. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 26, 1889	263
329. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 27, 1889	265
330. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 30, 1889	267
331. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 2, 1889	269
332. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [June 4, 1889]	270
333. Paul Lafargue to the Leading Committee of the Danish Social-Democratic Party, June 4, 1889	271

	<i>Page</i>
334. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 10, 1889	273
335. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, June 11, 1889	275
336. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, June 15, 1889	278
337. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, June 16, 1889	280
338. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, June 28, 1889	281
339. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 2, 1889	285
340. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 5, 1889	287
341. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 8, 1889	290
342. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 11, 1889	291
343. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 23, 1889	293
344. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 29, 1889	295
345. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, July 30, 1889	297
345a. G. Cluseret to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 28, 1889	299
346. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Aug. 4, 1889	299
347. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Aug. 27, 1889	301
348. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 1, 1889	305
349. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels at East- bourne [Sept. 3, 1889]	308
350. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 7, 1889	310
351. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 9, 1889	311

	<i>Page</i>
352. Paul Lafargue to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 9, 1889	313
353. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 12, 1889	314
354. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 25, 1889	315
355. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Oct. 3, 1889	318
356. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 7, 1889	322
357. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Oct. 8, 1889	324
358. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 11, 1889	328
359. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Oct. 17, 1889	329
360. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Oct. 29, 1889	331
361. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 4, 1889	334
362. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [Nov. 14, 1889]	337
363. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Nov. 16, 1889	339
364. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Nov. 16, 1889	341
365. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 17, 1889	344
366. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Nov. 18, 1889	346
367. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [end of Nov. 1889]	347
368. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 13, 1889	348
369. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 22, 1889	350

	<i>Page</i>
370. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London [Dec. 24, 1889]	352
371. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, New Year's Eve/89	352

1890

372. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Jan. 8, 1890	355
373. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels, Jan. 10, 1890	358
374. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Jan. 17, 1890	360
375. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Feb. 14, 1890	361
376. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Feb. 26, 1890	363
377. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, March 7, 1890	366
378. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Apr. 16, 1890	369
379. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, May 1, 1890	374
380. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, May 10, 1890	375
381. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 4, 1890	378
382. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, July 30, 1890	379
383. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Aug. 4, 1890	380
384. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Aug. 24, 1890	383
385. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Aug. 27, 1890	385
386. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels at Folkestone, Aug. 31, 1890	388

387. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 15, 1890	390
388. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 16, 1890	392
389. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 19, 1890	394
390. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 22, 1890	395
391. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 24, 1890	397
392. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 25, 1890	399
393. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 25, 1890	400
394. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Sept. 26, 1890	402
395. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Sept. 28, 1890	403
396. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 3, 1890	405
397. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 16, 1890	406
398. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Oct. 19, 1890	409
399. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 23, 1890	412
400. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 26, 1890	414
401. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Oct. 28, 1890	416
402. Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue at Le Perreux, Nov. 2, 1890	417
403. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Nov. 19, 1890	419
404. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Dec. 1, 1890	421
405. Frederick Engels to the National Council of the French Workers' Party	423

	<i>Page</i>
406. Frederick Engels to Edouard Vaillant, Dec. 5, 1890	424
407. Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue at Le Perreux, Dec. 17, 1890	425
408. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 19, 1890	428
409. Laura Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 20, 1890	431
410. Paul Lafargue to Frederick Engels in London, Dec. 22, 1890	433

A P P E N D I X

International Socialist Working Men's Congress, 14th to 21st July, Paris, 1889. Report of the Organising Commission	436
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1887

211. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS¹

London, January 28th, 1887

My dear Lafargue,

My eye is a little better at last, but not yet well enough to enable me to polish off the mass of work and correspondence which has accumulated in the meantime. I can write only by daylight and not all the time, but I can at least read for the best part of the evening.

If the Parisians are feeling bellicose at the present time they would do better to turn their anger against Russia, which has used them to pull her chestnuts out of the fire and now leaves them with their fingers burnt. Don't they see that it is Russia which, through the Paris newspapers in their pay, of which the *Débats* appears to be the most "abandoned," has started them on these revanchist bragging with the sole aim of making Bismarck capitulate to the Czar?² And now she has got what she wanted; Bismarck has made his peace with Russia, sacrificed Austria,

¹ This letter was published in *Le Populaire de Paris* of Monday, November 29th, 1920. It is reprinted in the Russian edition of the *Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 28, pp. 77-79), where it is erroneously dated 1889.

² Engels is referring here to the anti-German campaign which had developed in France at the end of 1886 and the beginning of 1887 and which was to take the form of Boulangism a few months later.

and Russia has sacrificed the Paris ninnies to Bismarck. The Russian alliance has its points!

However, I do not believe that Bismarck *wants* a war, which would become European as soon as entered upon. Once France and Germany are at grips—and it would be a hard struggle and rather long¹—the Czar, even if he didn't want to, would be *forced* to advance on the Balkans: Austro-Russian War.

From that moment Bismarck would be at the mercy of the hazards of the unforeseen, and I do not believe he is so stupid as to provoke such a situation in cold blood, but the Russian bureau in Paris will keep up its activities; it is in Russia's interests to involve France and Germany in a war, in which case there will remain only Austria and at the most England for her to fight, which means, in the opinion of the Russian chauvins who despise both Austria and England, a free hand for Russia in the East. That's where the danger lies. If Messrs. Cyon & Co. succeed in pushing France into this war, they will simply be cutting one another's throats for the benefit of the Czar and for the permanence of despotism in Russia.

Our chances in the German elections² are capital, I think we shall get 700,000 votes altogether, possibly more. But as for the majority in the new Reichstag, you have to reckon with the German philistine who is everything of the most villainous.

.
As soon as my hands are a little free I shall write to Laura. In the meantime, Nim wants to know if she has spoken to Longuet and what was his reply.

La Justice received a copy of the English *Capital*; if Longuet has taken it that will save us the copy which we

¹ The underscoring in this and all subsequent cases indicates that the word or words in question were originally written in English.—*Tr.*

² The Reichstag having been dissolved, new elections were to be held on February 21st.

had for him. Could you find out? As for the other copies which Sonnenschein was to have sent, we know nothing positive so far, he is jibbing.

Ever yours,
F. E.

212. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

[Febr. 1st 1887] Paris

My dear General,

By way of change, after much discussing of foreign wars, you may like to hear a little about our internal troubles here. The battlefield is the office of the *Cri du peuple*, the belligerents are Séverine and Labruyère on the one side and the editorial staff on the other. After a long series of drawn battles, a pitched battle has just been fought ending in the retreat of the editors, Séverine remaining mistress of the field.

This last quarrel broke out in the following wise. Séverine had engaged a new writer, one Bienvenu of the *Tintamarre*, and she wanted his entry to be a triumphal one and his maiden article to be a leader. The fellow's article was an idiotic one on the subject of the war with Germany and Guesde and Co. objected to its insertion. Séverine very reluctantly gave in and there was a bit of a truce. Soon after this comes the case of the anarchist thief, Duval,¹ and Sé-

* This and all subsequent letters marked * were originally written in English.—Tr.

¹ The anarchist Duval had been condemned to death for burglary followed by resistance to the police. This had given rise to a whole campaign vindicating Duval who was alleged to have committed robbery by way of propaganda for anarchism. The editorial of *Le Cri du peuple* dated January 29th, 1887, signed Albert Goullé, repudiated the "Duval type of enterprise." The following day's issue carried an editorial by Séverine which virtually exonerated robbery by the poor and ended as follows: "Let me make myself clear, one must give up everything—honour, reputation, prejudices, scruples—to follow the

verine writes an article in defence and in praise of him and calls on the editors to openly make common cause with him. This the editors not only emphatically refuse to do, but Deville appends to a communication from an anarchist group a statement to the effect that the *Cri du peuple* is as much opposed to robbery on the part of the anarchists as on that of the capitalists.¹ In answer to this piece of "bowldness," Séverine sends an ultimatum that Deville must decamp, whereupon the editors retort that not Deville but that Labruyère must take himself off. Of course Labruyère's *mise à la retraite*² is out of the question; he will continue to perform his customary functions while Guesde, Deville, etc., give up their editorship of the *Cri*³ and found a rival paper of their own—*La Voix du peuple*.⁴ They have got 1,000 £ in hand to start with.—All sorts of rumours are afloat concerning Labruyère who is said to be paid by the police for rendering his amorous services to Sé-

people to the sewers, to the pillory. At all times on the side of the poor—despite their mistakes, despite their faults, despite their crimes!"

¹ It appears in fact that Deville's note preceded the article by Séverine. *Le Cri du peuple* of January 28th carried on p. 3, under the heading "People's Forum," a statement from the anarchists of "The Batignolles Panther" group defending Duval's action. A blank following the statement obviously corresponds with some item of which the fount had been destroyed. None of the subsequent issues carried any statement from the anarchists.

² Retirement.—*Tr.*

³ The issue dated January 31st carried another editorial by J. Guesde, "Pro Domo," in which he said: "Socialists, we pursue and can pursue only one thing: the ending of robbery, of all the robberies which capitalist property constitutes and engenders." The editorial of February 1st reported the split and announced that F. Pyat, H. Brissac, J. Labusquière, V. Marouck, etc., had joined the editorial staff.

⁴ In her letter Laura erroneously calls it *La Voix du peuple*. The first number appeared on February 2nd, 1887, and carried the names of the former editorial committee of *Le Cri du peuple*. The editorial explains the reasons why the editors had resigned from *Le Cri du peuple* and started *La Voix du peuple*.

verine.¹ Anyway, the attitude of the *Cri* with regard to the police has undergone a singular change of late. Orders have been given that no further attacks are to be made on *Gragnon*, the prefect; also that *Boulanger* is to be treated with respect.

Guebhard, the proprietor, looks on, all this while, with perfect equanimity and simply says: "Ce Labruyère me gagne de l'argent."² To make money is indeed the object both of Labruyère and of Guebhard: they now purpose to denounce all such financiers as do not choose to come to terms with them and to levy blackmail on a grand scale. —The ultimate success of the *Voix du peuple* is of course doubtful.

We have seen Longuet and the children. The latter were all well and charming, Longuet was very amiable and gave us a very good dinner. To my great surprise he told us that he means to send us a bed, and one or other of the little ones on a visit to us, very shortly. I spoke to him again on the subject of Freddy. He renewed his former promises to send him something as soon as possible and explained that it had been out of his power to do so before this owing to the state of affairs existing "dans l'administration de la justice."³

Good-bye, my dear General, and give our loves to Nim and all friends.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

Johnny was quite beside himself with "shoy" on getting his watch, but if the watch manages to sustain his demonstrations of delight, it must have a devilish good constitution.

¹ Laura is reflecting a press campaign being conducted by *L'Écho de Paris*.

² That Labruyère makes money for me.—*Tr.*

³ (In the administration of justice.—*Tr.*) This obviously refers to Clemenceau's journal (*La Justice*) of which Longuet was one of the editors.

213. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

February 7th 87/Paris

My dear General,

The luckless *Voie du peuple* has already gone the way of its elder brothers in misfortune—*L'Égalité* and *Le Citoyen*.¹ Our bourgeois and our Broussistes triumph. But the Possibilists may live to laugh on the wrong side of the mouth yet, for this latest step of theirs is a risky one and is considered as such by the leaders of the band.² The sensation created by the split here was enormous; both *Cri* and *Voie* sold like mad for a day or two and even after the first excitement had cooled a little, the *Voie* sold very well. But money-lenders continued to fight shy of the paper and the unfortunate editors not only have no funds for a journal but find themselves without the necessary cash for their own daily bread and butter. With the exception of Deville and Goullé they all live from hand to mouth and cannot afford to work for nothing.

Guesde, when Paul last saw him, was as sanguine of success as ever and there does appear to be some chance of the paper's being raised to life again.

Meanwhile the *Cri* will be bought and read as heretofore, the quality of the leading articles having, as you say, very little to do with the success of it. That success has all along been owing to all sorts of dodges and devices due to the inventive powers of Séverine. The half-dozen daily feuilletons which so delightfully muddle the readers' brains, the police news and the illustrated scenes of murders and executions, the "portraits de 'filles', de prêtres et d'anar-

¹ In No. 7 (February 8th, 1887) the editors informed their readers that *La Voie du peuple* would suspend publication for the time being to cope with material difficulties. No. 8 was in fact dated February 18th and the paper continued to come out until the 35th number (March 17th, 1887).

² The editing of *Le Cri du peuple* was virtually in the hands of the Possibilists, Dumay, Marouck, etc.

chistes,"¹—these it is that have made the *Cri* dear to the "people." But if Guesde's articles did comparatively little towards the success of this cheap and nasty daily, Labusquière's "incapacité notoire"² will certainly not do more, so that, since Vallès and Victor Hugo cannot be expected to do their dying over again, nor Watrins³ be executed daily and since Duc Quercy's pistol⁴—"le plus beau jour de sa vie"⁵—rusts ingloriously, the *Cri* is likely to come to grief if Séverine slackens in her contrivances—as she appears to do. And then Guebhard will be for having a few pounds of flesh out of Marouck and Félix Pyat.

This same Dr. Guebhard who is not only the proprietor of the *Cri*—including its directress—but is a professor of chemistry into the bargain, was remonstrated with the other day by his colleagues on the subject of his connection with the *Cri* and the singular goings on of his wife; he simply told them by way of explanation that he had put 300,000 francs into the paper and he'd be damned but he would win them back again. To this clincher his bourgeois friends had nothing at all to reply and immediately changed the subject. And Dr. Guebhard goes on professing in peace.

Maupassant had no need to go farther than his own *Gil Blas*⁶ for his Bel-Ami whose prototype he found there in Baron de Vaux. But fiction—when it is not Zola's—is cleaner than truth and Bel-Ami is a fool to Labruyère.

Our best thanks for your long letter and for cheque.

¹ Portraits of wenches, priests, and anarchists.—*Tr.*

² Notorious incapacity.—*Tr.*

³ Mining engineer in Decazeville who was thrown out of a window by the strikers in January 1886. (See Letter No. 182 of March 15th, 1886, Vol. I, p. 339.)

⁴ An allusion to the police provocation at the offices of *Le Cri du peuple* on January 7th, 1885. (See Letter No. 138 of January 18th, 1885, Vol. I, p. 258.)

⁵ The finest day of his life.—*Tr.*

⁶ Maupassant was a contributor to *Gil Blas*.

Will you please tell Tussy that Lavroff fidgets about his historical review and ask her to send me the January number. I suppose she received the P.O. order he sent her.

Paul left for Bordeaux on Saturday in Guesde's stead and at a few hours' notice. I am without news from him but expect him tomorrow.

Very glad to hear that Pumps is getting better. Love to her and to you all from

Your affectionate,

LAURA

Not a word from Longuet.

214. FREDERICK ENGELS TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 24th Febr. 1887

My dear Laura,

The Révolution en Allemagne—Prise de Berlin¹—does not exactly come off in the way depicted in the *Way of the People*. The *Voie du peuple* on the other side of the Vosges is not exactly along the Boulevards of beautiful Paris. Not to speak of their mistakes about seats lost and gained, etc., the success of our German friends lies in another direction than where they seek it. First of all, we have so far lost seats and not gained any, but that, though a fact, counts for nothing. The decisive fact is that, while we are very slowly losing ground in the Saxon districts of *Handweaving* (which is dying out) and which were our original strongholds, we are gaining far more rapidly not only in the large towns but in all rural industrial districts. I have the exact figures of 43 districts with one deputy each, including Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Munich, Leipzig,

¹ *La Voie du peuple* of February 24th, 1887, carried a six-column headline: "The Revolution in Germany. The Taking of Berlin." The editorial, under the heading "Victory," was devoted to the success of the Social-Democrats in the Reichstag elections of February 21st.

Hanover, Magdeburg, Elberfeld, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Nürnberg, Stuttgart, Frankfort, etc., mostly large towns of course.

In these we had in all votes	408,360
in the same places in 1884	<u>321,876</u>
Gained	86,484

or 27 per cent on the votes of 1884, in 3 years; and these include 5 districts in which we lost votes. In a day or two I shall have more data to extend my list which comprises all districts the figures of which I know. Berlin has come out splendidly and I begin to have some confidence in that otherwise ridiculous town.

The pressure brought to bear on our people was tremendous. Not even public proclamation of their candidates was allowed. Every one who took a part in the election by distributing bulletins de vote¹ etc., was noted—which means expulsion in the numerous towns under state of siege.² Wherever possible, the manufacturers conducted them to the poll and saw that they voted for Bismarck unless they wanted immediate discharge from work. And all this will be repeated and increased on the day of ballottage where we expect to secure most of our seats.

Singer is the Lockroy³—le premier élu de l'Allemagne.⁴ He had 32,227 votes, which no other member can boast of; Bebel is in for Hamburg, Liebknecht out for Offenburg; had he had 50 more votes, he would have been in the ballot at Bremen and then sure of election. But there are sure to be double elections so that he will not want the place whereon to rest his hind quarters. The exact number of ballots in

¹ Polling cards.—*Tr.*

² Since 1878 the anti-socialist law (*Sozialistengesetz*) had been in force proscribing the Social-Democratic Party's organisations and press. By this Act a limited state of martial law was instituted which allowed the banning of all meetings and the expulsion from the town of any suspected person.

³ In the 1885 elections Lockroy had headed the poll in the Seine Division with 272,850 votes.

⁴ The top candidate in Germany.—*Tr.*

which we are interested I do not know; 16 at the least. These we shall almost all carry, as far as I can see—and unless we are left in the lurch by the Centre or Progressists, which is quite on the cards.

While ordinarily but 55 to 65% of the voters polled, this time the philistine came up in force; 85 to 90% of the number on the list. And this accounts for many defeats.

I am extremely glad of the Alsatian vote. That will help us to get rid of these nondescripts—neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring—all the easier.

In a day or two you will get a printed circular with Aveling's reply to the charges of the N[ew] York Executive.¹ If this Circular has not been sent to the German club in Paris then it has not been sent to Paris at all. It is nothing but the usual complaint of Knoten against Gelehrte² that they lived extravagantly on the pence of the working men. Fortunately we have a good reply.

Tell Paul that his discovery about Oriental Circumcision shares the fate of many of my discoveries in natural science viz that it had been made before. I have read the same thing long ago in German books and should not wonder if it was already in old Creuzer's *Symbolik*³ which is as old as the battle of Waterloo.

Poor Edward had an awful shock about these ridiculous accusations, so soon after his quinsy. He is not overendowed with power of resistance to malady, and so this threw

¹ Tussy and Aveling had made a fifteen weeks' tour of the United States at the invitation of the Executive Committee of the Social-Democratic Party. On the eve of their departure, the Executive had challenged certain items of expenditure claimed by Aveling, accusing him of having paid for Tussy's travelling expenses out of the amount allocated to him. Engels took the Avelings' side in the matter. The details can be found in Engels' letter to Madame Wischnewetzky of February 9th, 1887.

² Rowdies . . . men of learning.—*Tr.*

³ A reference to the book *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* by Professor Friedrich Creuzer, of which the 3rd edition appeared in 1836.

him back very much. He has been off and on at Hastings and is going off again tonight.

The last page of the *Voie* today looks rather queer, all *Bel Ami* and no advertisements.¹ Rather too much for one dose, I should think.

Half past five—Postschluss²—and Dinner Bell! So fare-well for to-day.

Very affectionately yours,

F. ENGELS

215. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 10th March 87

My dear Laura,

Pleasant news. The first edition of *Capital*,³ 500 copies, is sold with the exception of about 50 copies and the 2nd edition is in preparation. Nearly half the edition, as far as I can calculate, has gone to America and the 2nd ed[ition] will still find a good market there unless a piratical edition is brought out which however will not probably be undertaken before the success of the book in America is manifest and moreover it will take some time. As the clichés are there, the 2nd ed[ition] will soon be in the market, and on that we shall have 3/9 in every copy instead of 3/—as on the first. It will again be a 30/— edition.

We saw the article in *The Athenaeum*⁴ and Tussy will send you a copy. It is very fortunate that the press begins to speak of the book just as the 1st edition is sold out, and the *Ath[enaeum]* article is worth a good deal to us. The

¹ *La Voie du peuple* of February 24th, 1887, devoted its entire fourth page to the serial story (*Bel Ami* by Maupassant) of which it had begun publication on February 8th.

² Post-time.—*Tr.*

³ This refers to the English translation of Volume I.

⁴ *The Athenaeum*, No. 3097 (March 5th, 1887, pp. 313-14), published a review of the English edition of *Capital*.

gentlemen of the press evidently did not know exactly how to speak of the book, hence the delay, but now the *Ath[enaeum]* has given them the key-note, the others are sure to follow suit.

Between the above and what follows lies a longwinded visit from old Jakins the house-agent who took the rent and payment for coals and two glasses of gin and a cigar—a repeated ringing of the dinner-bell to drive the old fellow away—successful at the third repetition—then a rather heavy dinner with Nim's potato cakes as a wind up, and so I am wound up, but not for letter writing. I think you will not be sorry if under these circumstances I make no further attempt but proceed at once to subscribe myself.

Yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

216. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Wednesday evening [March 16th 1887]

My dear General,

More welcome than flowers in May or a fire in December is a cheque at all times; it is the one thing that is never out of season.

Very happy we were to hear that *The Capital* is selling well and I hope that it may be read as well as bought and that what it teaches may not all of it fall on stony ground but some of it on good and generous soil.

If I did not, there and then, write to thank you for your remittance it is that I hate postcards and that I had no time for better or for more. The fact is that I have a pocket-ful of gossip for you and that I put off writing until I should have the leisure to let you have it comfortably. But yesterday, and the day before and again to-day I have had no time to talk to you, so that I must needs send on these few lines just to say that we thank you.

Paul has given notice to leave to his voutour¹-landlord, who not only had refused point-blank to make any of the repairs which he had undertaken to make when we took the apartments, 5 or 6 years ago, in the dirtiest and most dilapidated condition (and which repairs are now grown indispensable) but had been impudent into the bargain. I think that he wants to get rid of us after the late electoral campaign, the mere thought of which still stinks in the nostrils of this "vulture."

Tell Schorlemmer that I was more touched by his failing to turn up at the right time than by the desertion of some other folks, for he has always been the faithfulest of friends.

Goodnight, my dearest General, and à bientôt. Love to all and to yourself.

Affectionately,

YOUR LAURA

217. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 21 March 1887

My dear Laura,

I have received Fortin's MS. which, I am afraid, will have to rest a bit in my drawer, as I must still nurse my eye. Of course the inflammation was merely symptomatic of the real affection, a weakness brought on by over-exertion of the eye especially at night-time, and that can be cured by nothing but the removal of the cause; in consequence Nim and I pass our evenings now at card-playing and I find it acts, but has to be continued yet a bit. If Paul continues his work at the Bibliothèque etc. in the usual way, I am afraid he will have to suffer for it, though of course his doctor ought to know.

¹ Vulture.—*Tr.*

To settle business first: I enclose cheque for £12.—, and further inform you that nothing has been heard here from Longuet. I sent him a postcard about the copy of *Capital* addressed to *La Justice* asking if he had got it; no reply either.

The giffes¹ between the *Voie* and the *Cri*² may amuse the Parisians but I should be very sorry to see our friends there sinking to the level of saltimbanques at fairs forcing themselves upon the attention of the public by quarrels and fights provoked for that purpose. If that will go down in Paris, it will certainly not anywhere else, and it is certainly not the way to raise our Parisian friends in the esteem of the working class out of France. I can conceive Goullé boxing Labruyère's ears while they had the *Voie* to give their own account of the affair, but the repetition by Goullé and Deville after the paper was dead, and they had to take refuge in the *Radical*,³ seems to me utterly out of all common sense. The version of the *Cri* reaches all the foreign socialist papers; that of the *Radical* does not, unless forwarded express. And whether or not, this mode of settling disputes after the manner of the German Knoten before 1848 will give foreigners a very poor idea of the leaders of French socialism and makes one almost regret the duelling practices of the Second Empire journalists, as being only ridiculous. The sooner the whole affair is forgotten, the better it will be for our people.

Old William, if not actually dead, seems to be dying—

¹ Slaps.—*Tr.*

² Following certain regrettable rumours which *La Voie du peuple* had repeated in its final issue (March 17th, 1887), there had been an exchange of blows and of seconds between Goullé and Labruyère, each accusing the other of having tried to get out of a duel. *Le Cri du peuple* naturally gave its own version of the incident, carefully omitting, however, any mention of *La Voie du peuple* by name and alleging it had stopped publication for lack of readers.

³ *Le Radical* of March 20th, 1887, opened its columns to allow Goullé, Deville and Duc-Quercy to reply to *Le Cri du peuple*.

vide enclosed cut from *The Weekly Dispatch*.¹ And the dynamite shells of St. Petersburg seem after all not to have missed their aim. Vide the abject declaration which through Reuter (!) the Russian Government have sent round Europe. The Czar goes on his knees before revolution, and even the Russophile *Daily News*² says this abject document can be compared only to the abject telegram of Alexander Battenberg to the Czar.³ This thing looks indeed like the beginning of the end in Russia, and that would be the beginning of the end in Europe too. What a fool that Czar must be! Not to see that when he ordered the plot to kidnap and, if necessary, to kill that poor ass the Alexander Battenberg, he justified the same proceedings against himself, and called upon his own enemies to apply to him his own methods!

Pumps is expected back from Eastbourne tomorrow. Edward lectured yesterday morning—for the first time since his quinsy—in an East End Radical Club; he is making a very useful and probably successful campaign amongst the East End Radicals to engage them to cut loose from the Great Liberal Party and form a working men's party after the American fashion. If he succeeds, he will get both Socialist Associations into his wake; for here he gets hold

¹ The death of Wilhelm I, announced by the entire press on March 7th, was denied on the following day. The cutting referred to by Engels is probably an article entitled "Topics of the Day" in *The Weekly Dispatch* of March 20th, 1887 (p. 1/1).

² An article entitled "The Nihilist Conspiracy" in *The Daily News* of March 21st, 1887 (p. 5/V-VI) contained a statement by Czar Alexander complaining that the precautions he was obliged to take for his personal safety restricted his movements and prevented him from seeing his people in their true colours and judging of their needs for himself.

³ In August 1886 a conspiracy of officers in Russia's pay had led to the kidnapping of Alexander of Battenberg, the King of Bulgaria, who had been forced to sign his abdication. Three days later, however, thanks to Stambulov's action, he made a triumphal re-entry into Sofia. Nevertheless, he felt it incumbent on him to telegraph a humble address to the Czar.

of the real spontaneous working men's organisations and gets at the heart of the working class. So far his prospects are good. Tussy and he are going to move this week into their new place in Chancery Lane but as they must clear out from 38 St. George's Square tomorrow, they will perhaps have to stay a few days with us.

Love from Nim.

Affectionately yours,

F. ENGELS

218. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS

*122 Regent's Park Road, N.W.
London, April 11th, 1887*

My dear Lafargue,

You ask me, in my capacity as executor of the last literary wishes of Karl Marx, to give you formal authority to negotiate the publication of a new edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy* and his other works in the French language. Although, as between you and me, that would scarcely appear necessary, it goes without saying that I grant it with pleasure.

Yours ever,

F. ENGELS

219. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS

London, April 13th, 87

My dear Lafargue,

Here is the letter for your publisher. I hope you will be successful this time; in any case, make sure that the copy is returned to you, for I have no other to send you.¹ Nego-

¹ This refers again to the publication of *The Poverty of Philosophy*. It will be recalled that a first attempt made in 1884 came to nothing in the end. (See Vol. I, pp. 171-82.)

tiate also for 20 to 25 free copies for us; we shall need them badly.

I will send you the report on the day before yesterday's meeting from the D[aily] Telegr[aph] which has a great deal about Tussy.¹ Schorlemmer was there; it was without exception the largest meeting we have ever had here.

The N[ew] York affair is going very well.² The gentlemen of the Executive Committee have made so many blunders since then that they are as good as routed. It's a very long business and very . . . involved, but we have nothing further to fear from that quarter.

You have a fine idea of Mr. Sonnenschein if you think that we have copies of the article by Aveling and Tussy at our disposal—I have only seen the proofs of it, but I will tell Tussy to let me have a copy for you. They will have to buy it; S[onnenschein] treats his authors as ordinary employees.

Yesterday the great anarchist Kropotkin accepted the hospitality of the Soc[ial] Dem[ocratic] Federation, he was with them and Davitt on their *waggonette*. Very characteristic: someone wanted to take Davitt to Aveling's place, but D[avitt] said: I cannot meet him, because he is an Atheist!

No means of pressing for your article to appear in *Time*—Price is leaving S[onnenschein] and S[onnenschein] says that it is his colleague Lowrey who is running the review, and he is a person we have never met. You cannot imagine the confusion and disorder which reign in that business, otherwise you would be much more patient.

Stand as a candidate in any case, with or without a

¹ This refers to the article: "Irish Crimes Bill, Great Demonstration in Hyde Park, Processions and Speeches," published in the *Daily Telegraph* of April 12th, 1887 (p. 2/I-VI).

² This refers again to the trouble between Aveling and the Executive of the New York Socialist Party.

chance.¹ It has to be done, particularly in Paris, and particularly since you have managed once again to extinguish all your press organs there is nothing else for it, for to agitate one must keep oneself in the public eye. With 10,000 francs you could maintain a weekly journal for a long time, and that amount you ought to be able to raise. However, I hope that revolution in Russia will relieve your difficulties and will shake up Europe. Three attempts on his life in 30 days; that should be enough even for a czar. According to even the Russophile English press, everything is in a state of confusion in Russia; confidence in the government's power is destroyed, the army is full of Nihilists—482 officers exiled to the island of Sakhalin (Pacific)—and the peasants, oppressed by the Emancipation, by taxes, by usurers, have received the final blow with liability for compulsory army service, Prussian style. Added to that, the permanent financial crisis, the paper ruble worth 2 francs 8 or 9 centimes, instead of 4 francs, American and Indian competition in grain, and not a single banker in Europe who is willing to lend—that situation cannot last out the year!

Schorl[emmer] sends his greetings.

Kiss Laura, to whom I shall be writing.

Ever yours,

F. E.

220. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Monday [April 24th 1887]

My dear General,

I think I was on the subject of your book when I broke off the other day. A Sunday in the country in hot and stormy weather—with an open air dinner of “lapin sauté” and

¹ Municipal elections were to be held on May 8th. Lafargue stood in the 5th arrondissement of Paris (Jardin des Plantes).

green peas and a bottle of piccolo—have somewhat confused my memory. These last few Sundays we have spent in exploring the banks of the Marne, beautiful “intirely” just about Champigny and Chennevières and which you have known perhaps, since, like the devil, you seem to know everything. Paul’s eyes will not let him work quite as hard as usual, wherefore we make the best of his enforced idleness by studying the environs of Paris.

To return to your book, Fortin sent me his translation, but it was not fit for print. So I lent my copy of your book to Guesde who is responsible for the version which has appeared in the *Socialiste* and which I consider very good.¹

Brousse is hourly sinking deeper into the mire of his own creating: his own people are getting daily more unmanageable; they protest against his attitude during the late elections and accuse him of having betrayed the party. The Bourse du travail² is another stumbling-block in the path of the Possibilists; hitherto they had managed to monopolise all the posts and places and monies placed by the town-council at the disposal of the workmen, and Brousse, by throwing them a sop from time to time, had succeeded in bribing his men into allegiance. Now, at last, the other fractions of our party, better-advised, are beginning to clamour for their share of the booty, and right and left, and on every side, the Possibilists find very dangerous enemies start up against them. Not one bit too soon!

Do you remember my talking to you about an American Stanton, co-proprietor of the *European Correspondent*,

¹ Laura seems to be mistaken here. Although it has not been possible to identify the book in question, it is certain that *Le Socialiste* did not publish any work by Engels at this time. On the other hand, in February and March 1887, a translation of *The Civil War in France* by Marx appeared under the title: “The Paris Commune and the International.”

² Labour Exchange: an institution under the control of the workers.—*Tr.*

and telling you how he had asked me to get Rochefort to write for him for nothing. (Fancy Rochefort writing for nothing! If glory and notoriety are no longer to be paid for in hard cash by "cute" Barnums, our most ambitious guinea-a-liners will be wanting to grow fat at ease and "live inglorious days.") By way of answer, I wrote, rather sharply, to request Mr. Stanton to pay me for the articles I had translated for him. To this short and sweet missive I got no answer. But one fine morning, as I was dusting Paul's room, in walks Mr. Theodore Stanton. Very amiable and charming and remarking to me that we were a very long way off from the Arc de Triomphe. (The Stantons are rich and live near the Champs Elysées.) I told him that we had no business near the Arc de Triomphe. He went on to explain how it was that I had not been paid. He invited both Paul and myself to lunch and a day or two later sent me an invitation to meet his mother, a noted American authoress (Elizabeth, something else, Stanton) and Mme Caroline de Barrau, a very rich old woman; very philanthropic, and kind to the inmates of St-Lazare. At the same time he asked me to write him 2,000 words on *socialism in Paris*. I did not accept his invitation but I sent him the "2,000" words "wanted" and am now conjecturing when this singular person means to send me the 50 francs due for my article.

Paul's paper in the *Commonweal* had been sent by him to Bax. It was a reply to an article of Bax's "On the Morrow of the Revolution," in which the Code Napoléon was recommended as the "code" of the future. Morris, to whom Bax had given the paper, has translated and inserted it. Bax had proposed handing an article of Paul's to the editors of *To-Day* and Paul had objected on the ground that he did not think anything printed in *To-Day* would be likely to be much read. He was not acquainted with "the nature of the beast," I mean of *To-Day*.

Paul comes in with his letter and fusses and says that this must go with his and so, my dearest General, as I have

no time to read my letter, pray correct what mistakes there may be, as you go on. Love to all my old and young and middle-aged friends.

Affectionately,

YOUR LAURA

Forgive me, my dear General, but I quite forgot the other day to thank you for your letter to Paul and cheque.

221. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 26th April 87

My dear Laura,

My congratulations to Paul le candidat du Jardin des Plantes—et des animaux.¹ Being, in his quality as a nigger, a degree nearer to the rest of the animal kingdom than the rest of us, he is undoubtedly the most appropriate representative of that district. Let us hope the animaux will have the best of it in this struggle against the bêtes.—I am rather surprised at Basly's holding back, but if a set of men succeeds in being excluded from the press altogether, what can they expect? From Mesa's letter in the Spanish *Socialista* I see that the Blanquists too are making volte-face and approaching the Possibilists—another bad sign. A little success—even relative—at the elections would therefore be very welcome when our people are under such a momentary cloud. I know very well that that cloud will pass, that Parisian party life is a continual change of ups and downs, but at the same time I cannot but wish that next time they will cherish their own little weekly paper a little more than those disreputable dailies to which they work hard to give

¹ Candidate for the Garden of Plants—and Animals. The pun below turns on *bête* meaning both an animal and a fool.—Tr.

a reputation in order to be kicked out as soon as they have succeeded.¹

That Stanton of yours seems to be an out and out Yankee. But the 'cutest Yankee in Europe is as often and as much out of his element as the toughest Polish Jew. They misjudge the people they have to deal with.

The N[ew] Y[ork] Executive have launched in their despair another circular against Aveling saying that his statements are lies, yet making very important admissions in our favour. We shall of course reply. But the affair is practically ended, the Ex[ecutive] are themselves accused in N[ew] Y[ork] as swindlers and liars in another affair and on their trial before the N[ew] Y[ork] sections; so that whatever they have said, say, or may say, loses all importance. In the meantime the Aufsichtsbehörde² of the American party appeals to them (to Edward and Tussy) to let the matter drop, and from very many places they receive very nice letters both from Americans and Germans. So that matter is virtually settled.

Edward and Tussy's agitation in the East End clubs is going on very favourably. The American example has its effects; it at last offers a handle to stir up the English working people.

In the League³ the anarchists are on the decline, as everywhere when they are seriously handled instead of being trifled with. Their last proposal yesterday in the Council was, that at the Conference of Delegates all vérification des mandats⁴ should be suppressed and everybody accepted who said he was a delegate—to allow them to manufacture

¹ After the Guesdists had left the *Cri du peuple* (January 31st, 1887), and following the closing down of the *Voie du peuple* (March 17th, 1887), the Party's weekly *Le Socialiste* also ceased publication on March 26th, 1887.

² Control commission.—*Tr.*

³ This refers to the Socialist League which came into being as a result of the split in the Social Democratic Federation.

⁴ Inspection of credentials.—*Tr.*

their usual bogus votes. This however was too much even for Morris; yet a minority of five was found to vote for such nonsense!

The Pagny affair¹ is not quite clear to me yet. The gist of the matter lies in Art. 4, No. 1, of the German Penal Code: "Pourra être poursuivi selon les lois pénales de l'empire allemand:

1) un étranger qui aura commis, à l'étranger (en pays étranger) *un acte de haute trahison* contre l'empire allemand ou contre un des états fédérés, ou qui aura fait de la fausse monnaie."²

To apply this article to anybody but a political refugee not naturalised abroad, must produce a collision with the country of the man prosecuted. No nation in its senses will stand such treatment and if they tried it upon an Englishman, the most peaceable minister would be compelled to send at once the British fleet to the German coast. Therefore this looks as if Bismarck wanted to place France between war or humiliation. For that he was ignorant of the warrant against Schnaebelé is impossible. And yet the state of Europe is such that a war would be for Bismarck, to play *va banque*. The man must be completely mad to act thus. Perhaps a few days more will give a clue. I really cannot imagine him to be such a consummate ass.

Enclosed the cheque Paul writes for, £12.—

¹ On April 21st the special superintendent of the frontier station of Pagny-sur-Moselle, Schnaebelé, had been arrested by the German police on German territory to which he had gone on official business to meet his German opposite number, Superintendent Gautsch. He was accused of espionage. There were great repercussions and war was feared. Eventually the German authorities were compelled to release him on April 29th.

² "Liable to prosecution in accordance with the penal laws of the German Empire:

"1) a foreigner who commits *abroad* (in a foreign country) *an act of high treason* against the German Empire or against any of the federated states, or who issues counterfeit coinage."—*Tr*,

Nim is well—was at the theatre last night with Pumps—going again this week to the Princess's—with Edward's ticket. Beer is flowing plentiful—I consume fully 2 bottles a day and march three miles, and for the last few Sundays have taken a glass of Port—voilà du progrès.¹

Bien à vous, je vous embrasse.²

F. ENGELS

222. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

(*Fragment*)

May 11th 87

My dear General,

The result of the elections, as far as our district is concerned, has fully answered all expectations.³ Vaughan of the *Intransigent* and others, who know the place, had predicted that Paul would get between 2 and 300 votes. Collin is not only an old man of 70 who has lived (and is likely to die) in the neighbourhood, but he represents all that is moderate—modéré et déshonnête⁴—in our bear-garden here and serves to keep those wild beasts, the “socialistes-révolutionnaires” at bay that have all of a sudden been sprung upon the bourgeois in their snuggery—the Jardin des Plantes. Paris in general and the Jardin des Plantes in particular are not the revolutionary strongholds that some of our enthusiastic German friends would make them out to be. Not a single candidate daring to call himself a “socialiste-révolutionnaire” (barring Vaillant in the revo-

¹ There's progress for you.—*Tr.*

² Good wishes to you and a kiss.—*Tr.*

³ In the municipal elections on May 8th Lafargue polled 568 votes; Collin, the opportunist, 1,540; Tailfer 788 and Haulier 304 in the first ballot.

⁴ Moderate and dishonest.—*Tr.*

lutionary district of Père Lachaise)¹ has been elected, even in the more advanced arrondissements, and if the Possibilists have succeeded so much better than other and better men, it is, apart from the fact that they have a couple of monied men amongst them and that they had wormed themselves into the only people's paper on the eve of the elections, because they manage to make themselves acceptable to the bourgeois elector in divers ways; thus they style themselves "parti ouvrier,"² which appellation has come to cover a multitude of sins, and, by hiding away all and everything that is obnoxious in the way of collectivism and revolutionarism, they pick up all the crumbs that drop from the "radical" and "autonomist" tables.

Paul's position has been doubly difficult in consequence of this Pagny business, for while paid agents of Collin attacked him on the score of his revolutionary violence and such minor grievances as his quality of bourgeois and his difference with the *Cri du peuple*, many an imbecile worried him *gratis* on account of his internationalism and his leaning toward Germany. Under these circumstances it has been no easy matter for him to win five hundred and odd votes.

Tailfer, another competitor, is an "industriel et opportuniste"³ who calls himself "républicain progressiste." He is a bad lot and hated by the workers. He declared publicly, the other night, that one of the women he employed did the work of two men and that he paid her "à peu près autant que les hommes."⁴ The votes for Haulier—"radical socialiste" who took pains to inform his hearers last week that his competitor Lafargue was much better up in socialism than himself—like chickens, come home to roost with Paul. It is a funny sight to see Haulier's committee sitting over

¹ Vaillant got in on the first ballot, as did the Possibilists Joffrin, Chabert, Faillet and Dumay.

² Workers' Party.—*Tr.*

³ Manufacturer and opportunist.—*Tr.*

⁴ Almost as much as the men.—*Tr.*

against Paul's, hobnobbing and talking together in the friendliest and most familiar way.

I went to several of the meetings and have enjoyed a splendid opportunity of watching "l'explosion de la bêtise humaine."¹ Some of the electors of our Jardin des Plantes belong to that borderland where there is no knowing whether an organism belongs to the vegetable or the animal kingdom.—I always get into the thick of the crowd and people known and unknown come up and talk to me. The other night a workman said: "il parle bien, *votre Gascon*!"²; another: "il est bien gentil ce Lafargue; quel dommage qu'il soit si bavard!" A mastroquet, gascon lui-même, cried out enthusiastically: "Quel gueulard, que ce Lafargue."³ The fact is that Paul has made wonderful progress as a speaker. On one or two occasions he has spoken with rare fire and energy and with a naturalness and sincerity which distinguishes his style of oratory from that of the vile "cabotins"⁴ who infest our platforms here.

It is good fun to watch the impressions produced by the socialist speaker: some. . . .

223. FREDERICK ENGELS TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 21 May 87

My dear Laura,

A few words in a hurry. There is hope of a place for Martignetti in Hamburg—correspondence about this has kept me busy today. You will have seen in *Justice* how Hyndman has tried to bring out Edward's American bother, but has apparently got more than he expected—his retreat in

¹ An outburst of human stupidity.—*Tr.*

² He talks well, the braggart!—*Tr.*

³ That Lafargue's very nice, pity he's such a windbag! A pub-keeper, himself a braggart. . . . What a ranter that Lafargue is!—*Tr.*

⁴ Barnstormers.—*Tr.*

this week No. is undignified enough.¹ A 3^d circular on this affair is in the printer's hands. I have had some droll correspondence with Liebk[necht] about the letter from him it will publish. In N[ew] York we are completely victorious and that is the chief point; and our final circular I hope will settle the business.

Paul's success is though externally negative, still quite satisfactory. Only the ballottage² seems to have been attempted on rather too Parisian grounds. However it gives him a better standing for the future.

I confess the success of Brousse and Co.³ is inconceivable to me. It is no use crying after a new "journal quotidien"⁴ after having been kicked out of ever so many and after having secured so little permanent effect out of it while our friends had it. But all the same, the next best thing to a victory of our people is the entry of Brousse and Co. into the City Council—there they will have to show what they are. Cremer, Howell and Co. were never lower in London than now since they are in Parliament.

My congratulations to Paul for having cudgelled one of his electors. Ça doit avoir produit un effet.⁵

My eye is considerably better since I have taken to smoke different cigars. There was the determining cause of the whole affair. You may laugh but I shall as soon as I have time explain to Paul medicinally that the thing was entirely caused by applying too much guano to the tobacco-

¹ In a paragraph in *Justice* of May 21st, 1887 (p. 3/II), Hyndman acknowledged a letter he had received from Aveling and the fact that Engels, Sorge and Liebknecht answered for his absolutely correct behaviour over the matter of his expenses in America.

² In the final ballot Collin was elected with 1,575 votes, Lafargue polling 685 and Tailfer 567.

³ On the second ballot the Possibilists returned six of their candidates: Brousse, Lavy, Simon Soëns, Réties, S. Paulard and E. Chauvière.

⁴ Daily paper.—*Tr.*

⁵ That must have made some impression.—*Tr.*

fields of the Vuelta Abajo. Of course I have to be very careful still, limit reading and writing.

I am rather curious to see how the Ministerial crisis in France¹ will end—unless it brings in Clemenceau, it will be the old affair over again, and I doubt whether Cl[emenceau] will go in just now. He is the last resource of the Bourgeois republic and would be soft to go in without a dissolution.

Edward and Tussy speak to-day in an open air meeting in Victoria Park, Hackney; the weather was boisterous and wet though, showery up to 4 p.m., now better. Don't know the hour of meeting but hope it's late in the afternoon. Their agitation in the East End is going on quietly and steadily. Next Sunday Delegate Conference of the League. Will decide its fate. Both League and Federation are in a bad way; Hyndman is in very bad odour again amongst his lot, has fallen out with Champion, and Burns goes about preaching an independent union of the working men of both societies leaving Hyndman, Morris, Aveling and Co. to fight out their quarrels themselves.

So much for to-day—the implacable Nim calls with the dinner-bell.

Affectionately yours,

F. ENGELS

224. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 7th June 1887

My dear Laura,

Here is a heap of gossip for you—while the movement is still in the sectarian stage it resolves itself all into gossip—and such is the case in England.

Last Sunday was the Delegate Conference of the League. Morris and the anarchists carried a resolution that

¹ On May 17th the Goblet Ministry had been brought down by 275 votes to 257 over the failure to balance the budget.

the League was to hold to an anti-parliamentary policy—vote 17 to 11. Amongst the 17, one bogus anarchist section and 3 who voted against their instructions. The real reason was Morris's money which is to continue to pay the £4.—weekly deficit of the *Commonweal*; if the resolution fell through, Morris would have resigned.

Our friends are now going to try to organise their sections better in the provinces and to call an extraordinary conference to upset this. I don't believe in it, neither does Tussy, but the attempt is unavoidable on account of the feeling among the working-class element.

One of the prominent (in a small way) members of the above bogus anarchist section was Mother Schack (who by the bye is exactly your age!) who has lately patronised the anarchists considerably, this appearing to her the most likely means to jouer un rôle quelconque ici.¹ As by this she placed herself in a position where she must either discontinue her visits at my house or expect an unpleasant explication, she took the initiative in breaking off. On 29th the Conference. On 30th she writes me a letter: she cannot continue visiting me because she cannot meet Aveling as he has committed discreditable acts and also is slandering whom?—Tussy! I replied asking for particulars and proofs, and stating that unless I received them, I should communicate her letter to Edward. Reply: she could state no particulars but invited me to inquire into Edward's character and antecedents generally, in which case she would assist me. This I naturally declined and again summoned her to particularise and prove, or take the consequences. Again she declines, warns me that "the credit of my house" must suffer if I take the responsibility for Edward, etc. Nothing but gossip, insinuations, infamies. The charge of Edward's slandering Tussy reduces itself to an insinuation that he spreads the idea that Tussy is extremely jealous!—Well, I told her in my reply that the credit of my house requiring from the people that met there the

¹ Playing some sort of part here.—*Tr.*

courage to stand by what they said about one another, I could only be extremely grateful to her for the resolution she had come to, to break off her visits. Of course I read the whole of the letters to Tussy and Edward who intend calling on her tomorrow and try to force her to some definite statement in the presence of the Kautskys. I don't think it will lead to much but let them try.

I am glad we are happily rid of this Madam who has a foot in every camp, religious cranks, anarchists, etc., and is a thorough Klatschschwester.¹ She first got the myths about Edward from her religious friends and had them confirmed by Mother Besant who has every reason to hold her nose but reckons on Edward's melodramatic generosity. And it is merely because he insisted on doing the virtuous hero of melodrama who is slandered right and left and rather glories in it because it belongs to the part and the eternal justice will end in bringing out the truth and show him resplendent in all the glory of his virtue, that all this slander has spread. But we shall stir him up a bit, and I think experience has told on him a little too, so that as soon as we get hold of something tangible, we shall soon put an end to it all.

Yesterday Sam Moore left here, and today we find a postcard announcing Schorlemmer for tonight. Pumps and her children are here, the boy is really a splendid fellow, with more irony in him than both his parents together can boast of.

At last I can sit by an open window! That is something.

Sam Moore wishes to know whether Paul has received the Beckmann, *Hist. of Inventions*,² he sent him.

Yours affectionately, F. E.

Nim sends her love. She is rather asthmatical after the winter.

¹ Scandalmonger.—Tr.

² Johann Beckmann: *A History of Inventions and Discoveries*, translated from the German by William Johnston, 4th edition, 2 vols., London, 1846.

225. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 11 June 1887

My dear Laura,

Mother Schack has had her punishment. Yesterday Tussy and Edward went to Kautskys', with whom she lives. Found her in. She refused to see Edward. Tussy and Mrs. Kautsky went in to her bedroom. Interpellated as to what were the facts against Edward and what her proofs, she declined repeatedly to say anything. Tussy, after various severe hits, told her this refusal was a Gemeinheit.¹ She: Das lasse ich mir von Niemand sagen.—Tussy: Dann werden Sie sich es jetzt von mir noch einmal in Gegenwart von Louise Kautsky sagen lassen, dass es eine Gemeinheit ist, wenn Sie solche Anklagen vorbringen und nicht dafür einstehn.²—Upon which she bolted out of the room, leaving Tussy in possession of her own bedroom!

She even tried to get old Lessner to fall in with her slanders but got the worst of it. She also says Pumps is sat upon by Percy! All this comes out now at once, but it has had two good effects: it will make Edward see what his treating all that stuff with contempt leads to and will make him speak out about various matters about which he ought to have spoken in his own defence; and secondly it has helped the Kautskys out of their unfortunate position in the house with Scheu. They are going to leave and take a flat for themselves.

I don't know whether I told you she had Mother Besant to tea the other day and said in her presence that *all* our deputies, Bebel, Liebknecht, Singer and all were corrupt. Kautsky jumped up and put his fist under her nose, he was

¹ A vile thing.—*Tr.*

² I allow no one to say that to me....

Then you will now allow me to say to you again in Louise Kautsky's presence that it is a vile thing for you to make such accusations and not substantiate them.—*Tr.*

in such a rage. If it had not [been] for her staying with them, we should have shaken her off long ago.

Schorl[emmer] is still here, doing business as Vice-President of Chemical Section at British Association meeting, Manchester, next August. He, Nim, and Pumps had a long conversation this morning, planning a trip to Paris in September. Châteaux en Espagne so far. He sends his kindest regards to both of you.

Affectionately yours,

F. ENGELS

226. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Paris, 11/7¹/87

My dear Engels,

The Parisians have gone mad. It is impossible to imagine the enthusiasm for Boulanger, he is a god; his name is on everybody's lips and everywhere you hear the mawkish refrain:

*C'est Bou . . . lange, lange,
C'est Boulanger qu'il nous faut.*²

The ovation at his departure was wild³: 150 thousand people invaded the station and its approaches. People flung themselves at him, yelling: You shall not leave!

¹ The original is erroneously dated June.

² (It's Bou-lange, lange. It's Boulanger we need.—*Tr.*). This refrain which was sung by the Boulangists to a popular song of the time was parodied by the socialist cabaret singer Jules Jouy.

³ By a decree of July 4th General Boulanger had been appointed Commanding Officer of the 13th Army Corps at Clermont-Ferrand. He entrained on July 8th at the Gare de Lyon to take up his command.

They stormed the train. They jumped on to his carriage, removed the lamp and shoved their arms through to shake him by the hand: others lay down on the rails, etc. If he had put himself at the head of the crowd and said: To the Elysée! M. Grévy would have been lucky to be sleeping at Vincennes as a State prisoner.

And what has Boulanger achieved? A few useful reforms for the benefit of the soldier, such as better food and better sleeping arrangements, a few republican pronouncements and the expulsion of the Orléans. The soldiers love him, but the officers don't.

It shows that you can do what you please with the Paris population if you know how to rouse them.

But this inexplicable revival of chauvinism is due to Bismarck's brutalities. The Patriots' League was discredited, its president so ridiculous that he was obliged to resign. It required the reactionaries' absurd attacks upon Boulanger, who personified national defence against Bismarck, to kindle such patriotism.

But one thing has taken the patriots by surprise, namely, the far from courageous attitude of the patriots in the Leipzig case¹: it stands in strange contrast to that of the Socialists prosecuted by Bismarck, risking years of imprisonment and even their heads.

I shall not tell you about the disunity which is beginning to make itself felt in the Broussist camp. Laura will tell you about it; but it is very characteristic. Brousse's victory will spell his end. *Le Cri* declines every day.

At last the heat is abating; for the past two days we have had a little rain which has freshened the atmosphere.

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ The Leipzig case was something of an epilogue to the Schnœbelé affair. A number of Alsatians, accused of spying for France, were indicted by the Highest Court in the German Empire.

227. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 15 July 1887

My dear Laura,

Thanks for your letters. I have Schorl[emmer] still here; a chronic catarrh of the stomach, the great heat, and the absence of a very pressing wish to revisit his dear country keep him here. Besides him, Fritz Beust from Zurich whom you saw here eight years ago, has arrived too. So I must confine myself to urgent matters.

I was obliged to give a card of introduction (to Paul) to a young Dr. Conrad Schmidt of Königsberg, who dabbles in *question sociale*. He is about the greenest youth I ever saw, he was here about 3 months, seems a decent fellow, as decent fellows go nowadays, frisst keine Schuh-nägel und säuft keine Tinte.¹ If Paul deposits him rue Richelieu, Bibliothèque nationale, he will not trouble him much. He admires Zola in whom he has discovered the "materialistische Geschichtsanschauung."²

The Boulanger fit of paroxysm ought to make our people demand again and again l'armement du peuple³ as the only guarantee against Caesaristic velleities on the part of popular generals. That is the only argument against the outcry of the royalist press with regard to Boulanger being a danger to—the Republic they say, and the future monarchy they mean.

Saturday week, 23 July, we move to Eastbourne, 4 Cavendish Place, same as last year. If your Jersey trip is realised, let us know. I should not wonder if Tussy and Edward caught the Jersey fever.

Love from Nim [and] Jollymeier.

Yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

¹ Eats no boot nails and drinks no ink.—*Tr.*

² The materialist conception of history.—*Tr.*

³ The arming of the people.—*Tr.*

228. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Paris, 20.7.87

My dear Engels,

Please send me the cheque, for which I asked you, before Saturday, for on that day I have to pay a tradesman who is very pressing.

The Boulanger fever persists and spreads: in the Loire-Inférieure department the lucky beggar got 2,000 votes without standing as a candidate.¹

Bon voyage and enjoy yourself.

P. LAFARGUE

229. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Friday, July [22nd] 87

My dearest General,

A cough and sore throat of several weeks' standing, added to the excessive heat, have been making me quite good for nothing. Once you catch a cold in our place, it's next to impossible to get rid of it; our rooms are all doors and windows and they always, all of them, stand wide open. Our bedroom, with two windows and *three* doors, opens into two other rooms, besides getting the benefit of all the hot and cold winds that blow from the kitchen which measures 3½ yards by 1½ and boasts of two doors and a window!

All this by way of apology for my silence. And not only have I been wanting to thank you for your book,² but I

¹ In a by-election in the Loire-Inférieure held on July 17th, 2,355 votes were cast for Boulanger.

² This probably refers to the English translation of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, first published in America. (See Vol. I, p. 335, Note 3 to Letter No. 180 of February 9th, 1886.)

have had a lot of odds and ends of gossip which are a real weight on my mind so long as I have not made you a present of them. It is I, in every way, who am punished when I do not write to you.

You will, doubtless, be getting some latest excellent advice from Paul one of these days, for he has just undergone a second operation of his eye and as it appears to have done him good, I know that he will be wanting you to reap the benefit (along with the smoked glasses and the Turkish baths) of a somewhat similar operation on an eye or two of your own. Paul has not been as well as usual and whether his eyes affect his general health or his general health his eyes, I know not, but he certainly has not been himself this long while. He talks of going to the sea-side and as Vaughan (de *L'Intransigeant*) has promised him a railway pass and as we have an opportunity of getting rooms cheap there, we think of going to Jersey (whither, perhaps, the whole lot of you might come, but that's almost too good to be true and not to be dreamt of!).

No, we get neither *To-Day* nor *Justice*. The Fabians, you say,—they're a set of intellectual Dundrearies aren't they?—are making mincemeat of Mohr. Well, Rouanet (vous ne connaissez pas Rouanet?¹) who sits at the feet of Gamaliel-Malon and sucks the honey "des doctrines ésotériques" from his lips, is busy here in demolishing both Mohr and yourself, and in a very little while there will be nothing left of either of you.²

Shacre is neither the beau-frère³ nor the admiral, but just a plain, honest "libre-penseur,"⁴ rather a good sort of

¹ You don't know Rouanet?—*Tr.*

² The *Revue socialiste* (Nos. 29, 30 and 31 of May to July 1887) had published an article by Rouanet: "Marx's Economic Materialism, and French Socialism." G. Deville replied to it first in *Le Socialiste* (2nd series) on June 11th, 1887, and again in the issue of July 23rd, 1887 (p. 2/I-III).

³ Brother-in-law.—*Tr.*

⁴ Freethinker.—*Tr.*

fellow with a very loud voice and an Italian wife who goes in for "la guerre des sexes."¹

Shacre reminds me of our "fête" which was a great success: about 140 of us, citoyens and citoyennes of age, under age, over age and of no age. You should have seen our band as we set out! Colours flying, drums beating and what singing, in and out of tune! Our halting-place was Châtillon-Clamart, but we had to get there. And the sun, in our honour, had sported the colours of our own blood-red flag and shone and burnt like fire. There was a bit of speechifying, a good deal of eating, a great deal of drinking and a "power" of dancing. (I danced with Vaillant, tell Nim.) The dancing, I think, carried the day, or rather the night, for the sun had set for hours before we turned our faces homewards.

I had little Marcel Longuet with me, the only one of the children free to come.

I have read the preface and appendix of your book² with the greatest interest and the sight of the book itself has been an infinite delight: it was like meeting, after how many years! (for if I'm not as old as the hills, you remind me that I'm as "old as mother Schack") with an old familiar face. I was about 15, I think, when, a self-imposed task, I did the whole or part of your book (I can't remember) into English, at the same time turning the first part of *Faust* into verse. Neither translation can have been good, but the verse, I am sure, was better than the prose. I can't go on for the present, but will post this and conclude tomorrow. Love all round.

LAURA

¹ War of the sexes.—*Tr.*

² This refers to the preface and the appendix to the American edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. The two items had been published under the title "The Working-Class Movement in America" in *Le Socialiste* of July 9th, 16th and 23rd, 1887.

230. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS AT EASTBOURNE

Paris, 28/7/87

My dear Engels,

I have undergone a third operation on my eyes; I believe it will be the last. The gods favour odd numbers.

An Armenian, Loris-Melikov, a relation of the famous general, took me to a Polish oculist, Galezowski, whom, as a matter of fact, Lavrov had recommended to me. G[alezowski] is one of the three most celebrated oculists in Paris; they say he has worked miracles.

G[alezowski] examined my eyes through a magnifying lens and diagnosed that the inflammation and the cysts on the eyelid were due to a contraction of the tear duct; the two operations the eye had undergone, far from diminishing the inflammation, had, on the contrary, increased it by aggravating the inflammation and consequently the contraction of the duct. To verify the accuracy of his diagnosis, he put an injection into the duct; some of the fluid, unable to penetrate, was rejected.

What had then to be done was to dilate the duct by repeated injections, a lengthy operation; or to open it with a lancet. I chose the second method and was operated then and there. Since then the eye has been much better; I can read and write without fatigue. For a fortnight I have to go back to G[alezowski] every other day for him to examine the condition of the duct.

G[alezowski] is the third oculist to examine my eye. Although the other two were famous, the second one being a hospital consultant, G[alezowski] is the only one who has diagnosed the case.

If I am cured I would advise you to make the journey to Paris to consult him.

We shall not go to Jersey until my eye is cured, when I shall no longer require G[alezowski]'s attention.

The Boulanger affair still excites the Parisians.

Cassagnac cast doubts on the disclosures by XX which I sent you, claiming that they were infamous lies, whereupon the deputy Laur came out into the open and demanded satisfaction from Cassagnac. I send you the charming letters they exchanged.¹

It is hot! How lucky you are to be at the sea-side!

Regards to everyone and enjoy yourselves very much.

P. LAFARGUE

231. FREDERICK ENGELS TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

Eastbourne, 9 Aug. 87
4, Cavendish Place

My dear Laura,

We have now been here more than a fortnight and nothing to complain of but the heat. This is indeed an exceptional summer as the sneaks in *Nature* call it: "The Jubilee Anticyclone." I have taken some light work with me for a rainy day but the rainy day will not come and the work remains fast asleep in my drawer. Jollymeier was here with us for a week and Fritz Beust a fortnight—he had to begin teaching again the day before yesterday in

¹ *La France* had started publishing on Thursday, July 21st, 1887, "Letters from Clermont-Ferrand," signed XX. In the issue of July 22nd (p. I/I-VI), the article under that heading revealed that at the time of the Schnœbelé affair, the Monarchists had approached Boulanger with the proposal that he should make a coup d'état, in the first place for the benefit of the Orléans and subsequently in his own name. Cassagnac called upon Boulanger in *L'Autorité* (July 24th, 1887) to deny these statements. In *La France* of July 25th, 1887 (p. 1/IV), a paragraph appeared announcing that, as a consequence of the article in *L'Autorité*, Monsieur Laur had sent Messieurs C. Dreyfus and Ch. Lalou to demand satisfaction from M. de Cassagnac. Thereupon there was an exchange of letters between Laur and Cassagnac. The duel did not take place, but in *La France* of August 3rd, 1887, Laur stated (p. 1/III-IV) that he would take proceedings against Cassagnac.

Zurich—there was considerable and quite undisguised flirtation between Pumps and him and nobody was prouder of it than Percy. Oh les maris!¹

Whoever translated that preface of mine for the *Socialiste*² did it exceedingly well, I never was so well done in French. One or two passages make me suspect that it was done from the German, at least in part.

The determined stand our people have made against Russophilism and Katkoffolatric has evidently had a good effect. I see the *Justice* is coming round, and Kropotkin has tackled Rochefort. Guesde's article in *L'Action*³ shows that he knows more about the matter of Russia than I dared to hope for.

Otherwise French, like all other, politics are under the influence of the hot weather. Tout rate, même les duels.⁴ When two such first-rate duels as Boul[anger]-Ferry⁵ and Laur-Cassagnac,⁶ miss fire, then it is all up until the weather changes, and Paris sleeps indeed.

I hope that great Polish oculist will be the last and finally successful of Paul's panaceas. When he wrote be-

¹ Oh, husbands!—*Tr.*

² This refers to the preface to the English translation of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. (See Note 2, p. 53.)

³ Katkov, the editor of *La Gazette de Moscou*, had died on August 3rd, his death being the occasion for a whole series of articles in the press on "this great friend of France." In *L'Action* of August 4th, 1887 (p. 2/I-II), Guesde wrote an article: "Republicans and Cossacks," in which he recalled Katkov's responsibility for the repression to which the Poles had been subjected. He emphasised that revolutionary France would never align themselves with this "Asiatic barbarism," but with the Russian people who were fighting to win their freedom.

⁴ Everything misfires, even duels. —*Tr.*

⁵ In the course of his speech at Épinal on July 24th, J. Ferry referred to Boulanger as "this music-hall Saint-Arnaud." The general sent his seconds to Ferry, but the conditions laid down were considered too dangerous by the seconds of the former Prime Minister and the duel did not take place.

⁶ See Note 1, p. 55.

fore of operations, I thought they consisted in the opening out of the lachrymal duct, as this is the most common of all slight operations on the external eye. But most old men with watery eyes suffer from that *rétrécissement*,¹ and I am almost certain I have got it myself on one eye at least. But that I can get set right, if need be, in London, and before rushing into the arms and tools of that miraculous Pole, I shall await Paul's final report. There is nothing to give you such mountain-moving faith in individual doctors, as a general scepticism with regard to scientific medicine.

I have had Bax here for a week and was daily interviewed by him with the regularity of a clock and the inquisitiveness of an American journalist. But it gave me an opportunity of quiet talk with him on many subjects, and when he has done with his set questions (which, as with most people here, are meant to save them study) and has exhausted his sudden flashes of original ideas about le *lendemain de la révolution*² and so on, he begins to talk sense and more sense than the preliminary conversation led you to expect. Then you find that after all he has a largeness of view that is but too scarce here amongst the sectarians calling themselves Socialists. But as to unacquaintance with the world that is, as to hermit-like simplicity and *Fremdheit*³ in the midst of the largest town of the world, an English *Stubengelehrter*⁴ beats his German compeer hollow.

Paul's article on the services publics⁵ was very good. It would do good in Germany too, when the Vierecks and Co.

¹ Contraction.—*Tr.*

² The morrow of the revolution.—*Tr.*

³ Being a stranger.—*Tr.*

⁴ Bookworm.—*Tr.*

⁵ This refers to an article by Lafargue: "The Public Services," which appeared in *Le Socialiste* on August 6th, 1887 (p. 1/IV, p. 2/II), directed against the Possibilists' thesis.

are only too eager to use "Verstaatlichung"¹ in the same bamboozling way as Brousse and Co. the services publics.

Sunday evening all of a sudden Charley Rosher arrived—after ten. Had tricycled it—the hottest day of the season—from London; got to Hayward's Heath (about 40 miles), done up, had to take the train. Next day diarrhoea and general breakdown. And on the following day, scarcely recovered, he had a telegram that his wife was ill and he was to return at once. A subsequent telegram informed us that she had had a "Miss Carry."

Nim was at first, while here, suffering from slight muscular rheumatism—pains all over, as poor Lizzie used to say—but she is all right now and very jolly. So is Pumps and her two children. Percy has to spend most of the week in London. I am lazy and give way to it, as being the best thing under the circumstances to do. And here comes the whole brigade ready for dinner and the children want me to make them paper boats so it's all up with writing and I close in haste.

And love from all.

Yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

232. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS AT EASTBOURNE*

*August, 10th/87.
66, Bd de Port-Royal*

My dear General,

At last I am able to give you the details of our trip to Jersey you have asked for. All this while we have been in a state of doubt and uncertainty as to how, when and whether we should get away from this huge furnace. Paul's eyes, the first cause of our projected expedition,

¹ Nationalisation.—*Tr.*

have been keeping us here; a letter from America, due on the 15th of July and which we looked to for the ways and means to move on, only reached us on the 7th of August; finally the children were not ready to come and Longuet had not got Paul his railway pass. Now, at last, there's an end to our suspense: after settling accounts here, we shall have enough left to make our trip, and Longuet is coming presently to bring us the little ones. We are going to take Marcel and Mémé with us; Edgar is in the country with his grandmother and Jean is obliged to stop in Paris for another month as he is being coached by his father for college.

We leave here on Sunday evening and shall reach Jersey some time on Monday.

I hope that Nim will manage to come over to Jersey and to Paris; she will, I am sure, find the children charming.

From Tussy I have not had a line in answer to my letter; indeed I have not had a line from her since our return from London. But for you I should not know what has become of her. Do you know whether she has caught the Jersey fever or not?

How are you all enjoying your stay at Eastbourne and how do you all?

I am very busy, my dear General, and have to prepare dinner for our little folks, so that I will bid you good-bye till I write to you from Jersey. With love and best wishes for yourself and all your party.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

Stanton has sent me 100 francs for the translations and now owes me 50 frs for article.

Paul's eyes are getting well rapidly since his latest operation.

233. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS AT EASTBOURNE

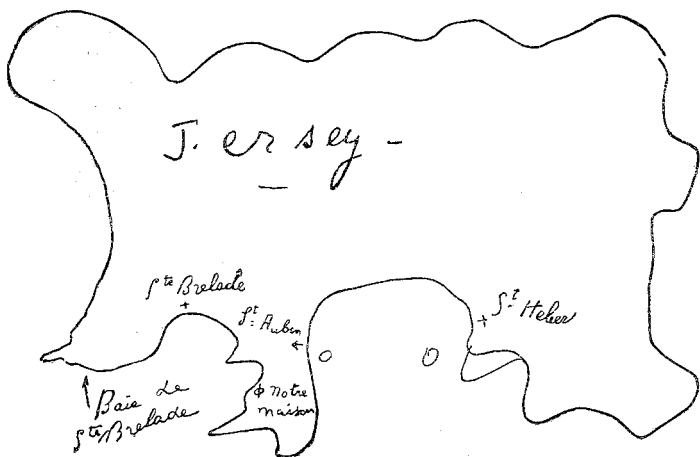
Sainte-Brelade, 16/8/87

My dear Engels,

At last we have left Paris, taking two of Longuet's children with us.

We are in a delightful spot. We are lodging with some peasants; the house is not beautiful, but the position is unrivalled; we are alone, without a single house in the vicinity. The bay belongs to us, so to speak, exclusively. It is a real country holiday such as we have never yet had.

We await H  l  ne. She will be delighted with the children who are charming. Why don't you accompany her? We could take rooms for you at Sainte-Brelade. My eye is better; I am cured. I told you about Galezowski because quite a lot of people agree in saying that where other oculists cannot make head or tail of a case, he has effected cures. Your case is perhaps as simple as mine and a skilful oculist such as may be found in London would meet the case. I do hope so, for I know what it means not to be able to use one's eyes.



Laura wants you to know that she is enchanted with the place, that she eats like an ogre, that she likes the Norman peasants with whom we lodge, but that there is a little 'but': the walls of our room are papered with the *Police News*.

Love to Hélène, Pumps and family, and good wishes to you.

P. LAFARGUE
C/O MONSIEUR LE HERISIER
AT NOIRMONT,
SAINTE-BRELADE JERSEY

234. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Jersey, 24/8/87

My dear Engels,

After having settled our bill with our landlady, we found that we had only enough left for one week, and barely that. We had hoped that our money would last us a month, but the expenses of the journey and other things were far beyond our expectations.

Jersey was extolled to me as a place where living is cheap; that is an illusion better lost. Everything is as dear as in Paris, if not dearer. This year is exceptional because of the drought which ruined the whole market-garden crop, inadequate even at the best of times, for cabbages, onions and other vegetables are imported from France. This trade is in the hands of Bretons who tour the island selling their wares from door to door. On the boat which brought us over here there were pigs and sheep which were being imported. On none of our walks have we caught sight of more than a few scarce sheep cropping the yellowed grass. In the meadows there are only cows, whose price has fallen considerably as a result of the drought.

Since we have been here the weather has been delightful. We learnt from some travellers from the Continent

that there had been a terrible storm in England. We are completely isolated from the world in the corner where we are living; not a single newspaper reaches us; it is from people passing through that we glean a little news. We feel wonderful in this solitude; the children are well, eating like ogres and as lively as grigs. I am as red as a lobster. Since I came here I have eaten so much shellfish that it has taken its revenge by giving me an irritation of the skin. Whilst I scratch myself like a Spanish beggar, Laura battles with the fleas which, finding her skin more delicate than mine, reserve all their attentions and their bites for her. Our farmer's wife alleges that we bring them home from the sands; but we believe that their native place is our bedroom.

I am sending this letter to London, as I am very anxious that it should reach you as soon as possible because of the cheque that I would ask you to send me. Let me have it as soon as you can, for I shall need at least three or four days to cash it.

I wrote to you a week ago and have not yet heard. I send you my address again.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

PAUL LAFARGUE

C/O MONSIEUR LE HERISIER
AT NOIRMONT-HO,
SAINTE-BRELADE JERSEY

235. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 11th Oct. 1887

My dear Laura,

I was glad to learn you received the cheque all right—a miscarriage with that sort of thing may be a very unpleasant matter and so I was rather anxious about news with regard to it.

I hope by this time you have settled down again, and are not too much disturbed by the precious scandals cropping up around you. This Caffarel affair¹ seems to have been brought forward by the Rouvier-Ferry lot, but if so it was a great mistake. It looks very much like the first scandals brought out by Girardin 1846/47 and which led much farther than le rusé Emile² expected. The ball is once set rolling; and no doubt a good crop of further scandals will come to daylight. There are plenty of them going on behind the scenes and this single affair having been dragged forth, will frighten a lot of petty dabblers in the same kind of thing; in their anxiety to get out of danger they are sure to compel Madame la Justice to come forward, however reluctantly, and tackle the people who will be denounced by their frightened associates. Even this one affair bodes no good to the ruling lot; if Wilson is implicated, what is old Grévy to do?

It would be a splendid piece of historical irony if the bourgeois republic was doomed to kill itself by the same révolution du mépris³ which swept away the bourgeois monarchy in 1848.

The Raon-sur-Plaine affair was simply this⁴: *Within* Bismarck's empire this way of treating civilians is quite the rule with the military. They are *trained* to it, and rewarded for it; and the cowardly bourgeois press praises

¹ On October 6th General Caffarel, deputy-chief of the General Staff at the Ministry of War, was dismissed and, on the 7th, arrested. This was the start of the decorations scandal in which, amongst others, Wilson, Grévy's son-in-law, was implicated.

² The cunning Emile.—*Tr.*

³ Revolution of contempt.—*Tr.*

⁴ On September 25th, 1887, some Frenchmen out hunting in the Vexaincourt area, quite close to the frontier, were fired on from German territory. An officer of dragoons who was of the hunting party was wounded and a huntsman was killed. It was a soldier by the name of Kauffmann of the Saverne light infantry battalion, who had been accompanying the German gamekeeper on his rounds, who had fired.

such things if committed upon working men, and excuses them if committed upon bourgeois. And then it is of course impossible to drive into the same soldiers that on the frontier they must act differently, and that a Frenchman, a Russian or an Austrian is to be treated with more consideration. That drunken brute Kauffmann will either be acquitted or, if sentenced, for appearance's sake, to a nominal imprisonment, will be treated like *le bon dieu en France* and promoted hereafter.

The *Socialiste* in its new shape¹ is a considerable improvement upon the old one. Paul could not do everything and his own articles look more worked out since he has not the whole burden upon his shoulders. It will do Deville good to contribute an article per week, his journalistic practice wanted developing and his articles are getting less ponderous.

Next week I expect Bebel here and also probably Singer. Their congress² seems to have been a great success, and the Right wing of the Party have got a direct snub: Geiser and Viereck have been too cowardly to sign the *Aufruf*³ for the congress, and have consequently been declared incapable of further occupying eine *Vertrauensstellung* in der Partei.⁴ Bax was also there, he has brought his boy to Zurich where he will be more or less under Bernstein's care and go to Beust's school.

Here things are moving slowly but they are moving. The Trades Union Congress was a splendid symptom. The Tories help us here by all sorts of little police chicanery with regard to open air meetings—what confounded jackasses they are both here and in Ireland! Jackasses—unless they intend opening next parliament with the announcement

¹ Since its re-issue (June 11th, 1887) *Le Socialiste* had adopted a large folio format and articles were signed.

² The German Social-Democratic Party had held its congress from October 2nd to 6th near Saint-Gall.

³ Convocation.—*Tr.*

⁴ A position of trust in the Party.—*Tr.*

that they have tried coercion and broken down and that nothing therefore remains but Home Rule—thus taking the wind out of Gladstone's sails and bringing in a half-and-half Home Rule Bill of their own shaping. But I cannot think Salisbury has either so much sense or so much boldness.

In the meantime Champion has openly attacked Hyndman in his paper *Common Sense*¹ (rather Uncommon Nonsense) and the Fabians—a dilettante lot of egregiously conceited mutual admirers who soar high above such ignorant people as Marx—are trying to concentrate the “movement” in their hands. Very nice amusements en attendant que la classe ouvrière se mette en mouvement et balaie tous ces mannequins et femmequines² (Mrs. Besant is of them too.)

Yours affectionately,
F. E.

Nim sends her love, is just remanaging the carpet in my room overhead. I have not yet had Sonnenschein's account. I have reminded him of its being due.

236. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS³
(*Extract*)

[*End of October 1887*]

...To outwit it, he says, the Republic will always be in danger and it will always be in danger so long as every worker does not have his own Lebel rifle and fifty cartridges. And that is what Clemenceau dares not concede—far

¹ *Common Sense* of August 15th, 1887 (pp. 65-70): “The Future of Socialism in England” by M. M. Champion.

² Until the working class goes into action and sweeps away all these male and female puppets.—*Tr.*

³ This extract was published in *Le Populaire de Paris* of November 29th, 1920.

less propose—and that is what you should be shouting in his face daily. The Republic will always be in danger so long as the soldier has a rifle and the worker has none. But Clemenceau is a bourgeois and, as such, closer to Ferry than to the Socialists. If there were no Soc[ialist] Revolutionaries he might possibly have been a staunch Radical. And now that his ideal—Republican America, where the working-class question was unknown—no longer exists, he must be in a strange predicament. Taken all in all, the situation in which he finds himself, according to what you say, explains how he comes to see a Ferry-Clemenceau government as an acceptable solution. . . .

F. E.

237. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

[Beginning of] Nov^{br}/87

My dear General,

We thank you for your letter and cheque. That house-hunting business is over at last and we have found a local habitation to rest and be thankful in when we shall have turned our backs on our boulevard de Port-Royal. We leave our present quarters in December for a house at Le Perreux, near Nogent-sur-Marne, about 20 minutes from Paris by train. And who knows but that the spirit may move you to come over and see us in our new home? We shall have a bit of a bedroom to offer you and plenty of fresh country air, pretty river scenery and a kitchen and a flower garden into the bargain.

Our friends are delighted with the success of the Montluçon¹ congress, the more so that they had confidently ex-

¹ The congress held from October 23rd to 28th at Montluçon by the Labour Unions of France was the first national Trades Union Congress, which was to give birth to the C.G.T. It should be noted that the Trade Union Act had been in force since March 21st, 1884.

pected it to be a failure. Our French friends never seem to be able to forecast results: whenever they expect to succeed they are sure to be beaten, and to succeed when they thought to fail; up to the present it is by no means the men who lead the movement, but the movement that leads the men.

Stanton wrote some time ago to say that the article on the Paris Socialists had been widely circulated and asked me to write a *striking* letter on the St. Gall congress, "as if I had been there" and to tell his readers all about the German socialist leaders and especially "how they look." So I sent him a report of the proceedings, together with a description of the cut of the hair and the colour of the eyes of as many of the men as I know anything about.

Do you share the admiration felt by the officers of the French army for Mme Limouzin's style of beauty?¹ That old "avachi,"² Caffarel, is comparatively innocent and therefore, of course, the scapegoat: Wilson is the most coolly insolent of all rogues in office; the silliest thing he has yet done was sending that trifle of some 40,000 francs to Rouvier.

Yes, it is the impossibility, as you say, in which Clemenceau finds himself to play the out and out Radical, as he had hoped to do, which so unsettles and unhinges him. He hates the Collectivists and fears them, I believe. The contributors to *La Justice*, who have been on short commons this long while, are beginning to mutiny. Longuet, who is in a state of impecuniosity, complained bitterly, the other evening, of his director's slackness in paying his debts.

An ill wind has been blowing of late over the *agglomération parisienne*³ and has been driving a lot of the mem-

¹ Mme Limouzin, the mistress of the former War Minister General Thibaudin, had been arrested in connection with the decorations scandal. She had acted as an intermediary for General Caffarel.

² Sloth.—*Tr.*

³ (Paris aggregate.—*Tr.*) This was the name of the French Workers' Party organization in Paris.

bers mad. One of the "militants," Blanc, a bootmaker and a busybody, but, for all that, a very honest and ardent worker in the cause, suddenly takes it into his head to fall in love with a workgirl employed by Mme Blanc (a good and hard-working woman, with a temper of her own) and after making love to the girl under Mme Blanc's eyes, marries her and goes off with her to America. Mme Blanc, la *maîtresse légitime*, went mad and had to be confined in an asylum.

And there's as bad, or worse, to tell of Lépine—this name will be familiar to you for he is bitten with the vanity to let the world know of him,—this Jules Lépine is a very good-looking young man who possesses an aunt who coddles and nurses him till he looks like a fat man of forty at 26. He has been engaged to his cousin, this aunt's daughter, for many years, but having a harem of his own somewhere about Montmartre, has been in no sort of hurry to enter the holy bonds of wedlock. Instead of courting his cousin he continued to "faire la noce"¹ with numberless "*maîtresses*." When tired of one of these, he commends her to the notice of his friends and begs they will rid him of the woman. Crépin did him this good turn in the case of one "Blanche," Fréjac, another friend, did him a like service "*auprès de Clémence*."² Once as thick as wax, Crépin and Fréjac are now at daggers drawn with Lépine.

Now, from whatever motives, Lépine at last made up his mind to take the leap and get married. So he and his betrothed, a rather pretty girl of 19, with all due rites and ceremonies and the help of both church and law, went in for matrimony. Now, Lépine was barely married when he found out that one of his best friends, V. Boulet, who had formerly shown hospitality to his cast-off mistresses, had not drawn the line at the *maîtresse*, but had extended his kindness to the bride and had indeed forestalled the husband in his marital functions. This Boulet, by the way, had

¹ Have his fling.—*Tr.*

² In relation to Clémence.—*Tr.*

been all along engaged to a girl-friend and cousin of Lépine's bride, which fact may have thrown Lépine off his guard. But worse remains to tell and the story has ceased to be a joke. Lépine's wife has had a miscarriage and some male or female enemy of the husband's (he is generally hated) has denounced the fact to the police as a criminal proceeding.

This is how matters stand for the present. The rottenness of our society breaks out, there is no denying it, as well among the workmen as the Wilsons and a revolution is badly needed to sweep the world clean.

I have just time to catch the post, my dear General, and I write in haste and almost in the dark.

With love to Nim and one and all,

Affectionately,

YOUR LAURA

238. FREDERICK ENGELS TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 12th Nov. 87

My dear Laura,

Nous voilà en plein 1847!¹ The parallel is indeed striking; for "Teste" read: Wilson, for Emile de Girardin read: A. E. Portalis²; and if Grévy is not an exact counterpart of Louis Philippe, he is a very well got-up combination of both Louis Philippe and Guizot, uniting the money-greed of the first with the false dignity of the other. I have devoured this morning the papers Paul was good enough to send me, and thought myself forty years younger. Only that the *république bourgeoise* beats the *bourgeois monarchy* out and out in cheek. Girardin's study was never bro-

¹ Here we are right back to 1847.—*Tr.*

² A. E. Portalis was the director of the *XIX^e Siècle*. From the start of the Caffarel affair, the *XIX^e Siècle* had violently attacked Wilson, calling on Grévy to turn his son-in-law out of the Elysée Palace (residence of the President of the Republic since 1873.—*Tr.*)

ken into nor was his head smashed,¹ and the wholesale suppression of documents seized by police and parquet² has no counterpart in 1847. But all these tricks will be useless, the ball is set a-rolling and roll on it will. What we see now is only the "exposition" of the drama which seems likely to be as creditable to the innate dramatic genius of French history as any of its predecessors.

The most important feature is that this commencement de la fin de la république bourgeoise³ does not come alone. In Russia, too, the end seems near. The ever-repeated promises of an energetic and successful policy with regard to Bulgaria, followed by ever renewed checks and moral defeats, seem to have again united the various elements of opposition—it looks as if there might soon be a crisis. Then there is Unser Fritz⁴ with a now undeniable cancer in his throat. If anything happens to him, the successor to Old William will be a dummer schnoddriger Junge,⁵ of the Gardeleutnant⁶ type, at present an adorer of Bismarck but sure soon to fall out with him because *he* will want to command; a fellow who will soon drive things to extremes and upset the present alliance between feudal nobility and bourgeoisie by sacrificing the latter entirely to the former;

¹ On November 10th Portalis was burgled for the second time, as a result of which a file called "Financial antecedents of the members of the Rouvier Cabinet" was stolen. The following day, on leaving his house, Portalis was attacked.

² (Public prosecutor.—*Tr.*) According to the *XIXe Siècle* of October 21st, 1887, the public prosecutor had demanded the return of documents seized in the course of the searches, whereupon the prefect of police offered to provide copies but formally refused to relinquish the originals.

³ Beginning of the end of the bourgeois republic.—*Tr.*

⁴ Prince Friedrich, the heir to the German imperial throne, suffered from cancer of the throat. Under the title of Friedrich III, he occupied the throne for ninety-nine days and was succeeded by his son, Wilhelm II.

⁵ Stupid insolent youth.—*Tr.*

⁶ Guards' subaltern.—*Tr.*

and who even in army matters is almost sure to fall out with the old experienced generals. And then a crisis is certain. Thus, the critical point is coming nearer everywhere, and I only hope that everywhere people will find as much work cut out for them at home as to prevent them from rushing into war.

La belle Limouzine, alias Scharnet,¹ is indeed a beauty of a peculiar kind to fascinate French officers. But then, she aimed at nothing less than generals, and generals are people of a certain age when tastes begin to be uncertain with some people. It is certainly a very queer new edition of the *Victoires et Conquêtes de l'armée française*²—the conquest of a hunchbacked, lame, repulsive old hag from Karlsruhe! Anyhow she looks energetic and has roused Thibaudin to a rare enthusiasm.

The stories you tell me about the men of the agglomération are characteristic too. The transformation of Paris into a *Luxusstadt*³ under the second empire could not help taking on the working class too. But any serious movement will shake off a good deal of that. The effect upon the intellect of the masses, I am afraid, will be more lasting.

Tomorrow we shall have here a bit of a tussle too. After a deal of hesitation and vacillation the police have at last forbidden all meetings on Trafalgar Square; the radical clubs have answered by calling a great meeting thither for tomorrow afternoon.⁴ Tussy and Edward are of course bound to go. I do not anticipate a serious collision. But it is just possible that Matthews and his colleagues of the Tory government for once show fight; especially as the daily Liberal press have taken the side of the police, and as there is no general election in sight just now, as was the case at the time of the Dod St. affair. If so, there may be a

¹ Madame Limouzin's maiden-name. (See Note 1, p. 67.)

² *Victories and Conquests of the French Army.—Tr.*

³ *Luxury town.—Tr.*

⁴ The most important demonstration of the period took place on November 13th, 1887.

scrimmage and a few arrests. So you better look out for tomorrow evening's papers.

I must shut up now, it's past five and no time to lose if you are to have this letter tomorrow morning. So good-bye. Nim keeps cutting her fingers now with one kitchen tool and then with another. Percy has been to Dresden and Berlin for his buttonhole machines and consumed untold quantities of lager. Pumps and children are well.

Ever yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

239. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS

(*Extract*)¹

November 22nd, 1887

... You will have read in the L... V.'s speech in... K's constituency. He complains, quite rightly, that the Party is growing bourgeois.

That is the tragedy of all extreme parties as soon as the day for them to become "possible" draws near. But ours, in this respect, cannot go beyond a certain limit without betraying itself, and *in my view we have reached that point in France as in Germany. Fortunately there is still time to call a halt.*

240. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

(*Fragment*)

Friday afternoon [25 nov. 1887]

My dear General,

I have not, in my own time, witnessed anything like what has been going on, and as spectators are supposed to see

¹ This extract was published in *Le Socialiste*, No. 115, of November 24th, 1900.

something of the play, I may be permitted to speak of what is passing.¹

Never, I believe, have circumstances been so revolutionary and never have the masses shown themselves so wholly indifferent, so shamefully apathetic. When those Caffarel misdemeanours were first made public, there was a great outcry and some real indignation; when that Caffarel business came to implicate others, there was an outcry of another sort and much sham indignation, for all the upper crust knew well enough all along what finger Wilson and Co. had had in every kind of mud-pie.

The smaller and honester sort of the bourgeois de Paris naïvely believed in the virtues of the rosette and the red ribbon and would have spilt their best wine and their vinegar—not their blood—in defence of their belief that those bits of bunting were *the reward of merit*. You should have seen the faces that they pulled when that Caffarel-d'Andlau-Limouzin traffic came to light: they all—hares and rabbits as they are for valour—swore they would not stand it, talked of going in for socialism and railed at trimmers and opportunists. Little by little, as matters went from bad to worse, their excitement cooled down and a sublime “m'enfoutisme”² got the better of their nervousness. Nobody cares for Nothing. Yet the state of things is surely unexampled: “Parquet, Police et gouvernement”³ at loggerheads, each and all convicted of jobbery, denouncing one another publicly and laying bare one another's wounds after the most cynical fashion. And despite all that, nothing stirring! The apathy of the masses is really baffling,

¹ The decorations scandal reflected on Grévy himself. A question in the Chamber on November 19th led to the fall of the Rouvier Government. But Grévy asked Rouvier to remain in office though promising to resign on November 23rd. He did not finally do so until December 2nd. Throughout the whole of that period demonstrations in the Place de la Concorde took place.

² Don't-give-a-damn-ism.—*Tr.*

³ Public prosecutor, police and government.—*Tr.*

neither does this *calme plat*¹ seem to be the uncomfortable stillness which comes before a storm; people go about their business in the quietest and most unconcerned way in the world and do not appear to care a straw whether rouge or noir² turns up. Grévy, qui n'y est plus, reste encore.³ Wilson "qui n'a plus ni centre ni circonférence"⁴ is none the less alive and kicking and for the rest, nobody knows, nobody cares what's coming. It's just wonderful!

You talk of the French dramatic genius, it had long ago come to be, I think, rather theatrical than dramatic—for Scribe and Sardou had ousted Molière—and it is now as flat and tame as any German play-wright need desire.

Of political chit-chat and gossip, of course, there is no end. Freycinet, Ferry, Floquet, Brisson, Saussier are seesawing it; they and a host of possible and impossible prime ministers have been shaken like the bits of glass in a kaleidoscope into all sorts of "combinations." But thus far nobody has got a long way up the slippery pole at the top of which is stuck the presidential mutton that smells anything but sweet. The "Droite"⁵ are working hard for Saus-sier, others are for Brisson—(another *austere* rascal)—and the Déroulédistes, rather crestfallen, are trying to revivify the dying "Boulangisme." A few months back, upwards of a hundred thousand Frenchmen, not all of them fools, I suppose, had gathered together to see Boulanger off, or rather to prevent his going: hundreds of men flung themselves across the rails, playing a thousand fantastic tricks in honour of their general—(dont le pistolet avait si bien raté⁶)—and swore "qu'il ne partirait pas."⁷ At this

¹ *Dead calm.*—Tr.

² Red or black.—Tr.

³ Grévy, who is no longer up to it, stays on.—Tr.

⁴ Who no longer has either centre or circumference.—Tr.

⁵ Right-wing.—Tr.

⁶ Whose pistol had misfired so completely.—Tr.

⁷ He should not leave.—Tr.

moment a stray man out of work now and again turns a patriotic penny by shouting "Vive Boulanger!"

Guesde, who sees things not as they are but as they might, or ought to, be, has been in an extraordinary, or rather in his ordinary state of excitement; he sees Ferry, and after Ferry, Boulanger, in every bush, making a mouthful of French Socialists. Last night the agglomération held a meeting and only two or three hundred people came to speechify or listen.¹

A revolution that should break out here tomorrow would find the revolutionists as totally unprepared and foolish as heretofore, wherefore the masses do well to bide a bit, but *some* show of demonstration they might have made outside the Palais Bourbon to force the recalcitrant "parlementaires"² of all right and left and middle centres to "go ahead"....

241. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Paris, 27/11/87

My dear Engels,

You are mistaken; it has never been suggested that I should write a study on Fourier; Bebel was to do that. Kautsky spoke to me only of a study on S[aint]-Simon.

In my opinion, the only way of making studies of the pre-1848 Socialists interesting and useful is not by analysing their works, with their contradictory and sometimes very bourgeois notions beneath their reformist and revolutionary semblance, notions buried and lost under an indescribable farrago (I pity Bebel if he has plunged headlong into an analysis of Fourier's writings). In my view, one should in the first place study the economic and political conditions

¹ This refers to the meeting at the Salle Lévis on November 23rd. Laura was no doubt mistaken about the date.

² Parliamentarians.—*Tr.*

created by the revolution, draw attention to the aspirations of those disillusioned by the failure of the revolution and show how that disillusionment was palliated by the conspiracies and abortive attacks of the Republicans and by the mystico-socialist propaganda of Fourier, Saint-Simon and their disciples. In short, one should present the whole historical development on the lines you have laid down on this question in your *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

Conceived in this way, the work would have a completely different character from that which was asked for, and would have required that the same individual should be responsible for the studies on F[ourier] and S[aint]-Simon, who would thus have become no more than personalities shedding light on the intellectual outlook of society at the beginning of the century. And I shall set about this work when I have finished that on which I have been engaged for years, concerning the changes brought about in property, philosophy, art, etc., by the revolution. The two articles which I wrote for Mme Adam, on *language before and after the revolution*,¹ are part of this series.

As for thrice-worshipped Pallas Athene, who was anything but a virgin except in the antique sense, which is to say that she did not have an individual husband but a collectivity of husbands, it is your fault that I applied myself to this. It is your book on the family which, step by step, led me to the study of mythological fables which preserve for us in mythological form the primitive customs of savage and barbarian Greeks, or, at any rate, of clans of various origins who, by their merging, were to become the Greeks.

The situation is growing highly comical: Grévy is clinging on for dear life and parliamentarily they do not know how to prise him off, and to the same degree as the parlia-

¹ This article appeared in the March-April 1888 issue of the *Nouvelle Revue*. (See Letter No. 254, p. 104.)

mentary crisis deepens, apathy gains ground. The Stock Exchange, which seizes upon any occasion to fluctuate, remains steady. The revolutionary Socialists work themselves up talking of demonstrations and barricades in face of the most complete public indifference.

The English population is just as disheartening as the Paris public: one would never have imagined that they would have accepted being banned in this way from Trafalgar Square. Whatever next. How did Champion and Hyndman behave over this business?

Go on sending us the *Pall Mall*, for the French papers give no information about what is happening abroad. We do not know what came of the Cunninghame-Burns affair.¹

You gave us a fright with your: I haven't a penny! How unpleasant that would be! Fortunately your lack of pence is translated into a cheque for twelve pounds, for which we thank you.

Regards to one and all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

242. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

[Dec. 5th 1887]
Monday afternoon

My dear General,

You cannot in London have an idea of the ferment Paris has been in during the few days the fear of Ferry lasted.² The Blanquists, all on fire, had been stirring up the people to mutiny and preaching barricades; the Possibilists, in the opening paragraph of their proclamation, had called

¹ See Note 3 to Letter No. 251, p. 96.

² Jules Ferry stood for President, but his name aroused great opposition. Demonstrations took place continually outside the Chambre des Députés. At the Hôtel de Ville the Town Council remained in permanent session. In the end, helped by recollections of March 1871, Sadi Carnot was elected in the second ballot with 616 votes against General Saussier's 188.

on the masses to march and in a final paragraph had insisted on their standing still. The agglomération—that has little influence in Paris as a body—had pronounced in favour of popular demonstrations. Rochefort, who is always chicken-hearted when not assured of success, did nothing to make the first day's demonstration succeed, but some ten thousand persons having assembled on the Thursday outside the Palais Bourbon, he took heart, and invited the people to gather in their thousands on the day following. And on Friday afternoon there had turned up more than 50,000 men and women, who cried, à bas Ferry¹ with a will. And by this time Ferry is à bas and no mistake. Ferry-Famine, Ferry-Choléra, Ferry-Tonkin is hated not only by the people but by the majority of the small middle class and although the revolutionists took the lead in starting opposition to Ferry, they could not have triumphed without the help of the bourgeois. On Saturday evening when news came of Ferry's discomfiture, Paris "jumped for joy," though many a poor wretch had looked forward to a "row" or a "revolution" as a welcome change for the better from extreme and abject misery. Sadi Carnot? Every one now asks you who is Sadi Carnot, but as long as Ferry is out of the race, nobody, for the moment, cares by whom he has been beaten. Had Ferry been elected, a blood-bath would have been inevitable; the Blanquists were determined to fight and collisions would have occurred all over the town. And to judge from the anarchy and want of organisation which prevails and the success of such orators as call on the people "*de suivre leurs tempéraments* et de faire ce qui bon leur semble,"² the character of the struggle must have been as many-coloured and various as the "tempéraments" of the men taking part in the fight. And what do you think of our Radicals? After flinging mud enough on the old

¹ Down with Ferry!—*Tr.*

² To follow their inclinations and do what seems good to them.—*Tr.*

hunks Grévy to bury a dozen ordinary rogues alive, they go down on their knees to him and implore him to go on playing at president just the least bit longer, to give them time to get Ferry under. And they had known Ferry's little game all along and had refused to do anything to spoil it, deferring from day to day to inquire into the jobberies and the robberies of the "brothers." The leaders of the Left are "des poules mouillées,"¹ as Guesde calls them. They were in a fever of a funk on the day of the elections, many of them taking care not to sleep in their own beds that night. Between the reactionists on their right and the revolutionists on their left, the Radicals act a most preposterous part.

But now that Ferry, despite the pope and Mgr Freppel, has been hooted off the stage, what next? It is a poor fifth act to so strange and eventful a comedy as has been playing here, to wind up with a Sadi Carnot, "le modéré des modérés." Clemenceau, who got Carnot in, is likely once again to be shelved and for the rest la belle France is not a whit better off than she was with the old shark of a beau-père:²—Carnot, by the bye, has got a good-for-nothing gendre³ too!

It is past five, my dear General, and getting pitch-dark.

I must wind up with love and affectionate remembrances to all.

We move in about a fortnight! a nice cheerful season for a house-warming.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

Love to Nim.

¹ Milksops.—*Tr.*

² Father-in-law.—*Tr.*

³ Son-in-law.—*Tr.*

243. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS¹

London, Dec. 5th, 87

My dear Lafargue,

Like you, I cried *Victory!* yesterday morning. It was clear that, had it not been for the Paris populace, the Right would have been very wary of voting for an impossible candidate and would have joined forces with the opportunist-speculators in favour of Ferry. In which case—a fight, and probably defeat.

The drama proceeds according to all the rules. In 1878, victory of the people and the army over the monarchists only; in 1887, victory over the monarchists and opportunists *combined*. The next victory must be over the monarchists, opportunists and radicals combined.

After all, Clemenceau seems to have contributed not a little to the result by dropping Freycinet in favour of Carnot.² It was the least he could do after falling headlong into the Ferryist trap. But it is better than nothing. And in the present circumstances, such a *legal* outcome, brought about under the menacing pressure of the Paris workmen, is all we could wish for. It is like the best days of the great revolution, a period of ascent.

What was the attitude of the soldiers? I mean soldiers of the *line*. These bloodless victories are an excellent way of accustoming the soldier to the supremacy and infallibility of the popular masses. One or two more occasions of this sort and the soldier will be bound to mutiny.

Sadi Carnot will not do much. The presidency is dished after what has happened. The president has been reduced

¹ An extract from this letter was published in *Le Socialiste*, No. 110, of December 10th, 1887. This is the original text in full.

² It was on the initiative of Clemenceau, who realised that Freycinet's candidature was not a character to bar Ferry's way to the presidency, that support was given to Sadi Carnot.

to a puppet who appoints and dismisses ministers on the orders of the Chamber.

But I hope the proceedings over the scandals will not be dropped. I think it has gone too far for them to stop. The bourgeois will shout that it has gone far enough, that one should be magnanimous and let bygones be bygones—but let us hope that the prosecution of the thieves will be the only way for the Radicals to come to power.

Yours ever,

F. E.

The S[ocial] D[emocratic] Federation was to have held a meeting in Traf[algar] Sq[uare] yesterday, but the *D[aily] News* does not say a word about it, you may be sure that Hyndman did not run any risk.

244. FREDERICK ENGELS TO LAURA LAFARGUE IN PARIS*

London, 24 Dec. 1887

My dear Laura,

Nobody is gladder to be in possession of your new address than Nim who was in an awful funk—not so much about the arrival of the pudding than about *one* of the cakes sent along with it, and which she intends for the children, and as there was no safe and quick way of communicating with you and as she knows Paul capable of eating two cakes in one day, she was very much afraid indeed. She hopes now that this will arrive before that cake has been broken into and that you will be good enough to see it delivered à quid de droit.¹

I enclose cheque £25.—the add[itional] five is a little Christmas present for you which no doubt will soon find investment.

¹ To the proper quarter.—*Tr.*

Schorl[emmer] is here and I expect him in every minute so shall have to close this letter before he comes in.

I was in Brighton last Tuesday to see Gumpert who is there¹—generally very well outwardly but still very much shaken morally—absolute loss of self-confidence and energy. His poor young wife has to suffer very much in consequence. Perhaps when spring comes on, we may shake him up a bit.

The *P[all]* *M[all]* *G[azette]* is getting horribly dull—the paper is either a chronic bore or an acute sensation and chamber of horrors. Stead is out of date—a puritan fanatic who ought to have lived in 1648, quite out of date nowadays. But useful and good in one way—he, though full of it himself, hates respectability and middle class cant.

Will send you some American comic papers after tomorrow, must show them here first. The parvenu in all his glory—how they are enchanted to see themselves in evening dress! And the vulgarity breaks out all over their skins especially when talking about socialism. One almost gets a prejudice in favour of English “Society” after that.

Yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

Jollymeier was very “bould” last night and lost fivepence to Nim.

245. FREDERICK ENGELS TO PAUL LAFARGUE IN PARIS

London, Dec. 29, 87

My dear Lafargue,

I postponed my answer until today in order to have from Kautsky the precise details about the worthy Oberwinder.²

¹ Engels had known Dr. Gumpert in Manchester. He was the doctor who had attended the Marx family.

² In *Le Socialiste*, No. 113 (December 31st, 1887), under the heading: “Report from Geneva,” mention is made of the discovery in Switz-

I knew the story in general, but I preferred to be sure. Ober[winder] played a quite important part in the Viennese movement after 1873. He was a former Lassallean and the editor of *Volkswille*, a weekly paper. At that time the deputies to the Austrian parliament were elected by the provincial diets, and the Liberals agitated for direct election by districts. O[berwinder] took their part with a fanaticism the more disinterested insofar as he was in the pay of the Liberals—through the intermediary of a Mr. Szeps of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*. On the grounds that the Liberals' demand was the first step towards universal suffrage, he urged the workers to support them. Scheu opposed this; O[berwinder] had a majority in Vienna and forced a split between Scheu and his friends; they, who had a majority in the provinces, founded the *Gleichheit* in Wiener Neustadt and attacked O[berwinder] through their journal in every way imaginable, taking him to task for the above-mentioned deeds and for others. O[berwinder] brought an action against Sch[eu] for slander, but the jury found that Sch[eu] had proved his case and acquitted him. In the course of these proceedings it was further established that O[berwinder] had spent the sum of 10,000 florins (25,000 francs), subscribed for the starting of a *daily* paper, on his *weekly* paper, and other similar things. In short, the case ruined O[berwinder]'s position in Vienna; the Liberals had no further interest in paying him; he went to Hamburg and formed connections with the Breuerist group of Lassalleans, one of the sects in which moribund Lassallism had buried itself. They were petty bourgeois pure and simple; for the last ten years the sect has been extinct. So O[berwinder] went to Paris. About a year ago

erland of spies in Bismarck's pay who had wormed their way into German socialist circles. These individuals received 500 marks a month from the Imperial police. Amongst them were Oberwinder, a Paris journalist, and Christian Haupt, of whom more was to be heard later. This list, said the reporter, had been communicated to the German Socialists by a high Swiss official.

he published a pamphlet calling upon the workers to rally to Bismarck's policy, to support it, so that in return he would grant them social reforms.

As you see, he is a Lassallean who can claim that he has never betrayed *his* own views. 1st. He believes in the omnipotence of universal suffr[age], and for that reason supported the Austrian Liberals; 2nd. Lassalle demanded that, in the fight between royalty and the bourgeoisie, the workers should range themselves on the side of royalty—and that is why O[berwinder] is Bismarck's supporter. In view of the extinction of Lassallism in Germany, why should not this former Lassallean take Bismarck's money quite as readily as that of the Austrian Liberals? The only thing is that, once he had taken the first Bismarck penny, he must have realised that he was dealing with someone stronger than himself and that he was caught.

The discovery made by our people in Switzerland may be of extreme importance: the Swiss authorities will do their utmost to compromise Prussia and the Geneva affair—a Nihilist plot—will have repercussions. There's the stupidity of the Prussian police for you! This Haupt, caught red-handed by some bold workers who were searching his place—which he submits to!—and who found his correspondence with Krüger—this Haupt is such a *muff* that he admits having been a police-spy for seven years! And that's the man to whom they entrust a mission of that sort! After that are you surprised by the bribery of Nonné and Oberwinder? But as Heine always said: Prussian police-spies are the most dangerous because they are not paid—they are always hoping to be, and this makes them energetic and intelligent. Once Prussia begins paying them they will become [worthless¹].

I hope Laura has received the *Pucks* and *Judges* sent yesterday.

¹ The word is indecipherable.

Your protégé Stead is being very useful at the moment, which nobody denies; but that does not prevent this man, who defends in Russia what he attacks in Ireland, from living in a century other than our own. You should also stand up for the Salvation Army, for without it the right to hold processions and discussions in the street would be more decayed in England than it is.

Nim, Jollymeier, Pumps and the children are at the theatre seeing *Hans the Boatman*, an American play in which there are a lot of children and a big dog.

Laura's painting will not dry easily in the weather we are having.

A thousand good wishes for the New Year.

Ever yours,

F. E.

I am sending my card to Mesa at 36, rue du Bac. Is that still his address? Does *Le Socialiste* not come out any longer?

1888

246. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

*Jan[ua]ry 16th/88
Le Perreux*

My dear General,

Things are anything but shipshape with us as yet, but it has begun to be possible to find a decent corner to settle down in and jot down a few lines. Your last letter to me is old by this time, however young and fresh in my remembrance; but if you have ever moved from Paris into the suburbs with furniture and books and flowerpots and a lot of useless rubbish, you will know what a job it is; how glad one is to snatch one's meals and wet one's whistle and get a few hours of rest as one may and how letter-writing is as much out of the question as shaking hands with the man in the moon.

A removal from Paris to Le Perreux in midwinter is an aggravation of the ordinary evils of removing. Fixtures, such as one finds in Paris, looking-glasses, grates, etc. are wanting here. Then, we got here, as you know, in the worst and wettest of seasons, into a region which, for mud and underfoot dirt, beats all Junction Roads hollow. The fatal consequence of the dampness, as you hit it, was, and that has been the crown of all our troubles, that *the paint wouldn't dry*. And while the paint was drying we had to

“piétiner sur place.”¹ The worst of it was that, tired of “piétinant sur place,” we began to piétiner² on the paint—which wasn’t dry—so that I had to lay on a second coating and that second coating dried less than the first and our footprints are all over it and thus we have been moving in the worst of vicious circles. However “time and the hour run through”—and run away with—the roughest day and à l’heure qu’il est,³ things are beginning (as you like to put it) to find their level.

Le Perreux, our patrie,⁴ is the refuge of all the riff-raff of Paris, respectable thieves, swindlers and sharpers who make it a halting-place on their way to Mazas.⁵ Sleek and well-clad “commerçants”⁶ with well-lined pouches settle down here for a season and live on the fat of the land in ornamental villas till one fine morning they are clapped on the shoulder by some limb of the law and marched off to prison. People in this place all eye each other askance; nobody trusts his neighbour and every Perreuxien lives apart from his fellow Perreuxien like an unsociable spider in his web. As we have not come here with the intention of tasting the sweet of social intercourse with the people of Nogent[?], of course this state of things does not affect us. With the house and the country we are well pleased—to the bewilderment of our Parisian friends who ever since our flight from their Ville-Lumière examine us, when they meet us, with that inquiring and doubtful look with which one contemplates persons of whose sanity one is not sure. We are snugly and comfortably quartered here, neither is it necessary to await the returning season of sunnier skies and more genial days to feel at home here. Barring the mud, which is infamous, there are no drawbacks to speak

¹ Mark time.—*Tr.*

² Trample.—*Tr.*

³ By this time.—*Tr.*

⁴ Our home-country.—*Tr.*

⁵ Prison for solitary confinement on the boulevard Mazas (now Diderot), demolished in 1898.

⁶ Tradesmen.—*Tr.*

of and however little prized by Paris people—whose friendship is not equal to the wear and tear of journeying to Le Perreux in cold weather—country life in winter has charms of its own. I wish you could see our garden. In front of the house we have some fine trees; chestnuts, ashes, firs and poplars and at the back are plenty of fruit-trees, vines and ground enough for a well-stocked kitchen garden. Paul is delighted with the “property” and while I have brushed and painted and rubbed and scrubbed and tinkered and tailored, he has been hammering, sawing, planing, nailing, digging and making himself generally and unusually useful. We have, indeed, both of us been considerably more useful than ornamental of late; Paul goes about in great wooden clogs and inexpressibles in an inexpressible state of raggedness (he talks of buying a pair of corduroys) while I accompany him in a most draggle-tailed condition, smeared with paint and smutted with coal-dust. *La vie à la campagne est “cochonne”*¹ as Madame de Staël said. Allow me further to inform you that we have got a poultry-yard, an intelligent cock with a modest harem and that we have a dog who is a bitch and whose name is Diana, a six months old terrier who looks like Carlo’s daughter. I have just caught her burying some potatoes we had given her for lunch in a hole in the garden. What does that signify?

A thousand thanks for letters and papers and the Christmas box you so kindly sent me. A part of it I invested in a pair of flaming curtains, all red and yellow—for our dining-room, and some of it is still in my pocket and makes me feel an important and influential member of society. Helen’s glorious plum-pudding which we buried in our bellies with all “pomp and circumstance” and libations of white wine, gave up the ghost last night and now lives in our memory.

¹ Country life is swinish.—*Tr.*

Johnny and all the children send their loves and thanks to Father Nim and from ourselves accept, my dearest General, all good wishes.

Your affectionate,
LAURA

Love to Nim from both of us and to Pumps and Percy and the little ones.

247. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 25.1.88

My dear Engels,

Thank you for the cheque and the stamps.

You should go and see a specialist for your eyes since you do not wish to come to Paris to consult the oculist who, in five minutes and a stroke of the lancet in the lachrymal duct, cured me after two other oculists had hacked my eyelids about. If you and Hélène came to Paris, we could arrange for you to stay at Le Perreux; we have two empty rooms which it would be only a matter of fitting out with hired furniture.

I am sure that the translation of the *Manifesto*¹ will be a great success in England; but you should profit by the occasion to give the English a little reminder of their socialist past, as well as of the *Young England* movement, which they have largely forgotten.

As for us, we shall not forget the cask of wine; tomorrow we are going to the warehouse to see a merchant who has sent us some samples.

¹ The first English translation of the *Communist Manifesto* appeared in 1850. The reference here is to the translation made by Moore and published in England in 1888.

Engels' preface is dated January 30, 1888.

Laura has too many things to say to you to put them into my letter.

Regards to Hélène, to Moore and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

248. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS

Le Perreux, February 5th, 1888

My dear Engels,

We have wine in the cellar, but at the same time the money has gone from our purse; a cask of light wine delivered to us, all expenses of transport to Le Perreux and duty paid, costs us 165 francs; as it contains 226 litres, it comes to 73 centimes the litre; a litre is about a fifth more than the ordinary bottles of so-called Bordeaux wine. The wine is good and not adulteration; we know one of the firm's employees and it is on his recommendation that we have bought it. We shall let it settle and then put it in bottles which we have acquired and when it is tapped we shall drink a bottle to your health, with regrets that you should not be with us to taste it.

What a sensation Bismarck has just created with the publication of the Austro-German Treaty¹; the French are dumbfounded by it. They have an unbounded, idiotic faith in Russia; it is Russia who will rid them of the Prussian nightmare. That view is widespread; it shows their imbecility rather than their fear of Bismarck; they feel themselves incapable of beating the Prussians and look to the Cossacks to lend them a hand.

There is no doubt at all that the unexpected publication of this Treaty is Bismarck's reply to the advances made by

¹ On February 3rd, 1888, the Berlin *Reichsanzeiger* and the Vienna *Abendpost* published the text of the Treaty concluded on October 7th, 1879, between Austria and Germany. This Treaty provided for the combining of the armed forces of the Central European empires and was in essence aimed against Russia.

the Czar and the Czarina to the Austrian ambassador at the time of the Petersburg reception. The publication will have the effect of reassuring the Russians and the French, by demonstrating to them that Bismarck has long since taken his precautions. The European crisis which must inevitably come—for you cannot keep these gigantic and ruinous armies standing idle—will recede again.

Le Socialiste is passing through a crisis which will deprive it of such little life as it ever had. There is positively no way of running a weekly paper in France, the experience with the earlier *Socialiste*¹ convinced me of that and I was therefore opposed to it coming out again; but Guesde, who does not face facts, wanted a paper and he persuaded the others; they have run through several thousands of francs to no purpose: had they been kept in reserve they could have been very useful in certain circumstances. The situation is pretty bad for us at the moment: the Possibilists' socialism perfectly suits the co-operative and trade unionist element in Paris; and at the same time the Blanquists, with their politicians' revolutionism, reflect the sentiments of a large number. We have succeeded in inculcating in them the need for economic change, but they will not hear about it; they expect it to fall from the skies. Paris is more reactionary than one thinks, despite its outbursts.

I forgot to tell you to send me a cheque for £15 to fill the gap left by the wine.

Laura sends you her love.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ *Le Socialiste* ran from August 29th, 1885, to March 26th, 1887. The second series started appearing on June 11th, 1887.

249. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Feb. 7th, 88

My dear Lafargue,

Here is the cheque for £15.

I am overwhelmed with work. The business of the English *Manifesto*¹ is finally concluded and I await the proofs in a few days. I look to Laura for improvements to the translation—my revision had to be done in some haste and it would be of the greatest help to me for a reprint.

Then I am writing a critique of the whole Bismarckian policy which is to come out as a supplement to the *Force Theory* in *Anti-Dühring*,² or rather as its application to current practice. I have promised the MS. for the 20th and you can well imagine that it has to be thoroughly considered and reconsidered. Now there's a thing that would have done for the *Socialiste* had you not killed it off just in time.

The disappearance of the *Soc[ialiste]*³ means your disappearance as a party from the Paris scene. The Possibilists keep *Le Prolétariat* going all right; if you cannot do as much it means that you are dwindling instead of growing; the fault does not lie in that it is a *weekly* paper—so is the other. Meanwhile I am loath to believe that the Paris workmen have definitely entered a period of decline. The French are unpredictable and capable of all manner of surprises. So I wait.

As for Bismarck, he, no less than the Russian Panslavists and the French chauvins, is playing with fire. The present situation suits him so long as old Lehmann (you know this nickname for Wilhelm) still jogs. along. Bis-

¹ See Note 1, p. 89.

² This refers to *Gewalt und Ökonomie bei der Herstellung des neuen deutschen Reiches*. This work was not published until the beginning of 1895 in *Neue Zeit* (14th Year, Nos. 22 to 26).

³ The last number of *Le Socialiste* appeared on February 4th, 1888.

marck has every reason to render himself indispensable against the day when the old man dies. He has hatched quite a plot with young Wilhelm¹ against the Kronprinz²; he tried to drive him to laryngotomy, i.e., to get him to have his throat cut. The Kronprinz and his wife know it quite well, so that B[ismarck] had made himself well nigh intolerable to them. And therein lies one of the reasons why the new bill against the Soc[ialists] miscarried in the Reichstag.³ A Catholic from Cologne said in open session that it was quite possible that before September 30th (when the existing law expires) there would be other people in the government.

This debate on the anti-soc[ialist] bill was a great triumph for us. The facts put forward by Singer and Bebel⁴ overwhelmed the gov[ernment] and Bebel's speech in particular was a real masterpiece. It is the first time our people have gained a complete victory in the Reichstag. The law will be extended for two years, probably for the last time.⁵ But all the arguments and all the facts in the world would not have sufficed for the rejection of the government's demands had they been able to believe in the speedy succession of young Wilhelm, who is a true Prussian, as arrogant and bumptious as the Berlin officers of 1806 who

¹ The future Wilhelm II, son of the Crown Prince. The latter, who reigned under the name of Friedrich III, suffered from cancer of the throat and was, in fact, shortly afterwards operated on at San Remo.

² Crown Prince.—*Tr.*

³ The anti-socialist law had to be renewed every two years. On this occasion Bismarck's Government proposed introducing more stringent provisions. The debate opened on January 27th in the Reichstag and, after three days' discussion, the bill was referred to committee.

⁴ In their speeches, Bebel and Singer emphasised that the carrying out of the law was in practice entrusted to the police and recalled the part played by Bismarck's police-spies who had recently been exposed by the Zurich *Sozial-Demokrat*.

⁵ The law was in fact repealed on October 1st, 1890.

whetted their sabres on the doorsteps of the French embassy, only to surrender them in defeat two months later to Napoleon's soldiers.

The possibility of war has made me turn once again to military studies. If there is no war, so much the better. But should it break out—which depends on all manner of imponderable events—I hope that the Russians will be soundly beaten and that there will be nothing very decisive on the French frontier—in which case there will be a chance of reconciliation. With 5 million Germans under arms called upon to fight for things which are of no concern to them, Bismarck will no longer have the upper hand.

In the meanwhile I look after my eyes which are improving under my specialist's treatment, although he has not slashed my tear duct. But I have to take care of them. My love to Laura.

Ever yours,

F. E.

250. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*
(*Fragment*)

[*About Febr. 8th, 1888*]

...wine had been set a-flow, there was no stopping it and I had to go on bottling till the fountain had run dry. Upwards of 260 bottles! I thought, for I was in a deuced cramped and uncomfortable position that that cask was a perennial spring. I am sorry to say that I was glad when the fountain stopped playing. There are 240 bottles of clear, rosy-red wine and about 28 turbid ones, which will make excellent vinegar for pickling purposes. The wine costs us 61 centimes le litre. We pay 80 centimes for our vinegar. We have also invested in a small cask of beer which, after bottling, is excellent and costs us 2 d/fr. per litre. Henceforth I mean to be thirstier than ever and with a sense of

doing my duty by our beer-merchant—"la brasserie des patriotes."¹

Le Socialiste is dead. It had been galvanised into a semblance of life by a pocketful of Deville's money, but to all intents and purposes it had been dead a long while and it was time to get on with the burying. Is it possible, in the long run, to keep a paper going that the public refuses to support? The *Cri du peuple* has been ruined by the Possibilists; the *Intransigeant* was dying of inanition, despite Rochefort's popularity, when Vaughan, an excellent manager, bethought him of making it a half-penny paper and having it hawked all over the town and it is now the most popular of papers.

Yes, in France one may always count on "le divin imprévu"²: the Parisians, in especial, are a people of fits and starts, but your every-day, working-day Parisian is a duller animal than most people think for.

How loud that young Brandenburg cock³ crows on the hereditary, imperial dunghill since his poor father's voice is stopped!

Good-bye, my dearest General; I think I have attended quite long enough on the little leisure you have from your grave occupations and I hasten to make my exit with a kiss.

I wish the trees would go into leaf that I might find out what they are. In their present undress I cannot recognise them. It's true that I doubt if I should know my best friends—men or women—with their clothes off.

Love from both of us to all of you.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

Forgive this unsightly envelope!

¹ The patriots' beer-shop.—*Tr.*

² The charmingly unforeseen.—*Tr.*

³ The future Wilhelm II.

251. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 25th feb. 1888

My dear Laura,

I have just half an hour before post-time to give you a sign of life after sending off the last proofs of the *Manifesto*. I hope you have better weather than we here: nothing but keen east winds, frost, snow showers, varying with a few hours' thaw. Very uncomfortable with the English system of fire-places, but then this weather cannot last for ever.

I have not sent the *P[all] M[all] G[azette]* of late because there is literally nothing in it. It is strictly a London local paper, and consequently deadly dull when nothing is stirring in London.

Bebel and Singer had a glorious victory in the Reichstag, not only at the first but also at the third reading of the bill.¹ It was exactly like O'Brien's victory over Balfour² (who is a Scotch Puttkamer all over). Most of our people were at the meeting³ last Monday to welcome C. Graham and Burns; O'Br[ien] spoke there again, and very well. Cunninghame Graham who already before, at Glasgow, had publicly stated that he stood on the basis of Kellery [?] "absolutely and entirely" here again proclaimed the nationalisation of *all means of production*. So we are rep-

¹ On February 19th the anti-socialist bill was given its third reading and Bebel made a speech expounding the aims of the Socialists and attacking state socialism.

² A reference to the speeches on the Irish Question by O'Brien on February 16th and 17th, 1888, in the House of Commons during the debate on Parnell's Amendment.

³ On February 18th Cunninghame Graham and John Burns, who had been sentenced on January 18th for their part in the November 13th (1887) Trafalgar Square demonstration, came out of prison. On the 20th a meeting was held, under the chairmanship of Davitt, at which Professor Stuart, Mrs. Besant and W. O'Brien spoke. They paid tribute to the similarity of the struggle of the Irish people and that of the London proletariat in their fight for freedom.

resented in the British Parliament too. Hyndman who had not been asked to speak, had got some of his fellows to call for him, took possession of the platform, but only to attack violently and personally some Radical M.P.'s present—invited guests—who by the way had been told before by others, quite sufficiently, about their shortcomings. This attack of H[yndman]'s however was so uncalled for and out of place that he was hooted down.

You will have heard that Reuss has sued Morris for libel for calling him a spy in the *Commonweal*.¹ Evidently the work of the Bismarckian embassy. M[orris] was very funky at first, not having any evidence ready at hand, but I think we have since secured enough to make it a defeat for Puttkamer and Co. if they should persevere, which I doubt. I don't think Reuss will venture going into the witness box; perjury is only allowed to regular British police-constables.

Nim wishes me to ask you again to give Longuet a hint that he better begin repaying a little of that money. She seems very sore on that point.

Shall we have war? If so, it will be the most foolish thing on the part of the Czar and the French chauvins that they can be guilty of. I have lately studied the military chances. What Bismarck says, that Germany can send out $2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 millions of drilled and well-officered men, is rather below than above the truth. Russia will never have as many as a million actually on the seat of war, and France can send out $1\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ million of drilled and well-officered men; beyond that, officers and sergeants will be either absent or unfit. Thus Germany alone will be quite capable of resisting, for a time at least, and attack on both sides at once. The great advantage of Germany is in the greater number of drilled men, and especially of sergeants

¹ On January 7th, 1888, *Commonweal* published an article on "Police-Spies Exposed" (p. 1/II), signed by the editors. This article congratulated the *Sozial-Demokrat* for having exposed thirteen of Bismarck's spies, of whom one was Reuss, a journalist in London.

and officers. As to quality, the French will be fully equal to the Germans, as far as the *line* is concerned; beyond that, the German *Landwehr* is far better than the French territorials. The Russians I consider worse than they used to be, they have adopted a system of universal liability to service for which they are not civilised enough and certainly are very short of good officers. And corruption is there as rife as ever—and probably will also play a certain part on the French side, if we are to judge from the Wilsoniades and other scandals.

Jollymeier is very melancholy that you have not written him a line yet with that gold pen. Have you no mercy with him? He will be here again in about 4 weeks, for Easter, which this year falls on Bismarck's birthday, alias All fools' day. Very proper too, after people have been foolish enough for 1800 years to celebrate such a fantastical festival!

Methinks I hear a certain bell calling me to the consumption of—I dare say veal cutlets. Farewell for today, and may the breeches of Paul, with their excessive length, lose also their perfume of sour size—a perfume too well known, alas, to an old Manchesterian!

Yours ever,

F. ENGELS

252. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 25/2/88

My dear Engels,

I am sending you this extract from one of this morning's papers¹ to give you some idea of the nasty tricks the cold is playing on the Parisians.

"Snow in Paris.

"The weather which had been very sharp and cold all

¹ *Le Matin*, February 26th, 1888 (p. 3/IV).

day yesterday, suddenly changed in the evening and, towards ten o'clock, heavy snow started falling.

"Falling on absolutely frozen ground, it stuck in a most curious way and formed on asphalt and wooden pavings a slippery, glass-like surface on which the wretched horses lost their footing and fell down pitifully.

"All the roads leading to the boulevards, and particularly the Chaussée-d'Antin cross-roads, presented a woeiful sight.

"The heavy omnibuses which run from the Bastille to the Madeleine got stuck, their three horses struggling on the ground in the thills without being able to get up. And everywhere wretched fiacres littered the roadway, their shafts broken under the weight of the unhappy fallen animals who were maddened and unable to regain a foothold on the slippery paving.

"Smithies were set up in the open and, somehow or other, they tried to put ice-nails in the horses' shoes, whilst the cabbies laid out their rugs to enable them to get up.

"The good nature of the Parisian showed itself in all its artlessness. Everyone did their best to unharness the horses, pushed the vehicles in distress and, as gaiety never forfeits its rights, heaped gibes on the obstinate passengers—who insisted on remaining in the omnibuses and carriages.

"The exit from the theatres was epic and recalled the great frost of 1876."

The weather is the main topic of discussion. Everyone bewails it, except the coalmen who sell their wares by the cartload. I must admit the cold is exceptional; for two weeks the ground has been covered with snow and the temperature below zero. Fortunately we keep well; Laura stands the cold so admirably that she claims she could undertake an expedition to the Pole.

What Lavrov complains of where the weather is concerned is his coalman's bill. I saw him this morning; a

friend who has come from Russia brought him news of Lopatin. He told him something so strange as to be incredible: it appears that somebody had bequeathed his library to Lopatin who received permission to have it moved to his room. Another piece of news from Russia which has, it appears, all the earmarks of truth: there was an attempt on the Czar a month ago by an officer who, having missed his mark, tried unsuccessfully to blow out his brains. He is horribly mutilated and is being tended, incommunicado, in a Petersburg hospital.

Since I am on the subject of the Russians, let me give you news of Kovalevsky,¹ at present in Paris. He received the Geographical Society's Gold Medal at the same moment as he resigned his chair, and since then Stockholm University has invited him to come and give a series of twelve lectures on the evolution of the family and of property.

It so happens I am just writing a pamphlet on the evolution of property for the Zurich library. I show it as assuming the communist form amongst primitive peoples, amongst whom the only articles to be individually owned are weapons and implements personally acquired. The breaking up of primitive communal property gives rise to collective property, which leads to capitalist property, and it is during the capitalist epoch that the communist form is restored.

Would not the English publisher who is going to put out the translation of the *Manifesto* like to print a pamphlet of mine?

During this time of excessive cold one has to eat and drink an enormous amount and I can assure you that we carry out that part of the programme to admiration; but as we fill the belly the purse is emptied; it is flat at the moment; so I would ask you to send us a cheque for 15 pounds to inflate it again.

¹ This refers to the Russian ethnologist who was a friend of Marx and Engels.

Give our love to Hélène, Tussy, Pumps and the others
—and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

P.S. Thank you very much for sending us the *Pall Mall* whose pen-and-ink drawings are very entertaining. What a strange fellow Graham is! A muscular Socialist, with more intelligence in his legs and fists than in his head. It is all very well for boxers and sportingmen to become Socialists on the other side of the Channel; it wouldn't do here.

We have just received your letter; the scent of my trousers has evaporated, to assume another.

The postman has just trudged over the snow in our garden to hand me your letter—better than the sunshine which at last lights up our castle!

I will write you news of Longuet as soon as may be. Thank you for your military notes, eagerly devoured, like all from the same hand by your affectionate,

KAKADOU¹

253. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 29/2/88

My dear Engels,

Your letter, which has just come, has put new heart into us. People here, even the most chauvinist, believe in France's military inferiority. Recently Jules Simon, after referring in an article to the habitual bragging of Prussian officers, thought he was saying a great deal by asserting that the defeat of France would be by no means so easy²: after Bismarck's speech several papers spoke of the

¹ Laura's childhood nickname. (Laura Lafargue's post-script was in English in the original.—*Tr.*)

² Jules Simon's editorial: "Fatal Heedlessness" in *Le Matin* of February 15th, 1888 (p. 1/I-II).

possibility of F[rance] being dismembered in the event of a defeat. For them to venture to say such things in the press, you will realise that people are in general quite convinced that F[rance] would not stand up well to a German blow; but what you say in your letter about the fortifications in the East is altogether reassuring.¹ The Prussian General Staff must know the situation and that is probably why Germany is not so very anxious to start a war which might be complicated by Russian intervention. But if Germany does not start, you may be sure that France will make no move. How, then, will the situation be resolved? The European countries, who already have difficulty in balancing their budgets, cannot go on indefinitely increasing their war budget. It would be strange if general disarmament were to be the outcome of general armament. But in that case, what is to be done with those masses of proletarians who would be disbanded? The workshops are already overcrowded; for years past France has had to cope with an invasion of foreign workmen; resolutions are moved in the Chamber on this matter. What a dilemma for bourgeois society, ruined by armaments and thrown into confusion by disarmament!

L'Intransigeant will have given you news about the Possibilists on the Town Council.² They are the open allies of the opportunists who tried at all costs to wreck Humbert's candidature for the vice-chairmanship; they wanted to give him a lesson for his conduct during the pres-

¹ Engels considered France well protected by the fortifications in the East and the new defence works round Paris. (See Letter to Sorge of January 7th, 1888.)

² In *L'Intransigeant* of February 29th, 1888 (p. 1/VI-2/I), the column "A l'Hôtel de Ville" reported the change of officers on the Town Council. In the ballot for the election of vice-chairmen, the Possibilists had not hesitated to form a coalition with the Right wing to prevent Humbert's election and to get Joffrin returned as the second vice-chairman.

idential election.¹ Humbert is one of those who urged the Council to come out against Ferry's election; he presided over the session at which it was proposed that a deputation should be sent to the Left in the Chamber; the Possibilists and the opportunists tried to defeat the motion by making endless speeches. Humbert cut them short by closing the session. But this Possibilist insolence shows that they have firm confidence in the idiocy of the electorate, in which they are not wrong: as a matter of fact, Brousse's success is due to his unswerving reliance on human stupidity, the one thing that never disappoints.

This success of the Possibilists will terrify the Radicals on the Council who stood in great fear of them as it was: you will have seen in *Le Socialiste* how they allowed the Possibilists to oust our people from the Labour Exchange.² The Possibilists will have the upper hand on the Town Council; so much the better. The more powerful they are, the more enemies they will make for themselves. They have utterly ruined the *Cri du peuple* which has been reduced to living from hand to mouth, whereas in the days of the old editors it put 2 or 3 hundred francs' profit each day in the Doctor's pocket.

I have every reason to believe that my article will be published in March in the *Nouvelle Revue*; Mme Adam wrote me a charming letter apologising for not having printed it before owing to obstructions caused by Cyon's management.

¹ In the course of the events which marked the presidential election of December 4th, 1887, the Town Council had played its part in preventing Ferry's election by, amongst other things, deciding to remain in permanent session. Memories of 1871 led the Radicals in the end to nominate Sadi Carnot.

² In *Le Socialiste* of December 31st, 1887, and January 11th, 1888, two articles related how the revolutionary trade unions were removed from the administration of the Labour Exchange by the Possibilists' manoeuvres on the Town Council.

Thanks for cheque. It is terribly cold—8 or 10 degrees below zero; everyone is sick of it.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

I shall make good use of what you tell me about Sonnenschein.

254. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 18/3/88

My dear Engels,

Will the new Emperor¹ serve Bismarck the nasty trick of staying alive? This Hohenzollern shows signs of uncommon vitality; he must have the staying power of the devil to go through the ceremonies he does whilst breathing through a tube which is choked up every 20 minutes. For long years he was waiting for the old man's death to avenge himself on Bismarck and put his plans into effect. If he were able to last out six months—if it is cancer that's possible—he would reshuffle the cards and when his son, the paralytic, comes to the throne, he will no longer be able to have it all his own way, for he will meet with more or less organised opposition everywhere. If the Socialists are clever they will make hay while the sun shines.

It is we who cut a sorry figure in the midst of this Boulangermania. The French are mad. The enthusiasm for this man is extraordinary; the more he is attacked, the higher he rises in popular esteem. In France political parties must needs have a general: the people of '48 made Cavaignac—the brother of the good one—come from Africa; Gambetta courted Gallifet; Clemenceau thought of Boulanger at one point, but Laguerre, Laissant, etc., who con-

¹ The Emperor Wilhelm I died on March 9th. His son, Friedrich III, succeeded him.

stitute a parliamentary group between Clemenceau and the Socialists, have taken Boulanger under their protection until such time as they put themselves under the protection of his sword, loyal like MacMahon's. Rochefort makes an enormous amount of money out of Boulanger; his paper, of which I sent you the second edition on Thursday, has sold over a hundred thousand copies in Paris; it was the first to report the dismissal.¹ No one knows how this will end. Rochefort, Laguerre & Co. are in a fair way to forge a dictator, who could become embarrassing, although Boulanger has not the stuff of a conspirator in him, nor that of a man given to coups de main. He is a swashbuckler and a rake who would become a real danger only if Morny and Pietri egged him on. If Boulanger entered parliament, he would very soon be spent; but Rochefort & Co. want to reserve him for later; at the next general election he will head the Radical list; he will be nominated by fifty electoral colleges and impose himself on the Chamber. To prevent this, the Chamber is quite capable of abolishing the plural lists of candidates and going back to the former electoral system. Boulanger will have rendered a proud service to the Socialists if he brings about the repeal of plural lists.

Boulanger has brought back bad weather; yesterday evening it snowed very heavily, the ground is quite white. What a winter!

Winter may not leave us, but money takes itself off in a desperate way; to enable us to bury the winter I would ask you to send us a cheque for 15 pounds.

Love to Hélène, Tussy, Pumps & Co. and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ The government, by a decree of March 14th, had announced General Boulanger's retirement on half-pay. *L'Intransigeant* of March 16th, 1888, published a second edition with a six-column headline: "Dismissal of General Boulanger."

P.S. My article has appeared in the *Nlle. Revue*¹; I am sending you the first part, published in the March 15th issue and the proofs of the second part, which will appear on the first of April. When you have read them, if you have no further use for them, send them back to me as I am short of copies.

255. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, March 19th, 88

My dear Lafargue,

I am sending you a *Weekly Dispatch*² which will enlighten you on the reasons why "friend Fritz" works so hard. Bismarck would give two years of his life if he could succeed in reducing him to a state in which he—Fritz—has to acknowledge himself incapable of governing. That is why he has his work cut out for him and why Fritz must needs sweat. The plot is of long standing; it was planned to eliminate Fritz altogether before the old man died; that having failed, they are trying to kill him by means of work, public appearances, etc. All this must lead to an open rupture in the event of Fritz not succumbing pretty soon; if he is a little restored in the summer and proceeds to a change of Ministers, we shall have gained a great deal. The main thing is that the stability of internal policy should be shaken, that the philistine should lose faith in the indefinite duration of the Bismarck

¹ This refers to the article: "The French Language Before and After the Revolution," which appeared in the issues of March 15th and April 1st of the *Nouvelle Revue* (Vol. LI, pp. 385-406, 644-69). It was signed "Fergus."

² The *Weekly Dispatch* of March 18th, 1888, contained (p. 5/I-II) the letter from Friedrich III to Bismarck outlining his programme of government.

regime, that he should find himself confronted by a situation wherein he, the philistine, has to decide and act instead of leaving everything to the government. Old Wilhelm was the keystone; it has fallen and the whole edifice threatens to collapse. What we need is at least six months of Fritz to undermine it still further, to make the philistines and the officials unsure about the future, to give rise to the possibility of a different internal policy. Fritz is weak even when in good health, he takes the opinion of the last person he has spoken to—who is usually his wife. Nothing but the plots of Bismarck and of his own son will force his hand. Once a change of front has been brought about, it matters little whether he lasts for a longer or shorter time; Wilhelm II will in any event succeed in circumstances favourable to us.

On the other hand, should Fritz die earlier, Wilhelm II is no longer Wilhelm I and we shall yet see a revulsion of bourgeois opinion. That young man is bound to commit acts of folly which will not be forgiven him as the old man's were. While the doctors have cut his father's throat, he, the son, may well suffer a similar fate, though at other hands. Incidentally, he is not paralysed.¹ His arm was broken at birth; it was not noticed immediately and hence the atrophy of the arm.

In any case, the ice is broken; there is solution of continuity in internal policy and there will be movement in place of stagnation. That is all we require.

Boulanger is certainly something of a charlatan, but that does not mean to say he is a cipher. He has given evidence of sound military sense; charlatanism may be of help to him in the French army—Napoleon had his fair share of it too. But politically he seems incompetent, possibly owing to excessive ambition. It is certain that if the French want to lose all hope of recovering the lost provinces, they have but to follow Boulanger's friends and,

¹ See Lafargue's letter to Engels of March 18, 1888.

above all, Rochefort, who seems to be off his head. It only needs an abortive war of revenge to reconcile the block-headed Alsatians¹ to Germany; the peasants are lansquenets who will always serve in the conqueror's army by choice, and the bourgeois will have their profits as well assured by the German as by the French tariff. As for the Russians, they will certainly be beaten; I have just been studying their 1877-78 Turkish campaign²; there were 98 incompetent to 2 tolerable generals, an exceedingly badly organised army, with officers beneath criticism and brave soldiers inured to extreme hardships (they crossed fords *in 10 degrees Réaumur of frost*, with water up to their arm-pits), very obedient, but also very stupid at the only possible method of combat nowadays, namely, sharp-shooting. Their strength lay in fighting in close order; there's no such thing any longer and anyone who tries to revive it is swept by the fire of modern arms.

If Boulanger delivers you from plural lists we shall raise a Vendôme column to him without his having to earn it on the battlefield.

Tussy and Edward leave tomorrow for their country-house at Stratford-on-Avon, the Kautskys will join them. It must be nice, a labourer's cottage, in the recurrent cold and wind and snow that we are having. The rest of us here stood the winter remarkably well until, a week ago, we had a day as radiant and warm as spring, followed by frost, north-east winds and snow. That gave Nim the Mumps, alias parotitis, and me an influenza head cold, difficult things to get over in this weather, but nothing very serious.

I am sending you enclosed the cheque for £15.

Remember me kindly to Laura. What are Longuet and

¹ Engels did not always speak of the Alsatians in such pejorative terms. See his letter of August 21st, 1893.

² This refers to the Russo-Turkish War which was fought in the main in the Balkans and Armenia.

the children doing? Nim always asks me for their news as soon as a letter arrives from Paris.

Ever yours,

F. E.

256. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 21/3/88

My dear Engels,

March 18th was a revolutionary demonstration against Boulanger; he was attacked at all the meetings. Rochefort, who habitually presides at the Blanquists' banquet, did not do so this year; he foresaw that there would be a protest against his Boulangist campaign. All our people are in a blue funk about B[oulanger]; they already see him as dictator, emperor. Their fears are exaggerated. It would need quite extraordinary circumstances for Boulanger to become a real danger; and if such contingencies arose, anybody could play Boulanger's role. In the meantime, he is useful to us: he rouses public opinion, which was apathetic and no longer interested in anything. Clemenceau's latest speech is significant¹; the Radicals are beginning to understand at last that the Republic's inability to bring about even the smallest reform has disheartened the working class and the population in general which, in desperation, has taken to Boulangermania. The Radicals are too incompetent to do anything; but perhaps they will for that reason be more inclined to support Socialist action.

The parliamentary see-saw not being so completely established in France as in England, where after a Tory government there has to be a Liberal government, and *vice versa*, the system is replaced by changes of government: under Napoleon III they had enough of personal gov-

¹ At the meeting of the extreme Left-wing group on March 19th, Clemenceau made known the Radicals' break with Boulanger, a break which he confirmed in his speech in the Chamber on March 20th.

ernment; under the Republic, where the government is anonymous, they clamour for personal government in the person of Boulanger.

The Ministers are cowards; we expected important disclosures about B[oulanger]'s conduct, but they kept quiet and yet allowed it to spread about that they had deciphered Boulanger's coded telegrams from which it was learnt that whilst he was publicly declining to stand at all, he was urging his friends to put him up as a candidate everywhere.¹ In those telegrams, Laguerre was referred to as a *choir-boy*. The alleged visit to his sick wife was all humbug. B[oulanger] is on the worst terms with his better half. While he was in the government his mistress was a Comédie française actress and that was how he formed the association with Laguerre who was the lover of another actress. There has been talk of suing for a separation from his wife. The trip to Paris was in order to see Madame Séverine and come to some arrangement with her over *La Cocarde*,² which is to replace *Le Cri*, now more or less defunct. The *Weekly Dispatch* has some strange ideas about the circulation of newspapers in France: there is not a single one in Paris that has ever sold upwards of 150 thousand. *La Cocarde* sold 40 thousand and that is a great deal. It is wonderful to see Labruyère patronising B[oulanger]. They did not dare put *La Cocarde* on the committee³ which supported his candidature and they forced B[ou-

¹ *La Lanterne* of March 20th printed a note under the heading: "The Secret of the Telegrams" which had appeared in a foreign journal published in Paris and known for its connections with Flourens and Rouvier. According to this the Minister of the Interior was said to have in his possession telegrams which had passed between Boulanger and his friends.

² *La Cocarde* first came out on March 13th, 1888. On March 6th the following passage appeared in the *Cri du peuple*: "Our friend and collaborator Georges de Labruyère has left us to start an evening paper, *La Cocarde*."

³ This refers to the *Comité national* set up by Rochefort, Déroulède, Naquet, Laisant, Laguerre, etc., which had its headquarters in the

langer] to declare that he had nothing to do with founding it. But it is common knowledge that Labruyère was in the pay of the War Ministry and that it is thanks to B[oulanger] that he raised the funds for the paper.

Anyhow, the whole thing is peculiar and pretty dirty.

Thanks for the cheque. Love to Hélène and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

The weather is milder; the snow is starting to thaw.

I have written a report on Germany based on your letter and on the *Weekly Dispatch*, and have sent it to *L'Intransigeant*. We shall see whether it will be printed.

The little Longuets are well.

257. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 8/4/88

My dear Engels,

Boulanger is performing wonders. Carnot, who is as reactionary as old Grévy, did not want a Floquet government¹ at any price; but the general's success at the last elections makes a radical government a necessity. There is fear of a dictatorship and people realise at last that it is parliamentary impotence which creates Boulanger's popularity. Floquet could play a fine part: the opportunists are attacking him and talking of bringing down his barely hatched government; they have begun by depriving Clemenceau of the Speaker's chair.² Hostility from the opportunists is the best thing that could

rue de Sèze, a cockade as its emblem and as its programme the slogan: "Revision, Dissolution, Constituent Assembly."

¹ On March 30th the Tirard Cabinet fell and was replaced by Floquet's on April 3rd.

² The Speaker having become Prime Minister a replacement had to be found. Clemenceau stood against Brisson in the first two bal-

happen to Floquet. If Rochefort and the Boulangist papers dare to reproach him for not having reinstated the general in his post, it would secure him the support of the Radical press—which is the most popular and has the largest number of readers in Paris and the provinces. Though possibly defeated in parliament, Floquet and the Radicals would become popular, in which case the general would not be much of an embarrassment; and at the next elections the Radicals would be in the saddle. But Floquet is a complete ass; the *Débats* said that he had become famous only because he had committed blunders with “imperturbable serenity and majestic presumptuousness.”¹ He is not the kind of man to take advantage of the situation and I do not believe that there are people with enough vigour in the parliamentary Left to dare to tackle the Ferryists and table radical reforms. Fortunately we have Boulanger: if he does not wear out too soon—which could well happen—his popularity will wake up the parliamentarians and force them into action. Our people are very frightened of the general; I, however, believe that he could prove very useful and that he will not have time to become really dangerous. What do you think?

Discord has broken out on the *Cri du peuple*.² The Possibilists have left; they have started *Le Parti ouvrier*³ which I sent you. I do not know the inside story yet, but I believe it was the opportunists who raised the money for them. They allied themselves openly with the oppor-

lots. In the third ballot, on April 4th, the opportunists put up Méline who received the same number of votes as Clemenceau, but was made Speaker by virtue of seniority.

¹ From the *Journal des Débats* of Tuesday, April 3rd, 1888 (p. 1/II-III).

² The departure of the Possibilists from the *Cri du peuple* took place without much publicity. Only the resignation of Félix Pyat, on April 9th, was announced.

³ No. 1 of the *Parti ouvrier*, a daily paper, appeared on April 8th with an editorial, “Our Programme” (p. 1/II-IV), signed by Allemane, Brissac, Buquet, Dalle, Jouy, Labusquière and Marouck.

tunists against the radicals on the Town Council; it is said that at the next elections they will join forces. These political adventurers are in such a hurry to succeed that they will finish by ruining themselves in the eyes of their dupes.

What do these threats of resignation by Bismarck mean?¹ Do they mean that the new emperor, who positively refuses to die, is making his position untenable? That would be most amusing. You will have seen that the *Intransigeant* has published my article, signed Fritz, based on your letter and on the *Weekly Dispatch*.² Whenever you have important news, I could get it published.

Have you read my two articles?³ What do you think of them? They attracted some notice. People inquired who Fergus was.

In a few days' time dreaded Quarter Day will be here; would you please send me a cheque for 15 pounds to pacify my landlord.

Laura claims that I must have written my novel on the *Jugement de Pâris* while she was asleep, for she had no inkling of the existence of this masterpiece.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

258. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDŌN

Le Perreux, 13/4/88

My dear Engels,

The days of Floquet's Cabinet are numbered. Ferry whose parliamentary strength grows in proportion to

¹ The *Cri du peuple* of April 8th reported that the rumours of Bismarck's resignation had been denied in the *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Berliner Nazional-Zeitung*.

² *L'Intransigeant* of March 26th, 1888, published a letter signed "Fritz" and dated March 20th, 1888, Berlin, with the heading: "Bismarck and Friedrich III" (p. 2/II-III).

³ This refers to articles in the *Nouvelle Revue*.

Boulanger's electoral triumphs, has made an alliance with the Right wing and at the re-assembly Floquet will be dished; Ribot will deal the blow and it is he who will come into the legacy. The opportunists are full of bellicose plans; they speak of repression and even of a state of siege: that is just hot air. If they attempted to translate their words into deeds they might be made to smart for it. But how stupid the Radicals are: they are going to allow themselves to be slaughtered like so many wethers. There was a fine part for them to play had they opened fire on the opportunists and demanded the fulfilment of the old radical promises; instead, they are only concerned with Boulanger and waste their time accusing Rochefort of having made the general popular. There is an uncommon lack of political sense amongst French politicians.

Things are going well in Germany: it is war to the knife between the Empress and Bismarck. Should that last for six months it would sow uneasiness and confusion in the minds of the philistines.

You criticise my etymological derivations very wittily. They are not the discoveries of your humble servant, but a quotation of what I have read. There are some etymologists in France who claim for the Greek language the honour of having provided a host of French words. It is an old theory, it was upheld by the Hellenists of the 16th century. In the case I am concerned with it is as easy to trace the derivation of the words I quote to Latin as to Greek. As for Sanskrit, I refer only to the exaggerations of the Sanskritists; they are maniacs who reduce Greek mythology to no more than a series of idiotic puns; I did them too much honour by comparing them with craniologists who also claim to find an answer to everything by cranial measurements.

I mentioned in passing, and more by way of a joke than anything else, the theory by which the Finnish language is regarded as the mother of all Aryan dialects,

because it will be amusing to watch the collapse of the entire structure based on Sanskrit. There are whole libraries written on this subject and I believe it will turn out to be so much stuff and nonsense, like the in-folios of the Middle Ages, in which they disputed endlessly whether the chicken came before the egg. I may be wrong in the etymological part, but I am certain that everything the Sanskritists have written on mythology, starting with Max Muller, is absurd and will be pulped.

There are anthropologists who carry weight in France, notably Quatrefages, who believe in the Finnish origin of the European races. Here is what he says on the matter in his *Espèce humaine*¹ published by the International Library in 1886: "The Zend-Avesta teaches us that the first race originated in a region where the *summer lasted but two months*, which corresponds closely to the climate of Finland. Stage by stage it reached as far as the Ganges peninsula and Ceylon on the one hand and as far as Iceland and Greenland on the other." Perhaps the Sanskritists will have to modify their linguistic theory slightly? But in any case, their theory by which concrete words are derived from words denoting abstract ideas appears to me highly suspect; I believe it is the opposite that must have occurred. In my article I mention only M. Regnaut, a very famous Orientalist in France, who claims that from the Sanskrit word signifying the idea of "shining" the most concrete words are derived. According to this, primitive men were philosophical grammarians who had no real notion of existing things and who arrived at a conception of them only idealistically, by dint of etymological derivations.

Well, that's enough on this subject; but your criticisms and your praise are very welcome.

Thanks for the cheque, and I hope you enjoy the cele-

¹ A. de Quatrefages: *L'Espèce humaine* (*The Human Species*) Paris, 1886. The passage quoted occurs on p. 161.

brated food in the Shakespeare country; it should have a dramatic taste.

Love to Hélène and everyone, and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

My dear General,

I am writing to you while Paul writes, but really, after his letter, je crois qu'il n'y a qu'à tirer l'échelle.¹ More anon from your Laura.

259. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 24/4/88

My dear Engels,

If Bismarck thought to take his revenge upon the editors of the *Sozial-Demokrat* by getting them expelled from Switzerland,² he will find that he was grossly mistaken, for in all probability Bernstein and the other three will go to London and continue to annoy him with a little less interference. It is Switzerland that has been humiliated and Bismarck who has shown how profoundly Bebel's and Singer's disclosures have [stung]³ him. But I believe Bismarck will shortly have a more pleasurable experience: that of consigning to earth his new emperor, who has reached the end of his tether.

Have you ever witnessed anything like the madness of this enthusiasm for Boulanger? Garibaldi never caused the people to lose their heads more completely.

Various elements combine to cause this essentially work-

¹ I believe there is nothing more to be said.—Tr.

² At the end of 1887, the *Sozial-Demokrat* had published the names of the spies whom Bismarck's police had introduced into the ranks of the German Socialists. At the end of April 1888, Bismarck persuaded the Swiss Government to expel the editors of the paper, which, nevertheless, continued to appear.

³ Word missing in the original.

ing-class popularity: Boulanger is the man of the people in contrast to Ferry, Clemenceau and the parliamentarians. He has won hearts by the reforms he introduced into the army for the soldiers' benefit: instead of eating out of mess-tins, they now eat from plates; he established a new system of supervising the soldiers' rations; in short, he saw to it that they were better and more decently fed, and provided them with more comfortable sleeping conditions. His popularity started in the army amongst the soldiers; the higher officers, on the other hand, were very much against him; it is the soldiers returning home or writing to their families who have sown throughout France the seeds of this astounding popularity which has grown so rapidly as a result of the idiotic persecutions. I do not believe that Boulanger knows how to profit by his popularity: he thinks only of enjoying himself and strutting about; he is surrounded by shady individuals who will exploit him.

All the newspapers compare the situation with that of the 18th Brumaire and of December 2nd; I believe they are vastly mistaken; what is novel about Boulanger's situation is that the rich and satisfied bourgeoisie and all its political leaders, with a few rare exceptions, are opposed to him and that he derives his strength solely from the poverty-stricken popular masses who are vaguely disillusioned by the Republic. And when it's a matter of the people, there are the elements, not of a coup d'état, but of a revolution.

B[oulanger]'s election has consolidated Floquet's position.¹ The Ferrysts, who spoke so arrogantly of bringing him down, are rallying to him; B[oulanger] will give him a government majority. They say that one of the first measures he will propose is the abolition of plural lists of candidates. Hurrah! Clemenceau becomes more

¹ On April 15th, 1888, Boulanger was returned in the Nord department with 172,528 votes to 75,901 for the opportunist candidate and 9,647 for the Radical.

and more important, although he has a rival on the Left in the person of Sigismond Lacroix.

It is being openly said that the Possibilists accepted opportunist money to conduct an anti-Boulangier campaign. Two days ago *La Lanterne*¹ accused Joffrin of having accepted money from secret funds; so far he has not replied.

Though we have not found a publisher for Marx,² we have found a translator. One of our people is translating the second volume and Deville is abridging it. I shall be able to read that famous second volume. Deville wants to get his résumé published; he will write to you on the matter; I have told him that probably you would be willing to give him the authorisation so long as the book has not been published in French. Between now and the completion of the translation and the résumé, there will be time.

My dear Engels, my landlord has relieved me of the major part of the cheque you sent me; I find myself obliged to turn to you for a further cheque for 15 pounds, for we are running dry—although it rains continuously.

Our love to Hélène and to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

260. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 27/4/88

My dear Engels,

People are losing their heads over Boulangier; the Socialist Party is split on the subject; most of them are as

¹ In *La Lanterne* of April 22nd, 1888, the following short paragraph appeared (p. 1/II): "No doubt M. Joffrin is waiting for the funds of the Ministry of the Interior, drained by the Nord election, to be in a healthier condition. We always suspected that M. Joffrin was an opportunist."

² This refers no doubt to *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

frightened as the Radicals and the opportunists and see him already as president and then emperor; others believe that they can make good use of him. The opportunists and the Radicals are spending a fortune on paying Possibilists and other agitators to make anti-Boulangier propaganda in working-class circles; but they are wasting their time and their money; the more Boulangier is attacked, the stronger he will become. You will have seen in *L'Intransigeant* that the Radicals had the wonderful idea of obliterating B[oulangier] by setting up a rival to him in the person of Anatole de la Forge¹: it is far too simple-minded.

Tomorrow the *Intransigeant* will be publishing an article of mine on *Boulangism*,² written to expose the idiocy of the Radicals and to reassure the Socialists who have been frightened by the Possibilists and other Ferryist agents; for it is Ferry who conducts the campaign and

¹ *L'Intransigeant* of April 28th, 1888, carried an editorial by Rochefort (p. 1/I-II) entitled: "On a Point of Order." He had proposed two days earlier that a list of Republican candidates under Boulangier's aegis should be put up in opposition to a list of anti-Boulangier candidates: the poll would decide. Anatole de la Forge addressed a letter to him accepting the "challenge" on condition that Boulangier personally stood against himself and came in person to expound his programme, etc.

² *L'Intransigeant* of May 1st, 1888, published Lafargue's article: "Boulangism and Parliamentarians," with the subheading "A Socialist's View" (p. 1/III-IV). Following are two extracts from the article:

"... Napoleon I, Napoleon III and Thiers were unable to impose their dictatorship until after the defeat of the revolutionary party and then only by representing themselves as the saviours of the propertied classes..."

"... Since the parliamentarians of radicalism and opportunism have no wish to do anything, since they entertain a shameful fear of the Boulangier bogey, let them give us back the arms which the Versailles government took from us. When the nation is armed, when every citizen has his own gun and fifty cartridges, there will no longer be grounds for fearing either an invasion of our frontiers or a dictatorship at home."

whom Floquet has chosen as his ally: they are brothers-in-law. Please let me have your opinion of my article, it is important.

Laura has been to Asnières today. The little Longuets are in good health. Jean is having trouble with his German, his suns and other things they teach at school. Edgar on the other hand learns with astonishing ease; he is a remarkable boy. The two other children are delightful, especially Marcel, who is sweetness itself.

I enclose a letter for Liebknecht. He had asked me for my views on holding an international congress; my reply not having reached him, I am sending it through you, who will have some means unknown to the police of communicating with him.

Let us have news of Bernstein.

Thanks for the cheque.

Good wishes to you and to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

261. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 9 May 88

My dear Laura,

I have just finished, after many interruptions, a lengthy preface to the English edition of Mohr's discourse on Free Trade¹ (Brussels, 1848) which is to come out in N[ew] York, and as this is the last piece of work which had to be done within a certain time, I make use of my recovered liberty in order to write to you at once. And I have a rather important object too to write about, viz. that we want you here in London. You have planted, as I hear

¹ This refers to Marx's *Discourse on Free Trade* (Brussels, 1848). Engels' preface in German appeared in *Neue Zeit* in July 1888 (pp. 289-99).

from Schorlemmer, some Waldmeister¹ in your garden, and as it will be utterly impossible for us to come over and use it there, there is nothing left but that you should come over and bring it here, where the other ingredients shall be duly and quickly found. The weather is beautiful; on Saturday, Mohr's birthday, Nim and I went to Highgate, and to-day we have been on Hampstead Heath; I am writing with both windows open, and by the time you come, which, I hope, will be next week, we shall have lilacs and laburnums ready to receive you. If you only say by return that you are willing to come, je me charge du reste.² Moreover you will by this time have brought your country-house and garden to such a state of perfection that you can leave it in charge of Paul who must be by now an accomplished gardener. Nim has been sighing for Löhr for some time past, and surely you ought to be present at Edward's great dramatic triumph on the 5th of June when his dramatisation of N. Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* is to be brought out at a matinée. And I need not add that I want you here as much as anybody else. There are moreover so many other reasons for your coming that I must refrain from stating them here for fear of missing the post and killing you with ennui. So, make up your mind at once, and say you will.

Of Edward's remarkable *preliminary* successes in the dramatic line you will have heard. He has sold about half a dozen or more pieces which he had quietly manufactured; some have been played in the provinces with success, some he has brought out here himself with Tussy at small entertainments, and they have taken very much with the people that are most interested in them, viz. with such actors and impresarios as will bring them out. If he has now one marked success in London, he is a made man in this line and will soon be out of all difficulties. And I

¹ Woodruff.—*Tr.*

² I will see to the rest.—*Tr.*

don't see why he should not, he seems to have a remarkable knack of giving to London what London requires.

Paul's letter in the *Intransigent*¹ was very good indeed. He managed to hit the Radicals without the slightest concession to Boulangism and with the demand for general armament, just a spoke in both their wheels. It was done with great tact.

Have you heard that Fritz Beust is engaged—to an Italian Swiss girl from Castasegna, hard on the borders of Lombardy. I don't know who she is; we shall soon hear from our Zurich friends, who are expected here in less than a fortnight. Maybe you will see Bernstein in Paris on his journey; he may be there any day. How they are going to manage here with regard to the paper, I am curious to see. For many reasons London is not the best place for it, though perhaps the only one now. However we shall see, and generally things do settle down at their natural level.

Paul's Victor Hugo in the *Neue Zeit*² is very good. I wonder what they would say in France if they could read it.

The great *Stead*³ is off to Petersburg to interview the Czar and to make him tell the truth about peace or war. I sent you his Paris interviews; the profound man left Paris exactly as wise as when he came there. The Russians will soft-sawder him to his heart's content; I am afraid he will return from Petersburg a greater ass than what he is now. Perhaps in tonight's paper we may read that he has fathomed Bismarck.

¹ See Note 2, p. 119.

² "The Victor Hugo Legend" by Lafargue appeared first in German in *Neue Zeit* of April (pp. 169-76), May (pp. 215-22) and June (pp. 263-71), 1888.

³ A journalist on the *Pall Mall Gazette* who, in the May 5th issue (p. 1/II-2/II), published an interview with Mrs. Crawford, the paper's Paris correspondent. In the issue of the 7th a letter dated from Berlin—"Closing the Gate Left Open to Invasion"—was probably also written by him.

The Roumanians are queer people. I wrote to Nădejde in Jassy a letter in which I tried to work them up in the anti-Russian line. Now the Jassy Marxists are quarrelling with the Bukarest anarchists on account of the peasant revolt stirred up by Russia, and so they translate and print my letter at once! This time I am not sorry, but it shows what indiscreet fellows they are.

Not only the paper is at an end, but time too—5:20 p. m. and Nim will ring directly and in ten minutes the post closes. So farewell for to-day and do say you come!

Affectionately yours,

F. ENGELS

262. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

[May 12th 1888] Sunday

My dear General,

Our town friends, after fighting shy of us in the winter, come trooping to our place in this pleasant may-time, and it is because we have had the house full of people that I have not replied to your letter by return of post.

Your letter adds one other to the numberless acts of kindness you have showered on us during the last quarter of a century and yet—just see what comes of spoiling people—it was a disappointment. For haven't I been, all these months, cherishing a sneaking hope, against hope, that you might, after all, come over in the summer, in the flesh, honour our country house—which we are all of us quixotic enough to take for a castle, with myself for cook and chatelaine—by your presence and inspect our pretty garden—which, by moonlight and avec un peu de bonne volonté¹ looks like a bit of enchanted ground; yes, and haven't I been dreaming of taking you over the plateaus of

¹ With a little goodwill.—*Tr.*

Le Bry and Champigny where many a famous battle was fought and lost by Frenchmen in 71?

Our spring, which is not well out of its teens, is worthy of fair France at her best: we have got a couple of fine horse-chestnuts for such as love to lie in the shade, plenty of warmth and light for the chilly brotherhood and no end of sparkling beer, bottled by ourselves (costs us 25 c le litre) for one and all. I had really hoped that Nim would come over this year and let me show her the ins and outs of the place, pigeons and poultry and country walks and country markets.

But to come to the point. Our Waldmeister, alas! cannot contribute to any *Maitrank*; it may, eventually—for the ways of Providence, at Nogent-sur-Marne as elsewhere, are queer and crooked ways—flavour some god-like drink or other later on in the season, but for the present the poor plant is only striking root and all its odoriferous and intoxicating virtues are latent. All green stuff is behind-hand this year; vegetables that, as a rule, are plentiful in the first week of April are not likely to be cheap this year before the middle of June.

Now, as to my leaving Le Perreux at present, it is out of the question, what with the house and Longuet's little ones whom I have invited and a servant girl of 17 newly transplanted from the country (a needlewoman who cannot cook and knows nothing of housework) who very likely would object to living tête à tête in this lone castle even with the venerable Paul. . . . But, never mind, I don't despair of seeing you all, sooner or later, on this or that side of the Channel.—Gingerbread, tell Nim, is in the garden painting apple blossoms and her brother Gaston is taking a back view of the house.

Isn't sickening, that daily Rochefort on Boulanger?¹

¹ From March 16th, 1888, practically all Rochefort's editorials in *L'Intransigeant* were devoted to Boulanger, and during the period of the elections in the Nord department they appeared daily. (The election took place on April 17th.)

Ce général Boum que la France acclame, réclame et proclame (the *Pall Mall* reviewer calls him le général réclame by way of compliment!) is away at Dunkerque, but pictures of him and photographs of him and biographies of him and his own literary effusions are always with us. That "really handsome" general with the blue eyes and the tawny beard has made a conquest of the heart and run away with the pen of Mother Crawford¹: from his own "winning graciousness, nerve and composure down to the lovely heads and the eyes (such eyes!) and the elegant lower limbs" of the horses that drove his carriage, she is in love with the whole of the turn out. "How brave of him to return home in an open carriage!... of the three men whom he chose to go with him two are young and strong and one is powerfully built—qualified to act as a body-guard and resist an assault".... On Mrs. Crawford's showing it appears that discretion is not the least part of the general's valour.

Meanwhile Paris is overrun with Boulangists, anti-Boulangistes, demi-semi-Boulangistes and Boulangists "expectants ou honteux." There are some few who deny the general's existence, but after the fashion of Proudhon denying the existence of a God: Dieu c'est le Mal.

If Boulanger is allowed to go on publishing his books and making his speeches, the flashy popularity that his enemies had blown into a fire, will in a very little while have burnt itself out and it is not such a staff as Mermeix, Laguerre, Labruyère and Naquet, nor even Harlequin Rochefort with Columbine Séverine that are likely to set it ablaze again.

Paul is a model husbandman, up early and to bed late. . . . Madonna Adam is very gracious to him and I hope that before long he may be one of the regular contributors to the *Nouvelle Revue*.

¹ Mrs. Crawford, the Paris correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, kept her paper supplied with articles on Boulanger, particularly during the electioneering period.

I am called for: glad to say it's for a glass of beer.
Yours, my dearest General.

Affectionately,

KAKADOU

Kiss my dear old father Nim for me and Pumps and her little ones.

263. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 14/5/88

My dear Engels,

I am glad to know that you approve of my article on Boulangism. Many Socialists are frightened of the general and want to embark on anti-Boulangier agitation, and I wrote it in order to stop them. The Boulangier danger would materialise only in the event of the Emperor's death, as you so rightly say, but Fritz clings to what little life is left to him; he may yet perhaps bury Bismarck, who must be seething with frustration and rage.

Boulangier is spending money like water; during the election campaign money was squandered: every day 100 thousand copies of *La Lanterne* and as many of *L'Intransigeant* were bought up: one can understand their Boulangist enthusiasm. Rumour has it that it is Mackay, a Nevada gold-mine owner, who provides the funds by taking out a mortgage on Count Dillon's estate. The financial manoeuvres over Californian wheat may well be true.

In a few minutes Laura and I shall be leaving for Paris where we are to lunch at Deville's with Bernstein.

Deville was very gratified by your letter. He is starting on the translation of *Capital*.

I was supposed to order some wine last week; the wine we bought was so good that we hastened to drink it; hence we are literally dry; would you please send us a cheque for 15 pounds.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

264. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Tuesday evening [May 22nd 1888]

My dearest General,

You must excuse Paul for not having acknowledged and thanked you for your letter and cheque: he has been very ill with an "embarras gastrique." He is as well as ever by this time, but his rare attacks of illness, if short, are terribly sharp and take the acutest form. You will understand how uncomfortable I felt while his sickness lasted, in this countrified place, with nobody but a foolish slip of a country girl of 17! and in a land more noted for its peach and apple blossoms than its doctors!

But he is all right again and would write to you but that I have insisted on his dozing in the garden.

Our weather is beyond all praise.

Your loving,

LAURA

Good night to all of you and I am going to bed!...

I could not write yesterday, for holy days bring us visitors and I have to be both above and below stairs.

265. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 27/5/88

My dear Engels,

I have just come from the demonstration at Père Lachaise¹; it has never been so impressive as regards the

¹ On the occasion of the demonstration at the Mur des Fédérés on May 27th, an anarchist, Lucas, fired into the crowd just as Rouillon was laying the Central Committee's wreath. Two people were wounded, of whom one, Berger, was a joiner employed at Eudes. The anarchists and the Possibilists destroyed the *Intransigent* wreath whilst the socialist and revolutionary groups were paying tribute to Vallès and Delescluze.

numbers who turned up in response to the Socialists' call; but the most appalling scenes occurred. Revolver shots were fired by an anarchist well known to be in the service of the police. Two of our people were wounded. One of them, a foreman at Eudes, was shot in the kidneys; at first it was thought that the spinal column had been injured, but that is not so according to the opinion of the doctor who examined him. The *Intransigeant* wreath was torn to pieces. It is open warfare: it will no longer be the Boulangists, but the Socialists who will be the target for the parliamentary Republicans in alliance with the police. It must be said that we for our part are not hanging back: Joffrin, who fancied himself strong enough in his rotten borough of Montmartre, tried to hold a public meeting yesterday evening. The Possibilists had organised the meeting, but they were swamped by Boulangists and Socialists. *L'Intransigeant* gives a report of the meeting¹; but people who were present say that *L'Int[ransigeant]* speaks less than truth: the uproar was appalling. It is a defeat for the Possibilist Party. One of Boulanger's virtues, and not the least, is that he has given the Possibilists the opportunity to compromise themselves in so crass a way that soon everyone will regard them as traitors.

I had an opportunity to talk to Jaclard, a close friend of Clemenceau, and I asked him how it came about that the Radicals had failed to understand the splendid part they could have played. He assured me that the anti-Boulanger campaign was being conducted by Jewish bankers who put up the money and that Clemenceau & Co. were so idiotic that they had allowed themselves to be led by the nose.

¹ *L'Intransigeant* of May 28th, 1888, reported a meeting held on Saturday, the 26th, with the heading: "M. Joffrin Faces His Constituents" (p. 1/V). In the course of the meeting Joffrin was booed by the audience, who called him a traitor and prevented him from speaking.

After the demonstration the wineshops near the cemetery were, as usual, invaded: foreseeing that those who go to funerals will need to take refreshment, they have very large saloons which accommodate several hundred people. One has the chance to talk to and see a great number of people there. The topic of the day was Boulanger and the Clemenceau, Ranc & Co. alliance.¹ I was able to establish that the Socialists had recovered from their fear of the general, a fear which at one moment threatened to drive them into the anti-Boulanger movement. Today the situation is viewed much more calmly; they begin to realise that the circumstances for Boulanger to play at Decembrist coups d'état do not exist; and they have a glimmering of the general significance of the Boulangist movement, which is a genuine popular movement, capable of taking on a socialist character if it is allowed to develop freely. The result of the municipal elections² has contributed greatly towards calming down the Socialists. In very many towns and even villages the Socialists carried off brilliant victories. At Bordeaux, a commercial town, the Socialist list, to my great astonishment, polled 3,000 votes; at Beauvais, Fortin was elected; at Lyons, Lille, Roubaix, Armientièrès, etc., our people got in with large majorities. You will have seen in the Montluçon journal that Dormoy—who was in prison with me—headed the poll. He writes to tell me that in many villages in the Allier department socialist municipal councillors were returned; in some places the entire Socialist list was elected. The elections have been a triumph for the Socialist Party; and from now on one can foresee that the next Chamber will have a large socialist

¹ On May 25th, on the initiative of Joffrin, Clemenceau and Ranc, the Society for the Rights of Man was formed, with headquarters in the rue Cadet (whence the name Cadettists), and which was explicitly aimed against "any form of reaction or dictatorship."

² Municipal elections took place on May 6th throughout France (excluding Paris).

minority, which minority, if it includes people like Vailant, Guesde, Dormoy, etc., will not only build the Socialist Party in France—now merely existing in a state of chaos—but will also change the Boulangists beyond recognition and will ruin them. I say nothing of the Radicals, for they are already spent before having served any purpose.

The situation is shaping well; all we need is peace, to allow the bourgeois parties to disintegrate and the Socialists to win the country. Never have I felt so much confidence in the movement. You were right when you wrote to me that events in France develop in logical sequence. And as a crowning piece of luck there's the Emperor who, even if he is not restored to health, is lasting out long enough to prevent war.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

Rochefort is the pet aversion; people are stupid enough to believe that he is responsible for having made Boulanger and that it is his paper which is creating Boulanger's popularity. I send you the *Radical* which gives extracts from the abuse which those perfect lackeys, the Possibilists, heap on him to order in their organ *Le Prolétariat*.¹

266. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 3 June 1888

My dear Laura,

I am very sorry you do not see your way to come just now; the woodruffs having failed in your garden would not

¹ *L'Intransigeant* of May 27th published extracts from *Le Prolétariat* attacking Henry Maret, editor-in-chief of *Le Radical*. The last-named paper in its turn published extracts from *Le Prolétariat* on May 28th, 1888 (p. 1/III-IV), in which Allemane, Joffrin and Lavy dealt harshly with Rochefort. Most of these extracts dated from 1884.

have mattered, because Nim has got some and we are going to have it tonight; it would be so nice if you were here to take your share. We have 6 bottles of Moselle to sacrifice tonight.

Our Zurich friends¹ are getting used to London ways a little, and it is time for their notions of the possibilities of a settlement here were uncommon *kleinstädtisch*.² Next week I hope the principal questions as to locality, etc., will be settled and then there will be less difficulties and discussions.

Paul's arguments about Boulanger are rather derogatory to the French character. First he says *c'est un mouvement populaire*,³ but not dangerous because B [oulanger] is an ass. But what to think of a people capable d'un mouvement populaire in favour of an ass? This he explains thus: En France on patauge pendant un temps donné dans un semblant de parlementarisme, puis on réclame un sauveur, un gouvernement personnel . . . en ce moment on réclame un sauveur et B [oulanger] se présente.⁴ That is to say: the French are such that their *real wants* require a Bonapartist regime, while their *idealistic illusions* are republican and do not go beyond parliamentarism. Why, if the French see no other issue than *either* personal govt, *or* parliamentary govt, they may as well give it up. What I want our people to do is to show that there is a real *third* issue besides this pretended dilemma, which is a dilemma but for the vulgar philistine, and not to take the muddling philistine and au fond chauvinistic B [oulangist]

¹ The editors of the *Sozial-Demokrat*, after their expulsion from Switzerland, settled in London and made arrangements to bring out the paper there.

² Provincial.—*Tr.*

³ A popular movement.—*Tr.*

⁴ In France they dabble in some semblance of parliamentarianism for a while and then they clamour for a saviour, a personal government . . . just now they are clamouring for a saviour and Boulanger appears.—*Tr.*

movement for a really popular one. The chauvinistic claim, that all the history of the world is to resolve itself into the recovery of Alsace by France, and that until then nothing shall be allowed to happen—this claim has been far too much bowed to by our friends in France, by every one in fact, and this is the upshot. Because B[oulanger] incorporates this claim, which has been silently admitted by all parties, he is powerful. His opponents—the Clemenceaux and Co. do not, dare not contradict that claim but are too cowardly to proclaim it openly, and therefore they are weak. And because the movement is at bottom chauvinistic and nothing else, therefore it plays into Bismarck's hands who would be only too glad to entangle that poor devil Fritz into a war. And all this at a time when even among the German philistines the consciousness is dawning that the sooner they get rid of Alsace, the better, and when Bismarck's crazy passport regulations¹ are an open confession that Alsace is more French than ever!

The revolution in our household which I have been trying to set about for more than a year has at last been accomplished. Last night Annie left under notice from me, and we have another girl. Nim will at last be able to do no more work than she really likes and to have her sleep out in the morning.

Enclosed the cheque that Paul wrote about. Being Sunday, I must close, before the people come.

Ever yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

Keep in mind that you *must* come this summer or autumn at latest!

¹ A German government statute of May 22nd laid down that, as from Thursday, May 31st, 1888, all foreigners seeking entry at the French frontier in Alsace-Lorraine, whether passing through or staying in the country, must hold a passport with a visa from the German embassy in Paris.

267. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Le Perreux, 5/6/88

My dear Engels,

I tried to analyse in my letter the character of Boulanger's popularity; but the fact of being popular does not necessarily entail the danger of dictatorship, as the cunning Radicals allege. A pretender like Boulanger would be dangerous only if he had armed forces at his command, and I believe that unless there are changes which it is impossible to foresee he had better reconcile himself to the loss of all government and military positions.

The soldiers and non-commissioned officers are in favour of him, but that is not the case with the higher officers who are jealous of him and furious at his naïvely monopolising the credit for organising defence which is due to others. They have found a few generals to condemn him,¹ and that was a very difficult thing to do owing to clanishness and esprit de corps; tomorrow any Ministry could find generals by the dozen to discipline him and even wipe him out. His popularity with the soldiers would be a danger if the French army were given to *pronunciamentos* and if, more particularly, B[oulanger] were a conspirator; in fact, he is a vulgar libertine. A pomaded fop, who makes eyes at the ladies and is perfectly content to be admired for his beard and his immaculate appearance: he is no longer even capable of satisfying his female admirers. Floquet told him (and it is the only witty word that word-spinner has ever uttered) that at his age Napoleon had been dead and buried. Boulanger is nothing but an ornamental figure. He will remain a propaganda element for a certain time, but if we are lucky enough to have peace, he will be spent.

¹ On March 26th, 1888, a Court of Enquiry, presided over by General Février, sat at the Military College to pronounce judgement on the Boulanger case. They returned a verdict of conduct prejudicial to military discipline.

He should not be personally attacked, as the Radicals foolishly do. The only intelligent attack has been the exposure of his behaviour towards the Commune¹; that was so disgraceful that even the moderate bourgeois will not forgive it. The attack made on him by Basly² is extremely important.

The Possibilists are in process of scuttling themselves. They have sent emissaries into the provinces who are getting a peculiar reception, and in Paris the bulk of their army is disorganised; many of the Possibilists who have not personally benefited by the radical-opportunist alliance pose as stern men who will not hear of any compromise. Faillet, a Possibilist Town Councillor, has publicly protested against the alliance with Cadet Roussel.³ It was even rumoured that the Possibilists would try and withdraw from it with honour by proposing that the Society for the Rights of Man should demand the arming of the people, which would certainly be refused by the Clemenceaux and Rancs.

The idea of arming the people appeals to a great many just now; it will have been one of the good results of the Boulanger crisis.

Fritz is rebelling. All is lost when the sheep resist. He may yet yield to Bismarck once again, but the Iron Chancellor must not start imitating old Thiers, who played the card of resigning on every occasion; one day he was taken at his word and it unhinged his mind.

¹ Boulanger, at that time a lieutenant-colonel, had taken part in the 1871 executions, notably at the Vaugirard slaughter-house, at the Panthéon Town Hall and at the Jardin du Luxembourg.

² At the June 4th 1888 session in the Chamber Boulanger had tabled a motion for the revision of the Constitution. Basly reminded him that in the course of his election campaign in the Nord department he had championed the cause of social demands and that, whenever the social laws were under debate (particularly the bill moved by Basly on female and child labour), Boulanger had been absent.

³ ("Cadet Roussel": a French popular song of 1792—*Tr.*) This refers to the committee in the rue Cadet.

As I write to you this evening Aveling's play is being performed. The subject-matter, though it lends itself to good stage effects, is very dangerous by virtue of the nature of the psychological drama with which Hawthorne presented him; but no doubt Aveling will have skirted the difficulty by leaving out all that part. Tell them we wish them the greatest success—500 performances.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

268. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 17/6/88

My dear Engels,

The wretched emperor has at last been delivered from his cannula and his doctors¹; his death has made less impression here than one would have expected; the Stock Exchange, the bourgeois thermometer, is bullish. It is hoped that Bismarck, now in control of the situation, will moderate the bellicose fervour of the new emperor. How do you see the situation?

The Blanquists are to have *their* newspaper—for they intend that none but Blanquists shall edit this journal, to the despair of Vaillant who wanted to make it the organ of the Socialist Party and not that of a group.

It is Rochefort—or rather *L'Intransigeant* (which makes piles of money)—who will meet the expenses. What is urging Rochefort to start this new journal which, if it succeeds, [may]² find itself in competition with his *Intransigeant*, is this: Rochefort is being heavily attacked at the moment by the opportunists, who have let loose the Pos-

¹ Friedrich III died on June 15th, 1888.

² Word missing in the original.

sibilists, and the entire venal press on him; he is sick of these incessant attacks and wants to divert the fury of the opportunists and the rest of them to Vaillant & Co.: the Blanquist paper is to act as a sort of lightning-conductor.

The re-issue of *La Bataille*¹ is also announced. It will be anti-Boulangier, like *Le Parti ouvrier*, and, like the Possibilist paper, will be maintained by secret funds. This putting out of pseudo-socialist and revolutionary newspapers with the help of secret funds is the surest proof that fear of Boulangism and of the popular agitation conducted in its name frightens the Radicals out of their wits. Clemenceau has lost his head; he has convinced himself that the Possibilists represent the Socialist Party in Paris, in the provinces and abroad, whereas in fact they are but a handful of well-disciplined schemers and place-seekers, led by an arch-schemer—Brousse.

I have had a letter from Kautsky announcing his departure from London.² We were greatly surprised to learn that he was leaving England just as his friend Bernstein landed there. Will not his stay in Germany be risky, particularly at this juncture when, no doubt, the police [persecution]³ of Socialists will be doubly intensified?

The two little Longuets came to pay us a visit. The little girl had been ill; she is very anaemic. They are going to Normandy, to their grandmother. The three boys are well. Jean has a lot of trouble with his German, his Latin and other subjects with which they stuff his head. Edgar on the other hand, who is exceptionally intelligent, does all his school work with the utmost ease.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ *La Bataille* ceased publication on January 25th, 1886. It did not appear again until January 1st, 1889.

² Kautsky left London on June 14th, 1888, for Austria. This led to his divorce from his wife Louise, following a love-affair of which Engels gives a racy account (see his letter of October 13th, 1888).

³ Word missing in the original.

Although the Blanquist paper is closed to us personally, it will nevertheless be open, through Vaillant, to our ideas. Should you feel the need to express an opinion on the German situation, Vaillant would be happy to publish it.

269. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, June 22nd, 1888

My dear Engels,

You will have received the first two issues of the *Homme libre*.¹ Save for Vaillant's article, there is nothing in it. Although a silly journal has every hope of success, it must nevertheless provide something for the public to think about. The Blanquists fancy that within their ranks they have all that is required to govern France; it is even said that they have distributed the offices: this one to the Ministry of the Interior, that one to the Police Prefecture, etc.; but they will realise before long that the production of a newspaper presents difficulties and that what is required for that are journalists.

Otherwise, dead calm. French politics as a whole are in a state of expectancy; what will the new emperor do?²

The Possibilists have become commercial travellers for the Radicals and opportunists; as soon as there is a vacant seat, they are sent out to do propaganda for the radical or opportunist candidate. Boulanger and his dictatorship are now nothing but a means of distracting the public and diverting its attention from other matters.

My dear Engels, your cheque evaporated like the illusions about Radicals of the Clemenceau type which one

¹ The first number of *L'Homme libre* appeared on June 21st, 1888, and contained an article by Vaillant: "The Nation Armed" (p. 1/I-II). No. 2 was dated June 22nd.

² This refers to Wilhelm II.

entertained in the past. I beg you to send me another, for the tradesmen cannot be paid in illusions.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

At the moment I am writing an article for a Russian publication which I was asked to do by Vera Zasulich; she must have written to you. After this article I shall go back to some work for Mme Adam on adultery now and in the past: a ticklish subject.

270. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 26/6/88

My dear Engels,

Your letter has shaken me out of very sweet slumber: for the six months that we have been in the country we have been living in a veritable Capua, lost to all sense of economic needs, thanks to you. Our settling in cost us more than we had expected; that is what obliged me to make such heavy demands upon your purse.

The situation described in your letter is so serious that I was overwhelmed by it; at first I wanted to hide it from Laura, who had just set out for Paris, and I burnt your letter as soon as read. But on reflection I realised that this was impossible. As I don't want Laura to know that I momentarily wished to hide it from her, I beg of you to write and tell her the lamentable state of Percy's affairs and she will understand that you, who have been truly providential for us, must extricate them from their difficulties.

The 100 pounds which you have been good enough to put at our disposal I gladly accept at the moment. I had, however, hoped to be able to announce that soon I should be fending for myself in Paris; and it was indeed that hope which carried me away and led me into spending more than I should have done.

Some time ago I submitted to Vaughan (the manager of *L'Intransigeant* and a good friend) the plan of bringing out, side by side with the daily *Intransigeant*, a weekly *Intransigeant* devoted to literary matters. Several Paris papers have such literary running-mates which are successful. The plan would already have materialised perhaps had not Rochefort felt the need to produce *L'Homme libre* in order to divert attacks. But it will materialise, for *L'Intransigeant* is such a colossal success that this literary weekly is bound to succeed. If the journal comes out, I shall be the editor-in-chief. Only a post of that sort could set me up, for literary work—at least, that which I do—brings in so little that it can only be regarded as supplementary.

Forgive this disjointed letter, I am writing in haste before Laura's return.

Cordially yours,

P. LAFARGUE

271. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 6th July,¹ 1888

My dear Laura,

Today I write on business and therefore short and, I hope, sweet.

Jollymeier came last night and leaves next week, probably Wednesday, for Germany. He will not have time to return by way of Paris, but the present plan is that Nim is going with him as far as Coblenz, and then to St. Wendel to see her friends, and she does intend to come back by way of Paris provided you and the children are there. Will you therefore be good enough and let us know, if possible by a letter written on Sunday, but on Monday at latest, whether 1) you will be at home and 2) whether the

¹ The original is erroneously dated August.

children will be in Asnières, about the 26th or 28th July?

It is almost certain that you would have had a visit from Pumps at the same time, as she hoped to go with Jollymeier too, but last Sunday she came with the news that her boy had got the measles and that will keep her here.

Tussy and Edward are still at their Castle and expect to sail sometime in August to America where Edward is to superintend the mise en scène of three of his pieces, to be played simultaneously in N[ew] York, Chicago and God knows where besides. I don't think they will be away more than 8-10 weeks altogether. If his dramatic success goes on at this rate, maybe he will have to go next year to Australia, at the expense of some theatrical impresario.

Our Zurich friends are not settled yet—but on the way towards it. It is most astonishing, the bother, delay and kicking about of heels that is caused by the London system of monopolist landlords who prescribe their own terms to their leaseholders so that when you want to take a business place from one of these latter—and that you have to do—you have to wait the great landlord's pleasure in giving you leave to set up the necessary machinery. French or Prussian bureaucratic interference are nothing compared to it. And the Londoners have stood this for centuries, and even now scarcely dare rebel against it!

Kind regards to Paul.

Yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

272. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 15th July 1888

My dear Laura,

You ask why Schorlemmer cannot come too, and you hope to see Pumps over at Le Perreux. Well, I am afraid you will have your wish fulfilled and your question answered with a vengeance.

Pumps' boy having improved extra-rapidly, sudden resolutions were come to last Monday, and on Wednesday the lot, Jollymeier, Nim and Pumps, all three set off for Germany. Pumps to Paulis', Nim to St. Wendel. And then according to what was arranged here, Pumps and Sch[orlemmer] are to take up Nim at St. Wendel and all three start for Paris, where they will arrive somewhere about the 29th or 30th July—but they will let you know. Nim and Sch[orlemmer] must be here again on Saturday 4th August; Pumps talked of going from Paris to St. Malo and Jersey where Percy intends taking the children.

How you will manage to quarter the lot of them is more than I know. But Nim thought you would get over that difficulty right enough. Anyhow you will be wanting some little cash for the occasion which I shall not omit sending you in time.

Last night your letter with Longuet's document came to hand—at the same time as Edward who is again brought to London by his dramatic industry. He is going to read two plays to-day to speculative actors (Alma Murray is one) who intend to invest in a bit of novelty. Of course Longuet is again counting without his host, as Edward and Tussy will be going to America for at least two months and I shall take my holiday as soon as Nim comes back—if he likes to leave Jean with Nim at my place, all right and Nim would be glad of his company; but is that what Longuet contemplates? Anyhow Tussy will return the plaidoyer¹ to you and write, and you and Nim can settle the remainder.

What a nice mess that was which Boulanger and Floquet cooked betwixt the two of them the other day²—Bou-

¹ Speech for the defence.—*Tr.*

² On July 12th, Boulanger supported a motion "inviting the government to request the President of the Republic to avail himself of his rights of dissolution" and rebuking the majority for not having carried out any of the promised reforms. Floquet made a haughty and insolent reply, whereupon, after calling Floquet a liar, Boulanger

langer's coup de théâtre, pre-arranged in every detail and yet miscarried because he could not keep up his part to the end—Floquet's rage and invective where a cool reply would have been required—the insults, the duel, and le beau, le brave général worsted by an avocat!¹ Decidedly if the second empire was the caricature of the first, the third republic is getting a caricature not of the first but even the second. Anyhow, let's hope this is the end of Boulanger; for if the popularity of that fool continued, it would *drive the Czar into the arms of Bismarck*, and we don't want that any more than the Russo-French War of revanche. If the popular masses in France absolutely require a personal god, they had better look out for a different man, this one makes them ridiculous. But moreover it is clear that this desire for a sauveur de la société,² if really existing in the masses, is but another form of Bonapartism and therefore I really cannot bring myself to believe that it is as deeply rooted and vraiment populaire³ as some people say. That our people fight the Radicals, well and good, that is their proper business, but let them fight them under their own flag. And as a journée⁴ is only possible—so long as the people are unarmed—with the help of the Radicals (as on Carnot's election),⁵ our people have only the ballot-box to rely on for the present, and I do not see the advantage of having the voters' minds muddled by this plebiscitary Boulangism. Our business is not to complicate but to simplify and make clear the issues between the Radicals and ourselves. What little good Boulanger *could* do, he

tendered his resignation as deputy, which he had ready to hand. Seconds were exchanged, to be followed, on July 13th, by a duel which ended in Floquet's favour.

¹ The handsome, the gallant general . . . lawyer.—*Tr.*

² Saviour of society.—*Tr.*

³ Truly popular.—*Tr.*

⁴ Demonstration.—*Tr.*

⁵ It was due to pressure from the masses that Ferry did not run as President of the Republic and that Sadi Carnot was elected on December 4th, 1887. (See letters of that period.)

has done, and the chief good he did is to bring the Radicals to power. A dissolution would be a good thing—while a Radical government is in, upon whom we can exercise pressure; but Boulanger seems to me the least likely person to bring that dissolution about.

Here, after two fine days, it rains again cats and dogs since this morning. This is really a solution—summer dissolved in rain water—which makes one dissolute and drives one to drink. In fact I shall go and open a bottle of Pilsener and drink your health. Sur ce, je vous embrasse.¹

Ever yours,

F. E.

273. LAURA LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Wednesday [July 18th 1888]

My dearest General,

"The more the merrier," and I am delighted to hear that some of my own people are coming over here at last.

Had it not been for the *bed question*, I should have invited Pumps and Percy to come to Paris long ago, but our own patriarchal or matriarchal bed was the only one we possessed during our five years' stay at Port Royal. On our flitting to Le Perreux we had to get an additional diminutive bed for a small servant-girl. A l'heure qu'il est² we have a very pretty spare room in our castle, but it is much in the condition of a new-born babe or of mother Eve before she had tried on the fig-leaves; it is really in a state of innocence, or as the house-furnishers put it, it is unfurnished. For Nim when she comes to us we hire a bed and manage to please her. But will one small bed

¹ With that, I kiss you.—*Tr.*

² As things are.—*Tr.*

suffice for "three at once"? Poser la question, c'est, je crois, la résoudre.¹

I mention this to explain why I should not have dared to invite more than one guest at a time. But, although I should have hesitated to ask Pumps and Schorlemmer to accompany Nim, I am none the less, nay, rather all the more, delighted to know that the three will come together.

The sleeping business is the only difficulty and that is by no means an insuperable one. Either I hire two beds in place of one or I get bedrooms for Pumps and Schorlemmer within a stone's-throw of our house. Helen will put up with such accommodation as our place affords and so, I am sure, will Pumps, if she prefers sharing Nimmy's bedroom. Where there's a will there's a way, not always alas, the ways and means!

I wanted to thank you for and reply to your letter, but while I am writing these lines, a battle royal is going on below in the *poultry-yard* and garden.

Paul is at Paris and if any harm comes to his chickens and his pigeons and his "poussins"² during his absence, he will, if not knock me down, at all events, blow me up, on his return. Therefore I must slip down and see what can be done with these devils of cocks and hens.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

274. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 23rd July 1888

My dear Laura,

Tussy returns me Longuet's letter, instead of direct to you, so I send it herewith. She said she would write to him. Edward told me last week they would be here again

¹ To ask the question is to answer it, I think.—*Tr.*

² Chicks.—*Tr.*

yesterday, but he has a capacity of neglecting facts, when they are contrary to his wishes, that is worthy of a more juvenile age. So they won't be here before end of week.

Of course Pumps and Nim can sleep in your room and if you can find a bed for Schorlemmer somewhere in Le Perreux, he will be all right. I enclose a cheque £15.—so as to set you at ease with regard to the ways and means.

Our Zurichers are at last in a fair way of settlement. Their wives have arrived, they have got a business place—that is the agreement for an empty and not quite finished house—and private houses for themselves, so that in a week or 10 days they will all be unter Dach und Fach.¹ The female part of the *Sozial-Demokrat* is not over charming. Ed. Bernstein's wife seems the pleasantest, a sharp little Jewess, but she squints awfully; Schlüter's is an exceedingly good-natured and retiring little Dresden article, but uncommon soft; and as to the Tante, id est Mrs. Mot- teler, let Nim give you a description of this dignified juvenile of fifty (so they say), this Swabian Kleinstädter² affecting the dame du monde—I am told she is a very worthy woman after all, but I don't think she feels at home among our undignified lot, and I anticipate some pleasant little sparring when Tussy and she do meet. But Nim and Pumps will give you a description of her to your heart's content. I had them all here yesterday for supper, as our new girl (I think I told you that I sent Annie away) cooks quite passably and rather prides in cooking for company, and Mrs. M[otteler] lost no time in telling me that the custard was burnt (just as she told Pumps: Sie sind aber mal fett!³ imagine Pumps's horror!). When they are once settled in their own establishments—all about Junction Road and the Boston—I hope distance will lend enchantment to the view—of considerably reduced visits from the

¹ Settled in.—*Tr.*

² Provincial.—*Tr.*

³ How fat you are!—*Tr.*

lot—I don't quite intend to have the German element swamping everything at No 122.

I have got myself photographed before I shall be quite grey—and enclose the one they all say is the best.

Post-time and dinner-time, so here I shut up.

Love from your old,

F. ENGELS

275. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 25/7/88

My dear Engels,

Your letter and the cheque reached us just in time, but we have not yet had a word from the illustrious travelers. All will be ready to receive them tomorrow: we have hired two beds for Hélène and Pumps and we shall lodge Schorlemmer at an hotel. I had hoped to put him up at a little restaurant kept by a Luxembourg woman with whom he could have made himself understood in German; unfortunately she has no room available at the moment. The number of Bader, Zimmer¹ and other German words hereabouts is enormous, one would think it was a colony.

Wilhelm's trip² is a monumental failure; he's started well. The old man had trained Russia to bow down to Germany, and the Czar to come to Berlin; the young one has changed all that. The story goes that he is weak in the head; he has proved it now. His failure, added to the ear-trouble he has, may well derange him. The French are delighted. That interview made their blood run cold, for they were sure that Bismarck would never have allowed Wilhelm to leave unless he was satisfied with the results of

¹ Baths, rooms.—*Tr.*

² The Emperor Wilhelm II had visited the Czar's Court. It seems clear that he went in the hope of making an alliance but that he failed.

the interview. Undoubtedly the Bulgarians are the most interesting nation at the present time; without them where would Europe be?

Floquet, the bully, is beginning to quake. In destroying Boulanger's popularity he is himself wiping out the whole justification for his being in the government; the opportunists for whom he works will bring him down one of these days. In all the Boulangist elections a large section of the Radicals and the Republicans who want reforms vote for the general who, despite his follies, is not yet quite as finished as they imagine in the Clemenceau camp. They leave no stone unturned to defeat him; they send out people from Paris to stop Boulangist meetings and, despite all these manoeuvres, he polls almost 20 thousand votes.¹ That is not to be sneezed at. But this blow and those yet to come will suffice to banish the insane fear of dictatorship which was becoming Floquet's means of governing.

I received a letter from Liebknecht. On my advice he has given up the idea of a congress this year and suggests organising one to be held in '89 in Paris.² It has every chance of succeeding. I have just had a letter from Vailant who expects to be able to draw in the Blanquists; I think we could count on publicity in the *Intransigeant*; moreover, we can stir up Paris and the whole of France and give the congress real importance: it will perhaps be the only notable thing about the Exhibition, for the Eiffel Tower is hideous and the organisers of the Exhibition are only thinking of the pleasures they can offer visitors from

¹ On July 22nd there were by-elections in the departments of the Ardèche and the Dordogne. In the former, Boulanger polled 27,500 votes, his Republican opponent defeating him with over 43,000. In the Dordogne, where he stood for his own former seat (he had been elected on April 8th with 59,500 votes, but had resigned), he polled only 6,000 votes.

² The idea of a workers' international congress had been raised at the Saint-Gall German Social-Democratic Congress in 1887. On April 4th Liebknecht asked Engels' opinion, to which he replied on April 16th, 1888.

the four corners of the world. The most certain result of the Exhibition will be the propagation of syphilis.

Well, it is a good thing that the Social-Democrats are settled in; for they seem to have bothered you in a distressing way, which does not prevent you from being in splendid health, as can be seen from your portrait, where you appear to be full of life and in good spirits.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

276. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 30 July 88

My dear Laura,

Hope by this time you have got the travellers with you.

This morning letter from Sch[orlemmer]. When he arrived at Bonn, his friends advised him to have his wound¹ cured there and so he went to the University Klinik from which he was on Saturday discharged cured, but he still suffers from a Magenkatarrh² or, as his brother who is with him and serves him as amanuensis, more properly spells it, Magenkater,³ and is ordered to keep quiet for some time—he is even afraid that ulterior plans we had about a sea-trip of some duration may fall to the bottom as far as he is concerned. That however we shall see by and by. Anyhow, he intended to go to Darmstadt yesterday and will write again from there.

For Nim's information: yesterday we had roast beef and peas, very well cooked; there were only Edward and Tussy, as Percy and the children dined at Sandhurst Lodge, it being his mother's birthday. After dinner they came over

¹ During the crossing Schorlemmer had a fall on board ship and was seriously injured.

² Gastric chill.—*Tr.*

³ A play on the words "katarrh" and "kater," meaning a hang-over.

(and Charley, whose wife had called for supper the Sunday before, and I was only sorry she did not drop in then) and later on the four Zurichers with Mrs. Bernstein and Mrs. Schlüter—the *Tante*¹ was out of sorts fortunately—and we were very jolly. I am getting on right enough with the girl, only her sweets are not what they exactly should be; she makes a beautifully leathery paste and makes up for other defects in her custard by putting in about as much essence of bitter almonds as sugar—that however I have stopped. The girl is right enough, only she wants a bit more breaking-in by Nim; longer than three weeks more or less independent management she is not yet fit for, as she imports a lot of superior notions from the East End lodging-house where she was attending upon “ladyships.” But as these are confined to cooking chiefly, Nim will soon break her of them, and on the whole I have no reason to complain, though sometimes to laugh.

I hope you have better weather. I went to town about 2, it began raining before 3, and is still at it.

Love to all of you.

Ever yours,

F. E.

277. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 31/7/88

My dear Engels,

Hélène and Pumps arrived this morning in capital health after having spent a night in the train. I got there just in time—at the very moment when they were taking a cab to the Champs-Élysées in Paris.² I was in a blue funk

¹ Mrs. Motteler.

² The Lafargues lived in the avenue des Champs-Élysées, but at Le Perreux.

at missing them; the only information H  l  ne had sent me was that they would be leaving Frankfort and would arrive at about ten o'clock. They could just as easily have come to the gare du Nord as to the gare de l'Est; I did not know which station to go to, for trains were arriving from Strasbourg at both these stations at 10 o'clock. However, it all ended well.

The enclosed letter gives you news of poor Schorlemmer, whom we miss sadly.

Farewell and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

278. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 3/8/88

My dear Engels,

H  l  ne and Pumps will be leaving Le Perreux tomorrow Saturday morning at 8:30, will take the 9:40 train to Boulogne and arrive at Charing Cross at 5:40, just in time for dinner. The weather is very good; they will probably make the voyage without too much seasickness.

It is a pity that they are leaving us just when the weather is glorious, as the English say. Yesterday we spent the day in Paris from one o'clock in the afternoon until half-past twelve at night. As for H  l  ne, it was too much for her—in spite of our halts at beer-shops and restaurants, her feet were a torment to her.

Tell Aveling that I have taken to heart his post-script added to Tussy's letter that I should translate or adapt one of my plays. On his return from America I shall send him one of our one-act plays which I believe will please the English and American public. It is a comedy.

I must be off to find a porter for tomorrow morning.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

279. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 6th Aug. 88

My dear Laura,

When you receive this letter I shall be floating away on the *City of Berlin*, with Tussy, Edward, and Schorlemmer towards the shores of the New World. The plan has been of pretty long standing, only it was constantly being crossed by all sorts of obstacles, last not least Sch[orlemmer]'s misadventure—but he will be here tonight (fresh accidents excepted) and tomorrow we expect to be off, leaving Liverpool landing-stage at five p.m. on Wednesday. The affair had to be kept secret, firstly because indeed of the series of obstacles which threatened to wreck it, and secondly in order to save me as much as possible from the interviewers of the *N[ew] Y[ork] Volkszeitung* and others (among whom, Sorge writes, little *Cuno*¹ is now one of the most formidable) and from the delicate attention of the German Socialist Executive, etc. of *N[ew] York*, on arrival, as that would spoil all the pleasure of the trip and rend all its purpose. I want to see and not to preach, and principally to have a complete change of air, etc., in order to get finally over the weakness of the eyes, and chronic conjunctivitis which Dr. Reeves, Edward's friend, says is due entirely to want of tone and will most likely give way to a long sea voyage, etc. When I proposed the job to Sch[orlemmer], he fell in at once, but of course must be back by beginning of October, so that his Flushing accident came at a very awkward time. But that seems all right now and he is due tonight.

Edward and Tussy will not come back with us, as far as we can see; they are sure to be kept there at least a fortnight longer.

¹ Th. Fr. Cuno was a German Socialist who had been expelled from Germany.

Our travellers arrived here all right, though half an hour behind time, on Saturday, and as our postcard will have informed you, your currants—both raw and in the juice extracted by Hélène—I mean Nim—found the fullest and most general appreciation; the enthusiasm as to your garden is almost wild in its manifestations and I think both Pumps and Nim dream of it. In spite of their pretty rough passage neither was sick, they were wise enough to lay down at once.

I enclose a cheque for £25.—to go on with during my absence. Shall let you hear again on arrival and report on adventures, sea monsters, icebergs and the other wonders of the sea, unless captured by the Irish fleet which has succeeded in breaking the blockade of the English on Saturday night and is now destroying British commerce, capturing Scotch coast towns, etc.—a capital augury of the real political victory of the Irish over the British philistine which the next general election is sure to bring.

So farewell until then. I was very proud to hear from Nim that you look very well and younger than ever. Hope you will keep so till our next merry meeting.

Ever yours affectionately and kindest regards to Paul.

F. ENGELS

280. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 8.8. 1888

My dear Engels,

I have just returned from Eudes' funeral¹; it was an impressive demonstration by the revolutionary party. A vast throng preceded and followed the hearse; it occupied the

¹ Emile Eudes died on August 5th, 1888, whilst making a speech at a rally organised by *L'Homme libre* in the Salle Favié in support of the navvies' strike. The funeral took place on Wednesday, August 8th.

whole street, vehicles were unable to move and the column was as long as from the Red Cap to Oxford Street. The pavements, the windows of the houses, were crammed with people, in some cases sympathetic. There were shouts of Long Live the Commune! Long Live the Social Revolution! and clapping broke out as the funeral procession and the wreaths—carried on the tops of poles—went by. The shops were closed along the entire route and even in the neighbouring streets, as we were able to ascertain on making our way back with Deville and other friends by a different route from that taken by the funeral procession. This closing of shops (it is the first time I have seen such a thing) gives you some idea of the nervous state Paris has been in since the navvies' strike.¹ Eudes' funeral has raised the fear of the bourgeois and the government to its highest pitch, it was really like a day of revolution. The gendarmerie, the police and the Paris military guard, both foot and mounted, were ready to go into action, as we were able to ascertain. It is true that some people, including Boulanger's friends, had tried to organise a disturbance: yesterday evening some of the general's friends went to see the editors of *L'Homme libre* and offered to put 100 revolvers and some rounds of dynamite at their disposal. They were told that no disturbance was wanted and that in view of such a suggestion they would forbid the unfurling of the red flag which had been planned. Vaillant's article,² which I am sending you, was a public reply to this suggestion.

¹ The strike of navvies and well- and shaft-sinking labourers broke out on July 25th, following the employers' refusal to raise wages.

² In *L'Homme libre* of August 9th, 1888, Vaillant wrote an article entitled "Obsequies" (p. 1/I-VI), in which the following passage occurred: "We wish to honour our dead and our Party: the Party of the People's Republic and of the Revolution, as all citizens of a free country are entitled to do. There will be neither provocation nor violence on our side. If anything of the sort occurs, it will come from the enemy, from reaction, from the police, from the government. They will be answerable for it."

Floquet had undertaken not to interfere with the funeral procession, provided the red flag was not raised; it was a matter of life and death to his government. Everything went off quietly as they left the house of the deceased; the police had taken care to occupy the Labour Exchange to prevent the strikers from assembling there and moving off in procession to the house of the deceased. The funeral cortège set off peacefully. Red flags were carried sheathed, to be unfurled only at the cemetery, as is customary; but on the route the longing to see the red banner fly became irresistible and near the place de la République all the flags were unfurled, to the plaudits and enthusiastic shouts of the crowd, and a fight round the flags ensued. The gendarmes showed unprecedented brutality, bludgeoning people with their rifle butts. I saw one raise his rifle and aim at a group on a second storey, from where, no doubt, he had been struck by some sort of projectile. A comrade made him lower his weapon. The brutality of the gendarmes, who were brought in from the suburbs, was so shocking that they no doubt received the order to withdraw, for although the procession was attacked again by the police, nothing more was seen of the gendarmes. The police charged with drawn swords; there was one man quite close to me, an onlooker, whose nose was broken; others received wounds on the head and elsewhere.

What is going on in Paris and more or less everywhere in France just now is phenomenal; nothing like it has been seen since the last century. The crowds invading the streets and coming into collision with the police: in the last century, before the revolution, it was famines that caused the outbreak, today it is strikes. The crowd is more rowdy than bellicose; they smash windows, get into fist-cuffs with the police from time to time, but take to their heels as soon as the sword-bayonets leave their scabbards. The crowd is unarmed, but anger accumulates and grows as the movement spreads and becomes more stormy.

The masses have won the right to open air meeting, and that is a dreaded right in France. Hence everyone foresees the most serious happenings in the more or less near future.

We are glad to hear that you liked the currants and that the travellers arrived in London none the worse for wear. They did well to leave on Saturday: on Sunday the weather was appalling. Jean is going to spend his holidays with us.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

281. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

October 9th/88

My dear General,

The Weekly Dispatch was all-hailed by me yesterday,¹ not on account of the murders and mutilations it described, nor even on account of the wit and wisdom of Mrs. Crawford, but as a first sign of life from you since your return to gloomy-merry England. We had been re-assured regarding you and your fellow-travellers by a letter from Schorlemmer, but between the receipt of his letter and your paper, the days were beginning to have, I could not help thinking, more than the usual 24 hours a piece.

You must have had a roughish return voyage, for you were rather longer on the sea, I believe, than you expected to be. From all accounts your expedition has done you a world of good and I only hope that you will not think

¹ This refers to *The Weekly Dispatch* of October 7th, 1888, which contained an article covering three pages entitled: "Two More Murders in East London," a column devoted entirely to murders (p. 7) and a dispatch from Mrs. Crawford: "France" (p. 16/1-II).

it necessary all at once to plunge into the thick of work again and read and write and revise and review more than is good for you. I fear that, for some time to come, what with antiquated letters to read and answer, heaps of old papers in many languages you will be wanting to glance at, business matters, household matters, and all sorts of visits from all sorts of quarters and who knows what, you will not be a free man on coming home from America.

Paul has been absent from his beloved Le Perreux for a twelvenight, on a visit to his mother. He found the old lady in the best of healths and spirits. Paul's grandfather, his aunt told him, was a blue-eyed, fair-haired Jew of the name of Abraham Armagnac. There was always something suspicious, you know, about Paul's nose and his mother's nose!

Longuet came on Sunday, with Edgar and Marcel, to fetch Johnny¹ who had spent his holidays here.

Jean is a bright and amusing boy with a phenomenal gift of the gab, with all his father's brilliant qualities and—barring a certain sweetness of disposition—with none of his mother's sterling ones.

Guesde has just undergone an operation and is none the worse for it; Deville is the proud and happy father of a second daughter and Dormoy—who makes a stir at Montluçon—has a two-months-old son whom he has named *Marx*. There are, I don't know how many small Spartacus-Marxes, Rienzi-Marxes, Vercingétorix-Marxes toddling about on the surface of the globe just now. May they live to dare and do something worthy of the name.

Next time I write, dear General, my gossip shall be on politics. Our loves to you and Nim and all.

YOUR LAURA

¹ Jean Longuet.

282. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 13 Oct. 88

My dear Laura,

At last. The heap of letters which Paul foresaw would meet me here and which was indeed frightful, is mostly brushed away and I can sit down to write to you a few lines.

And to begin with, a bit of gossip. When we arrived, the first news Nim told us, was that Kautsky and his wife were going to be divorced, that K[autsky] had fallen in love with a girl in the Salzburg Alps, informed his wife of the fact, and Luise had set him free as far as she was concerned. We were all thunderstruck. However, a letter from Luise to me—a really heroic letter—confirmed the news, and with a generosity beyond all praise, even acquitted K[autsky] of all blame. We all of us here were very fond of Luise and could not make it out how K[autsky] could be such a fool—and such a mean one; except that an intrigue was at the bottom, planned by his mother and sister (who both hated Luise) and that he had fallen into the trap. This seems indeed to have been the case, from all we can learn. The girl is a Bezirksrichter's¹ daughter, longing evidently for a husband and especially for one who will take her to Vienna, K[autsky] flirted with her while his wife was in Vienna nursing her sick mother; and one fine morning the discovery was made that neither could live without the other—the sister, of course, working both puppets behind the scenes, while the mother *pretended* not to see anything. Well, K[autsky] came here, told Bernstein, sold his furniture, took his books with him and returned, with his younger brother Hans, to St. Gilgen near Salzburg, the scene of the above drama. When the youthful Bella (such is her name) saw

¹ County Court Judge.—*Tr.*

the equally youthful Hans, a flotter strammer Bursch,¹ she at once discovered that she had, in Karl, really loved Hans alone, and Hans reciprocated with the alacrity becoming to a young Viennese; within five days they were engaged and Karl found himself between two stools of his own setting. Karl in his generosity has forgiven both, but the old mother fumes and threatens to forbid the young woman her house—and this throws a peculiar light, or rather shade, on her pretended innocence of the affair.

Of course, now K[autsky] discovers at once that he has lived unhappily with Luise for the last 12 months (that is since his mother and sister were here and spent a month with them at the Isle of Wight) and Ede Bernstein will also have noted some disharmony when he came from Switzerland. This is all the more curious that during this time when he could not agree with her, we all here liked her all the better, the longer we knew her; which proves that she is not only a heroic woman, for that she is undoubtedly (and such are certainly not always the best for domestic use), but a woman with whom reasonable people can get on. Well, I think I said to Nim: this is the greatest Dummheit² K[autsky] ever committed in his life and I do not envy him the moralischen Kater³ which will be the upshot (sans calembour!)⁴ of it all.

The matter is up to the present kept quiet. Here only Ede Bernstein and his wife, Nim, and Schorl[emmer] know about it, also Tussy and Edward, and probably one or two of Luise's and Tussy's common lady friends. How it will all end, I do not know, but I guess K[autsky] wishes it was all a dream.

Now to business. Enclosed account of *Capital*, for the last 12 months, according to which I owe you £2.8.9, and

¹ Jolly strapping fellow.—*Tr.*

² Folly.—*Tr.*

³ Moral nausea.—*Tr.*

⁴ No pun intended.—*Tr.*

as you must be by this time pretty short of cash I add £15—making the cheque £17.8.9 in all.

Nim informs me dinner is getting ready and so I stop short, using the rest of the page for the account. Love from Nim and your

OLD GENERAL

Received from S. Sonnenschein & Co. for Royalties July 1887-June 88

	£ 12. 3. 9
1/5 Longuet's children	£ 2. 8. 9
1/5 Laura Lafargue	2. 8. 9
1/5 Tussy	2. 8. 9
	<hr/>
	£ 7. 6. 3
Remainder 2/5	4. 17. 6
	<hr/>
for the Translators	12. 3. 9
	<hr/>
Of which Sam Moore 3/5	£ 2. 18. 6
E. Aveling 2/5	1. 19
	<hr/>
	4. 17. 6

Meissner's a/c I have not yet received.

283. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 15/10/88

My dear Engels,

Thank you for your cheque which arrived most opportunely, as I did not know how I should manage to pay my landlord, whose quarter's rent falls due this month.

What you tell us about Kautsky surprised us very much. We certainly did not expect behaviour of this sort from K[autsky], who ought to have considered himself lucky in having so charming a wife: the young German girl who stole his heart seems to have given him a good lesson, but fate is to be praised that the dénouement came about be-

fore and not after marriage; one can only trust that, having grown cooler and wiser, he will take steps to reinstate himself in his wife's good books.

Floquet has just joined battle with parliament¹; he showed himself a skilful tactician. He defeated the opportunists who had expected to bring him down, introduce a Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet, dissolve parliament immediately after the vote on the Budget and hold elections²: it will probably be the Radical government which will hold the elections. So much the better; the fight will be more clear-cut, Clemenceau & Co. will be in the government and not the opposition. The Boulangists will be the ones to represent the Radical opposition; probably, and I may add certainly, we shall be obliged to form a coalition with them for the election period, if they do not ally themselves with the Bonapartists and Monarchists. Thanks to their co-operation we may perhaps be able to return several of our people to parliament.

It is not we but the Radicals who brought Boulanger into existence; we cannot do away with him, for the more he is attacked, the stronger it makes him; we can use him; we should be very stupid to let ourselves be taken in tow by the Radicals, as the Possibilists did, thus forfeiting public esteem.

The Radical Party is utterly compromised, one section of its forces, disgusted by the behaviour of the Floquet Government, has gone over to Boulangism, the rest is in process of going over to socialism. Clemenceau, who is the deputy for the Var department, does not dare to hold a public meeting in Toulon; he had to confine himself to private meetings amongst groups of friends; I think he in-

¹ On October 15th the Chambers reassembled. Floquet moved his Bill for a revision of the Constitution giving the right of veto to the senators and, after a hostile speech by Ribot, demanded a vote of confidence. He won it with 297 votes to 187.

² This refers to the parliamentary elections of 1889.

tends to send Longuet there to organise a round of meetings to prepare the ground for the forthcoming elections.¹ If Guesde had not been ill it is he who, invited by the Socialist groups in the South, would have held a series of socialist lectures.

Guesde has been operated for a testicular varicocele. The operation was entirely successful and he is up and about again, but he will not be finally healed up for two or three weeks.

I have hopes of some literary work for the coming winter. Ask Aveling whether he could not find me a critic's job on some theatrical papers with which he is in touch in London and the United States; I could send them news of the theatre in Paris (descriptions of new plays, innovations and so on). I think it would be of interest to the readers of the papers, for Paris is still the hub of the theatrical world.

Good wishes to you and everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

P. S. This morning I learn that the agreement between the opportunists and the Monarchists is rather shaky; the Bonapartists and Royalists are too exacting. That is a bit of luck for Floquet, but the idiot does not know how to take advantage of it; he dreams only of an alliance of Republicans, the ideal which parliamentarians are always trying to achieve.

284. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Nov^{br} 5th/88/Paris

My dear General,

Forgive my silence which, for all that the old twaddler, Carlyle, may say to the contrary, is just as often *similar* as "*golden*." I have been so busy with calls and counter-

¹ A parliamentary by-election was due to take place in the Var department on November 25th.

calls[?]¹ and bedevilments “de toutes les couleurs”² that I haven’t had the time or the heart to write.

I thank you for the cheque you sent me and I thank you for the good news that you sent along with it.

Touching the preface to the manifesto, I will translate the one of 1872, if you like, but I think that it is hardly suitable for the present publication. France is a wonderful country and Paris, the head and the heart of it, is wonderfuller still! Which means, that I don’t know whether our Parisian readers will appreciate the preface in question. I should say that a few lines would suffice by way of introduction, which you, my dear General, should write, IN FRENCH!

Later on, when second and third editions come to be wanted, all former prefaces can, and shall be, published. Be good enough to let me know what you wish me to do.

It has been pouring all day long and I have come home drenched after much long and unprofitable walking.

So for tonight no more but just Goodnight, and love to you, and love to Nim (how is she?) and to Pumps and all her family.

Yours always affectionately,

LAURA

285. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 9/11/88

My dear Engels,

It is indeed sad news that you give me of poor Percy. The sewing-machine failure does not surprise me so much, but I should never have thought that his whole position

¹ Letter torn here.

² Of every kind.—*Tr.*

would be jeopardised by it. We are the more affected by the news in that we know better than anyone else how you are pestered on all sides, and especially on our side. And this at a time when you have need of so much peace and quiet to complete the publication of Marx's work.

For my part I am doing my utmost to tide over the difficulty.

I have some hope of becoming the correspondent of a provincial paper.¹ I have some work ready which only needs a home where it can be placed, and it would be the deuce if I did not manage to earn a few pence. I hope to have an article accepted for the *Revue scientifique* by Letourneau. The madonna of the *Nouvelle Revue* has had one of my articles in hand for three months now, but owing to its subject-matter—*adultery*—she is reluctant to publish it. I shall earn a little from the *Neue Zeit* and the German pamphlets. I have just received a proposal from Braun to contribute to his archives. I answered at once suggesting an article on *Modern Criminality, its Trends and Causes*. In short, my dear Engels, I shall do my utmost to be as little of a burden to you as possible.

Have you spoken to Aveling about my becoming the Paris dramatic critic for a London or American paper?

My eyes, like yours, are not all right. My right eye, which was bad for over a year and underwent three operations, is weak; white light irritates it. I protect myself from that trouble by wearing slightly tinted glasses. Since I started using them, I can go about and work for 6 or 8 hours by day or night without the slightest fatigue. I mention this because perhaps you would do well to follow my example. By using very slightly coloured lenses you can see as well as through clear ones.

¹ This probably refers to Lafargue becoming a correspondent of *Le Petit Lyonnais*, a paper which had been re-started by Vaughan, who was a friend of Lafargue's, and which he put at the disposal of the Socialists.

Tell Percy that since I began taking Turkish baths regularly once a week, I no longer feel the slightest rheumatic pain.

We are glad to hear that peace is being restored between the Kautskys. If Kautsky has returned to London let me know by postcard: I have to send him a manuscript.

We trust that Pumps, Percy and their children, who have suffered every misfortune at the same time, are in good health again.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

Have you seen Farjat?

286. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 24 Nov. 88

My dear Laura,

I was going to write two lines to Paul just when your letter arrived. I have been busy with a very important Chapter in Book III¹ which I have had to rewrite entirely, the materials left by Mohr being all in the rough, and as it is a mathematical one, [it] required much attention. And when one has only two daily fragments of 1½ hours each allowed for work by the doctor, a thing which otherwise could be settled in 14 days takes more than 6 weeks—and so I determined to do it all before I allowed myself any interruption for correspondence. Well, the main portion is finished to-day and so I can just send a line to ask Paul to let me know as usual when he wants any money and I will do what I can.

As soon as my chapter is definitely got rid of, I shall write again—I have such a lot of letter-debts! In the meantime hope to get the *Figaro* tonight, so far it has not come.

¹ Of *Capital*.

The position in France seems indeed very curious—our friends have allowed themselves by their hatred of the Radicals to take Boulanger too little au sérieux and find now that he is a real danger—anyhow he has the lower ranks of the army on his side and that is a power not to be disdained. And anyhow the way the fellow not only accepts but courts the support of the Monarchists makes him more contemptible in my eyes than even the Radicals. Let us hope that the unconscious logic of French history will overcome the conscious breaches of logic committed by all parties—but then one must not forget that the form of all unconscious developments is the Negation der Negation, the movement by contrasts, and that this in France means republicanism (or respectively socialism) and Bonapartism (or Boulangism), and Boulanger's avènement¹ would be a European war—the very thing most to be feared.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

Pumps' boy has had to be transformed into a Jew last Wednesday—let Paul pronounce his blessing on his favourite operation.² He is getting better. Nim had a severe cold, home-bound nearly 3 weeks.

287. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 24/11/88

My dear Engels,

Marx said that December 2nd was a parody of the 18th Brumaire³; Messrs. Floquet & Co. tried to parody the parody. Now that the attempt has been exposed they deny it;

¹ Accession.—*Tr.*

² In the November issue of *Neue Zeit* (Sixth year, pp. 496-505) Lafargue had published an article: "Circumcision, its Social and Religious Significance."

³ At the start of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

but however absurd and impossible it may seem it is perfectly true that the opportunists, who use Floquet for their own ends, tried to bring off a coup to get rid of Boulanger, Rochefort and, above all, Wilson and his famous dossiers.¹ Gilly's disclosures² which, as the opportunist and radical newspapers say, reveal nothing new to those who know the shady side of parliament, are producing a tremendous effect upon the public and they are uncommonly afraid that this will continue and be aggravated by Wilson's disclosures. And Grévy's son-in-law wants his revenge. Floquet, Clemenceau and the rest of them realise that their popular prestige is utterly destroyed, that the forthcoming elections will go against them and bring in new men who will finally put them in the shade. Floquet, who is the personification of vanity, fancied that, by means of a plot against the security of the state, he could rid himself of these nuisances, do away with Wilson's dossiers and get his revision through, which would call for the partial re-election of the Chamber. Boulanger and Cassagnac were warned in time and, in turn, warned Rochefort. Who

¹ Wilson, Grévy's son-in-law, who had been implicated the year before in the decorations scandal, brought pressure to bear on parliamentary circles by threatening to publish his documents and thus compromise a number of deputies and senators.

² Numa Gilly, deputy for the Gard department and a member of the working-class group in the Chamber, had said when reporting back to his constituents in Alais on September 3rd, 1888: "When one realises in whose hands France's fortunes lie, who the people are on this Budget Commission, one shudders to think of the wild squandering which must prevail in spending the proceeds of those taxes which you pay over to the tax-collector with such difficulty. Wilson was prosecuted, which was a pure farce, to make believe that the others were more honest than he, but out of the thirty-three members of the Budget Commission, there are at least twenty Wilsons."

This statement, reported by the *Petit Méridional* and then by the *Petit Marseillais*, roused tremendous feeling. The most corrupt members of the Budget Commission—such as Raynal, Jules Roche, Baïhaut—sued Gilly and won the case. But public opinion tended to the view that the deputy for the Gard had been right.

let the cat out of the bag? Possibly a former Bonapartist turned Republican for the occasion; possibly Freycinet or Goblet, the two Ministers who are accused of Boulangism and who, indeed, would be quite ready to support Boulanger should he be returned at the forthcoming elections with a parliamentary majority. For lawyers like Floquet and upholders of legality like Clemenceau to reach such a pass one can only assume that their position is finally compromised. Will they stop at this? Or will they attempt something else? People think this is not the end of it.

If the Socialist Party had men like Vaillant and Guesde in parliament today, that is the Party which would succeed the Radicals and act as a counterweight to the Boulangist movement, which is nothing but an unconscious protest against what is going on in the political world. The ground is being cleared, the Possibilists are hopelessly compromised, they are greeted with shouts of Traitor. At their last congress, held in a small town in the Ardennes,¹ they decided to hold their annual congress in Troyes: the people of Troyes, on whom they thought they could rely, got in touch with us and invited us to the congress. When the Possibilists learnt of this, they resolved not to attend the congress they had themselves summoned. They are done for in the provinces and once they no longer receive money from secret funds they will be irretrievably done for in Paris. The socialist movement, which seems to be lost to us, reverts to us of its own accord.

If, at the forthcoming elections, we are able to send a few of our people into parliament—and that could happen—there would be a Socialist Party in the Chamber composed of all the good elements from the other parties.

Regards to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ The Possibilist congress was held at Charleville from October 2nd to 8th, 1887.

288. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 27/11/88

My dear Engels,

Your letter arrived on Sunday, just after mine had gone. Thank you for your solicitude: in about a week our funds will be exhausted.

You are mistaken about the role which the Socialist Party could have played in the Boulanger affair. Not being sufficiently united or strong it could only have rallied to the Radicals and do anti-Boulanger propaganda; it would have compromised itself to no purpose, as did the Possibilists, and without achieving any result whatsoever; on the contrary, it would have left to Boulanger the role of sole reformer, the only one to protest against the established order. To combat Boulangism, Boulanger should not be attacked; rather, a different current of opinion should be brought into being. Had that imbecile Floquet come out as a Radical on taking office, he would have been able to undermine some part of the general's popularity. Discontent is general in France; something new is required and the political leaders are nothing but cretins who seek only to maintain the status quo, which goes from bad to worse. Since the people feel the need to personalise their aspirations, they hit on Boulanger; Basly and Numa Gilly, had they been intelligent and vigorous Socialists, would have captured some of the Boulangist infatuation for the benefit of the Socialist Party. Unfortunately they are incapable of playing such a part: Basly is energetic but ignorant, Gilly is a Provençal braggart, a cooper who has never thought of using his position for anything more than furthering his business—quite honestly, in the bourgeois manner. Instead of going to meetings, he chased round the vine-growing districts to sell his barrels; the travel-voucher which he has as a deputy has enabled him

to travel free. But as he comes from the South and, to please his constituents, has to use highly spiced language, he launched into a virulent attack on the Budget Commission. He was greatly surprised to find his words taken up; he had thought that what he said was of no importance; he was very much annoyed by all the fuss, but there was no way of going back on it.

You say that Boulanger means war; the wretched general dreams only of peace; the day he becomes bellicose he will founder. The madman of Germany has been compelled to moderate his bellicose fervour in view of Europe's attitude. And one cannot attribute greater power for either peace or war to Boulanger as Prime Minister or President of the Republic than to the German emperor.

I told you in my last that the socialist movement which we had lost in Paris was reverting to us of its own accord. That is not quite true, for we have always had good relations with the provinces and we have never ceased working; on the contrary, since we no longer have a paper, our people bestir themselves even more. When there was a paper, they thought that it should accomplish everything, and it accomplished nothing. Not only do we and Vaillant represent socialism for the provincial Socialists, we also lead the trade-union movement. For the past three years it is our people who have had the upper hand at the congresses and for the past three years it is they who control the National Council, with headquarters at Lyons, Montluçon and Bordeaux.¹

At the Bordeaux congress² we succeeded in getting a

¹ In 1888 the Secretary of the National Federation of Trades Unions and labour corporations of France was Raymond Lavigne, a convinced Guesdist.

² The National Federation's Congress was held at Bordeaux from October 28th to November 4th, 1888. Owing to the arbitrary methods employed by the government to try and prevent it taking place, it created a great stir. It passed a resolution calling for the convening of an international workers' congress in 1889, which was the starting point for the Paris congress.

vote for an international socialist and labour congress. We shall put it forward at Troyes. We shall be the ones responsible for organising it in Paris. The Possibilists have made the first moves: for some time they have been paying court to Liebknecht, whom they butter up in their newspapers. In my view L[iebknecht] and the rest of them are slightly too well disposed towards the Possibilists, which is stupid, for Brousse & Co. do not represent the Socialist Party, but the party of the traitors inside the government. To-day they have sold themselves to Floquet, tomorrow it will be to Ferry, and they are perfectly satisfied; in their view it is the ideal thing to live on secret funds. The Germans must be prevented from going to the Possibilist congress; they would be ruined in the eyes of French Socialists and do us great harm.

When I have finished my article for Braun I shall write an article for the *Sozial-Demokrat*; I shall sign it and Bernstein must print it in full; I shall lay bare the role of the Possibilists.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

The Var election¹ is acquiring great importance: a Commune general has defeated the Mayor of Toulon, a protégé of Clemenceau, and this without either a newspaper or money. Clemenceau had thought of putting up Longuet there; it would have been a good thing if he had, Longuet's socialist side would have been useful to him. Socialism is advancing; radicalism has had its death-blow. Clemenceau was thunderstruck by the Var election, in his own department. After this experience he will not risk

¹ This refers to the parliamentary by-election in the Var department. In the first ballot, on November 25th, Cluseret, who had been a general in the Commune, defeated the Radical, Fourroux, by 12,746 votes to 12,010, and got in on the second ballot held on December 9th.

standing there, and in Paris he is very likely to be defeated. The elections are going to be fun.

Mémé Longuet¹ has been with us since Saturday night. She is a very sweet child.

289. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 6/12/88

My dear Engels,

It is a blessing that you are there to bring out Marx's work, for there is no one else in Europe capable of performing that arduous task. Twenty-two years ago, when I arrived in London and did not know you, Lessner and Eccarius told me that in Germany the name of Marx could not be mentioned without that of Engels; posterity will be obliged to bracket you together. Did Marx leave enough material to write what he called the history of the theory?

I wrote my article to prevent the Germans getting involved with Brousse & Co.; if Bernstein has sent it to Berlin, that is all I wanted, there is no point in publishing it. It is strange to find the Possibilists winning over foreign Socialists, when in France they have sold themselves to the Radicals and serve them with the shamelessness of lackeys. I expected a good deal, but they have surpassed all expectations.

We have tried the tactic you suggested in your letter. When Boulanger put up for the first time as the candidate in the Nord department, Guesde went there and started a campaign against both Boulanger and the Radical candidate; he told those who wanted neither the one nor the other to vote for Boulanger's horse. Leaflets were distributed, people laughed over it and barely a few hundred

¹ Jenny Longuet, Charles Longuet's youngest daughter by his wife Jenny Marx.

votes were cast. The Radicals, who draw on secret funds, have tried to turn anti-Boulangism into an instrument of government. The fact remains that it was B [oulangier] who brought them to power and their attacks serve only to discredit them.

There is no way of stemming the Boulangist tide; the country is demented. One ought to leave the general alone and go for the Radicals who are responsible for the present mess. We are advancing towards a revolution, no one is in any doubt as to that. At the forthcoming elections¹ B [oulangier] will be returned by 40 or more departments; will there be enough of his followers to dominate parliament? If so, he will form a government, for Carnot will not throw up his post like Mac-Mahon, and that government will have to meet the country's demand for a Constituent Assembly: that means opening the door to the unknown; for they will not be satisfied with a revision of the political Constitution. After the Exhibition the position will be worse; if the Panama crash² comes on top of it, the situation will not be tenable by General B [oulangier] nor by God Himself—it is bound to explode. The gallant general will have no time to dream about war, or else woe betide him! War today means the people in arms; and that is what Conservatives of every kind dread.

Liebknecht has received an official invitation from the Bordeaux congress to attend the next international congress and we are waiting for his reply, for we know that the Party committee must meet to discuss the matter.

¹ This refers to the parliamentary elections of 1889.

² In November 1888 the jobbery in connection with the Panama Company began to come to light. The scandal did not break until four years later, but the Company was in difficulties and, on December 14th, the government drafted a Bill whose purpose was to proogue payment of sums owed by the Universal Panama Canal Company.

The Bordeaux congress has made quite a stir in France. We shall try to achieve the same effect at Troyes.¹ Guesde and I will probably go as Paris delegates. After the congress a Paris organising commission will be formed and there will be a bit of a shindy, as you say.

Thanks for the cheque.

What a pity Nim is not here; the weather is bright and sunny, it would cure her indisposition.

Good wishes to you and to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

You will find an article in the *Cri du peuple* which will show you that it is generally accepted and unquestionable that the Possibilists draw on secret funds.² You will also see that the Blanquist Party does not give allegiance to Boulanger,³ any more than we do.

¹ A national workers' congress opened in Troyes on December 23rd.

² In *Le Cri du peuple* of December 6th, 1888 (p. 1/V), there appeared an article without a heading which said: "A journal, for which M. Floquet provides the funds and which spends its time in heaping insults on us, devoted the greater part of its front page yesterday to calling us Boulangists and accusing us of having Versailles connections. . . . Last Sunday the editors of *Le Parti ouvrier* were to be seen marching past the Versaillais Schoelcher, whereas those of the *Cri du peuple* have never taken part in a Boulangist demonstration."

³ Vaillant's editorial in *Le Cri du peuple* of December 6th said (p. 1/I): "M. Boulanger may interlard his speeches with republican declarations; that concerns us no more than do his intentions; his coming to power would inevitably mean the advent of personal and dictatorial power, of imperialism. The Cadettist and opportunist gentry may, in emulation, proclaim the wisdom and purity of their intentions and plans; we are not in the least disturbed by it. They are responsible for this marking time, for this standstill for the people in wages and in poverty, for this reaction, for this Wilsonism which compromises, discredits and ruins the Republic."

290. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Wednesday [December 19th 1888]

My dear General,

The Lord be praised, we've got our cake and puddings! If you knew what awful anxiety I've been feeling these last few days! All the awfuller because I kept it to myself for fear of alarming Father Paul whose silvery hair had begun to stand on end, and whose eyes had begun to glare with their hungry Christmas dinner-day-look! I feared that Nim had forgotten us. When, lo, in the thick of my fears and misgivings, *patacaise!* (as Mémé says) in tumblers Noah's ark, with all the beasts and birds and bonbons and puddings of the Regent's Park stores! If you and Nim have not heard our rejoicings across the Channel when the man with the box arrived, that's no fault of ours. (*Our* stands for Mémé, *Séraphine* and Kakadou) (Paul is out!).

Mémé is in an extraordinary state of excitement and babbles about her aunt Tuttie, though I tell her the box is sent by Father Nim and Uncle Frederick. I have wanted to talk to you, but have been unable to write. Poor Mémé's dilapidated condition has kept my fingers so busy with needles and pins, and her shaky state of health, that called for long walks and for gymnastics, has cut out so much extra work for my feet and legs that by the time the little lassie was tucked up in her bed, her aunt was just good for nothing at all but a bit of a nap in her arm-chair by way of getting ready for going to bed.

Mémé now goes to school and I can write. I'll just run round to the office to post this and then go on.

As a first instalment, our thanks and kisses.

YOUR LAURA

Edgar and Marcel and their sire come tomorrow and shall have their share of the good things from London. Johnny came on Sunday.—All well.

291. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Friday [December 21st 1888]

My dear General,

I thought to have announced Paul's departure for Troyes in this letter, as the congress opens on Sunday. But the "agglomération"¹ manages things so excellently that after having proclaimed for the last, how many months, the absolute necessity of having their group represented at Troyes, at the decisive moment there isn't wherewithal to send a delegate and so Paul stops at Le Perreux.

I cannot help thinking that foreigners and notably our German friends are rather "mixed" on the subject of French socialism. They will accept an invitation to an international congress, they say, on condition that the different Socialist fractions come to an agreement. And they ask this at a time when it has become impossible to agree with the Possibilists. You say that Liebknecht and his comrades will adhere to the Possibilist congress² if the Collectivist congress offers no chance of success. If Liebknecht and Co. come to Paris with no other purpose than that of figuring at a congress of the Possibilists, they had really much better stay at home. The treason of the Possibilist leaders is at this hour an open secret; Vaillant, who pulled together with Joffrin and Chabert, while these two shining lights were the only representatives of the Broussistes in the town council, says that the Possibilists at present represent the reaction there; the *Temps* and other respectable journals pat the "parti ouvrier"³ on the back and the Socialist Party is generally divided nowa-

¹ Aggregate (of the Paris Workers' Party).—*Tr.*

² The Possibilists, in agreement with the British Trades Unions, were also making preparations for an international workers' congress to be held in 1889.

³ Workers' Party.—*Tr.*

days into the "parti socialiste *indépendant*"¹ and the parti socialiste *ministériel*.²

The tactics adopted by the independent fractions may have been faulty, but people abroad do not appear to realise the difficulty of the position in which the Socialists find themselves. To act independently with any chance of success, it would require that they should be a powerful, a disciplined and a well-organised party and they are nothing of the sort. If Clemenceau had been well-advised and had given the least sign of "meaning" a bit of reform, Boulanger in a very little while would have been nowhere, but the Cadettistes³ appear to be bent on proving that they are as good reactionists as any and that there is no need to appeal for improvement to the Royalists. Meanwhile Boulanger inclines more and more openly to the reactionist bodies out of office so that the Socialists have got the revolutionary field all to themselves and their position is clear enough if it were only strong enough.

The Blanquists had trusted in the Boulangist movement to rouse up the workmen, whose apathy, previous to the Wilson scandal, had grown quite discouraging. The *Cri du peuple*⁴ is a feebly written paper, but the Broussists are paid for calling the Blanquists, Boulangistes. Vaillant attacks Boulanger on all occasions, both in the council and in his paper, and is as determined an anti-Boulangiste as he is anti-Cadettiste.

Vaillant too does his utmost to get his followers to work with the Collectivists, but he is too good for his party who are a short-sighted, narrow-minded lot, with

¹ *Independent Socialist Party.—Tr.*

² *Government Socialist Party.—Tr.*

³ That is, the members of the anti-Boulangist committee (Association for the Rights of Man), with headquarters in the rue Cadet.

⁴ Since August 30th *Le Cri du peuple* was replaced by *L'Homme libre*, the Blanquist paper, which had bought it up.

chauvinistic tendencies. Altogether things are in a fine muddle here;—I speak of Paris. From what Dormoy says of Montluçon and from what news comes from Bordeaux, Lyons, Lille, etc., the provinces seem to be ahead of our luminous capital. It is possible that Paul may find work to do at Lyons, and prepare.... Mémé since I wrote the above has upset a bottle of ink on my writing-table and old Madame Longuet has been in and has only just left after a two hours' stay and now, if I don't send off these lines to you at once, you won't get them till Monday. And I want to wish you all a jolly good Christmas and all sorts of good wishes from the lot of us.

Good-bye, my dear General,

from your affectionate,

LAURA

I was saying that Paul may find work as editor of *Le Petit Lyonnais*,¹ and pave the way for the elections by attacking both Floquet and Boulange.

292. LAURA LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Thursday, Dec. [27th] 88

My dear General,

For your letter and its contents, received yesterday, I thank you very heartily.

Paul's letters to you express his own views, but not, in the case of the Boulangist movement, those of the Collectivists generally. Neither Guesde nor Deville have looked on it from altogether the same point of view. The Collec-

¹ Vaughan, Lafargue's friend, had been editor-in-chief of *Le Petit Lyonnais* since mid-October. (See Note 1, p. 163.)

tivists have been gagged, in Paris, since the death of the *Socialiste*, but Guesde and others have attacked the Boulangists in such provincial papers as were at their disposal: the anti-Boulangism of the Broussists, for all the services it may render them at home and abroad, is of a piece with the rest of their machinations.

The Collectivists have never been as popular with the Parisians as the Possibilists or the Blanquists, from a variety of reasons, but their unpopularity is not to the discredit of the Collectivists but of the Parisians. The Marxists have been the only anti-chauvinist party in France; the Blanquists have at all times made capital out of patriotic clap-trap and the Possibilists have for years deliberately exploited in their own favour the unpopular internationalism of the Marxists. Whatever change has been effected in popular opinion on this head, is due exclusively to the latter. A few years ago, Paul, who had a genius for putting his foot in it at public meetings and who, as an orator, has three parts of valour for one of prudence, was howled down whenever he spoke in favour of the Germans, whereas, during the elections, he was loudly cheered in the Quartier du Jardin des Plantes when he advocated international solidarity. As regards the collectivist programme, the Possibilists pick and steal as much of it as will go down with the mob, toning down and weakening all that is too straightforward and bold in it and leaving as many points as possible confused and vague: all attempts at union on the part of the Collectivists have invariably been repulsed by the Broussists, who have nothing in the world to gain by such a union, their sole object being to wriggle themselves into office. And as far as the immediate success of their party, and their securing of place and position, is concerned, they have certainly manoeuvred well. They have got into the town council and for the sake of getting into the Chambers they have knuckled under to the Radicals whom they had befouled with dirt. And they will naturally be the first to get

into the Chambers, and once in, they will behave like the renegade Tolain¹ in the senate who insults "les hommes qui font des barricades."²

That Paul has gone to Troyes after all, you know. At the eleventh hour, on Saturday evening, he was invited to start. The agglomération has sent 9 delegates.

I am unable to go on; I have visitors in the house from Paris and an article of Cluseret's to translate for Stanton. Not to speak of Mémé who is waiting for her bath.

All good wishes, my dearest General and kisses from Mémé and myself for you and Nim.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

My love to Schorlemmer, to Pumps, Percy and children.

¹ Tolain, Henri-Louis (1828-1897), an engraver, Proudhonist, anti-collectivist and reactionary co-operator. Member of the International and of the first Paris committee of the International; deputy to the National Assembly at Versailles and an opponent of the Commune. Expelled from the International as a renegade. After 1871, when he became a senator, he protested against an amnesty for the Communards.

² Those who man the barricades.—*Tr.*

1889

293. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 2 Jan. 89

My dear Laura,

All our best wishes for the New Year to yourself and Paul! We got into it in a very queer way—we went as usual to Pumps' in a cab; the fog was thickening—in Belsize Road we stuck fast—the man had to lead the horse; by and by that was not sufficient; a man with a lantern took hold of the horse and led; after a full hour's drive in the dark and cold we arrived at Pumpses' where we found Sam Moore, Tussy and the Schlüters (Edward never turned up) and also Tauscher. Dinner of course an hour late in consequence of our adventure. Well, it got blacker and blacker, and when the New Year came, the air was as thick as peasoup. No chance of getting away; our cabman, ordered for one o'clock, never arrived, and so the whole lot had to stop where they were. So we went on drinking, singing, card-playing and laughing till half past five when Sam and Tussy were escorted by Percy to the station and caught the first train; about seven the others left, and it cleared up a little; Nim slept with Pumps, Schorl[emmer] and I in the spare bed, Percy in the nursery (it was after seven when we went to sleep) and got up again about 12 or 1 to return to Pilsener etc.; the sun shone brightly on a beautifully frozen ground. The spree agreed with all of us most amazingly and none of us is any the worse for the bout. The others drank coffee about half past four but I stuck to claret till seven.

I am glad to hear that the Boulangitis was a personal affection of Paul's though the *Parti ouvrier*¹ pretends that Guesde and Deville have given in to him. What you say about the Possibilists we are perfectly agreed on, but I was bound to place before you and Paul the excuses which Liebk[necht] and others—for instance the Belgians—may draw from the tender treatment the Boulangists undoubtedly have had from our side. All I insisted on from the beginning, and all Paul declined to let me have, was a clear and unmistakable assurance that the Boulangists should be treated as bourgeois-enemies quite as much as the Cadettists. For under no circumstance could I encourage our German friends to attend a congress² the convokers of which had so far forgotten the old traditional policy of the proletariat as to coquet with a bourgeois party, *et encore un parti tel que les boulangistes*.³

Well, the impending Paris election must bring our people to their senses—that was my first thought on Hude's death,⁴ and indeed the Troyes congress has taken at least one step in the right direction by proclaiming the necessity of an independent Socialist candidature.⁵ (I hope

¹ *Le Parti ouvrier*, the Possibilists' organ, published an article on December 28th, 1888, under the heading: "The Paris Aggregate," accusing the Guesdists of having tried to exploit the Boulangist movement to pave the way to parliament for Guesde, Lafargue and Deville. Lafargue was said to have inspired the idea and, with Vailant's help, to have convinced Guesde.

² This refers to the International Workers' Congress of 1889, which was held in Paris from July 14th to 21st.

³ And a party such as the Boulangists at that.—*Tr.*

⁴ The Paris deputy Hude died on December 23rd, 1888. Wishing to make a test case of the by-election, the Floquet Government precipitated polling-day, which took place on January 27th, 1889. The writ for the election was issued in the *Journal officiel* as early as January 2nd.

⁵ At its closing session (December 30th, 1888) the Troyes Workers' Congress adopted the following resolution:

"In view of the importance of the electoral fight which will take place in Paris and the necessity for a statement by the revolutionary Socialists:

Vaillant's who seems to me at present the only one to unite a certain number of suffrages, as our own people appear to be quite out of the race at this moment.) But no paper says what the other resolutions of the congress are; there have been individual anti-Boulangist pronouncements (though none of Paul's that I saw) but nothing on the part of the congress officially except the above resolution.

Mrs. Liebk[necht] will come to Paris about middle of January and I have to write to Bebel in a few days. Therefore if Paul wishes me to act in the interest of their congress he must enable me to do so by a clear and unequivocal declaration as to what our people may expect of him and the others with regard to the Boulangermania. And the sooner the better, there is not much time to lose.

I have never doubted the really anti-chauvinist character of the Marxists but that was the very reason why I could not conceive how they could think of an alliance open or disguised with the party which lives upon chauvinism almost alone. I never asked more than the open acknowledgement that Cadettists and Boulangists *dass sie alle beide stinken*,¹ surely such a self-understood thing I ought to have had long ago! Also the Troyes resolutions I ought to have.

If there has been an idea of getting some of our people into the Chamber by having them placed on the Boulangist list, that would be far worse than not getting into the Chamber at all. After all, if the poor old *Socialiste*² had been kept alive somehow or other, we should be better off, I think.

"The Troyes congress, to mark the first step towards the unity of the revolutionary forces, invites all groups supporting the congress and all the revolutionists of Paris to unite in putting up an outright revolutionist candidate in opposition to the politicians' factions (monarchist, opportunist, radical-cadettist and Boulangist.)"

¹ That both of them stink.—*Tr.*

² *Le Socialiste*, the weekly paper of the French Workers' Party, had ceased publication on February 4th, 1888.

Cunninghame Graham was here last Sunday week—a nice fellow, but always in want of a manager, otherwise brave to foolhardiness, altogether much of an English Blanquist.

Love from Nim, Schorl[emmer] and myself,
Ever yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

294. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, January 2nd, 89

My dear Engels,

The papers which Laura has sent you will have enabled you to judge of the congress's work.¹ We threw the town of Troyes into a commotion; unfortunately the congress did not create the same stir in Paris and in France generally, owing to Hude's death, which left a Paris seat vacant and provided the Boulangists and radical-opportunists with a battlefield on which to test their strength. What are we going to do in this free fight? The congress has expressed the wish to see all the revolutionary Socialists of Paris unite in congress to put forward a candidate in opposition to all the bourgeois factions, including Boulangism. The two possible Socialist candidates are Boulé, the stonemason, who led the navvies' strike, and whom as a result Floquet has removed from his position as Conciliation Councillor²; the other Socialist is Vaillant.

¹ The workers' congress held at Troyes from December 23rd to 30th, 1888, dealt notably with the resolutions of the Bordeaux Trades Union Congress (October 28th-November 4th, 1888), demanding that an international workers' congress should be convened in 1889 in Paris.

² Boulé, who was a member of the Conciliation Council (dealing with industrial disputes), had been removed from it in July 1888 by President Carnot. At the election of councillors on December 9th, he was again elected, but his election was declared void by the government. He was returned once again on January 6th, 1889.

Boulé would poll 10 to 20 thousand votes, Vaillant from 20 to 30 thousand. A result of that order would be a dismal set-back; nevertheless it is out of the question for us to take refuge in abstention and even more so to throw in our lot with the radical-opportunists. The other possibility which remains to us is if the Radicals do not nominate Hovelacque, who is the only man capable of winning the support of both the Radicals and the Socialists; in which case we could nominate him and put the Radical votes which he would poll to our credit. This electoral fight is of great importance.¹

The congresses of Bordeaux and Troyes have made it clear to everyone that, outside Paris, the Possibilists have no strength whatever, nor any influence. Two years ago they were forced to select for their congress a little town in the Ardennes with a population of 10 thousand,² where nobody went. After searching about in vain, they thought they had hit on a Possibilist town in Troyes; several of its municipal councillors were working men who were eager to walk in Joffrin's footsteps and betray their class, so they chose Troyes. But by bad luck these traitors were left stranded at the last elections, whereupon it was the hosiery and engineering Trades Unions who had to take over the organising of the congress. They declared at the outset that the congress would be open to all Socialists. The Possibilists tried every means to make them reverse this decision: two Possibilists—Lavy and Chabert—were sent to Troyes to try and persuade them; they attempted intimidation and bribery, but nothing worked. As soon as the Possibilists realised that they would not have the upper hand, they announced that they would not attend their own congress. The Possibilists have never had any strength

¹ On January 8th, 1889, the various Socialist groups met at the Salle Léger. The Possibilists did not attend the meeting. The adoption of Boulé as candidate was finally endorsed by 62 votes out of 70.

² This refers to the Charleville congress, which was held from October 2nd to 8th, 1887.

in the provinces, though they made out that they had groups there; and they hoped that, thanks to this lie, they would win over the provinces. But that is at an end; they are dead in the provinces without ever having existed there.

To pass to another subject:

Like you, I suffer from chronic conjunctivitis following the contraction of the lachrymal duct and the two useless operations. I have tried sulphate of zinc, tinted glasses, etc.; sometimes I obtained some relief, but never any lasting improvement; the only thing that has been successful is electricity. This is how I apply it: I take two coins, a franc and a sou, I apply them to the bad eye, taking care to moisten the two surfaces in contact with a little saliva. The warmth of the eye and of the hand holding the coins is enough to generate a certain amount of electricity which acts upon the vaso-motor nerve-centres controlling the circulation in the conjunctiva. The improvement is immediate. At first I made these metal applications when the eye was tired, which did not prevent me from continuing to read with the other eye. After 20 or 30 minutes of the application the eye was completely rested. As soon as I stopped the application, the eye in question was a little dim-sighted, but bit by bit it recovered. For about 3 weeks I have been practising this method and my eye is so much better as a result that it no longer bothers me, although I am reading and writing a great deal. Perhaps it would succeed in your case? At all events, it is worth the trouble of giving it a trial. There is no danger whatsoever. Even if it does no good, it cannot do any harm. Plates of zinc or copper would be preferable, but a silver and a copper coin have proved adequate in my case.

Happy new year—to you and everyone.

P. LAFARGUE

295. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

January 3, 89

My dear Engels,

The Possibilists have made you believe that the moon is made of green cheese and that the French Socialists are Boulangerists. I told you that we were neither Cadettists nor anti-Boulangerists; that to engage in anti-Boulangerism was to play Floquet & Co.'s game and would result in increasing Boulanger's popularity. I still think so. But that did not mean to say that in a given situation we would not act against both B[oulanger] and the Radicals. I am sending you the address of congratulations to the organisers of the Troyes congress which I got adopted in Paris and which expresses very well the feelings which animate the Socialists.

Boulanger may be scum, and he is; but the Boulangerist movement is the expression of the general uneasiness and discontent. Boulanger stands for the revolution in the eyes of a great many workers and petty bourgeois; there is no denying the fact. We should not seek to destroy this sentiment by abuse, as do the Possibilist traitors. Other weapons must be used. Some weeks ago the reactionaries of Montluçon decided to organise a huge banquet for over 1,000 people, with Boulanger presiding. The Montluçon and Allier Socialists, instead of greeting the general with hisses and insults as he alighted from the train, decided to attend the banquet in a body and drive B[oulanger] into a corner without leaving him a leg to stand on. Dormoy, one of our most intelligent and active people in the provinces, asked the organisers of the banquet for 300 tickets. When B[oulanger] learnt that he would have to face 300 Socialists determined to make him descend from his revisionist clouds, he valiantly decided not to appear at the banquet which he and his friends had organised. If Dormoy and the Allier people had been able to

pin him down at that banquet, they would have put him in such a false position that his reputation would have been far more damaged than by all the possibilist-radical abuse.

Together with the congratulations to the Troyes congress organisers I am sending you the resolution on the subject of the 1889 international congress so that Bernstein can publish both. I am responsible for keeping an eye on the publication of the congress resolutions; as soon as I have proofs, I shall send them to you.

Your letter which reached us this evening gave us much pleasure; it shows that you are in capital health.

Regards to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

296. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, January 14th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Reply from L[iebknicht] and B[ebel] after the two had consulted. It appears that they never had any intention of simply going to the Possibilists' congress and ignoring you. But,

1. The L[ondon] c[ongress],¹ having convoked a c[ongress] in Paris and made the Poss[ibilists] responsible for carrying it out, it gave them certain rights, particularly in relation to the nationalities represented in London who concurred with that resolution. (Besides, why have you abdicated completely and left the field to the Poss[ibilists]?)

¹ In November 1888, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Council had convened an "International Congress of Labour Unions" in London which was attended alone by the Possibilists from France.

2. The Dutch expressly requested that the Poss[ibilists] be invited to participate in the c[ongress], as a condition without which they (the D[utch]) would not come.

3. And L[ieb knecht] is right in this: the Germans cannot expose themselves to being attacked in Paris by French *workmen*—a risk, he says, against which you have been unable to guarantee them any safeguard.

It appears now that they have decided to call a preliminary conference at Nancy,¹ one delegate for each foreign nationality and one delegate for each of the three French parties: you, the Blanquists and the Poss[ibilists], and to propose to the congress that any speaker who shall refer to the internal affairs of these three parties and to their disagreements shall be deprived of the right to speak, so that there should be a single congress in which all may participate.

I do not see that you could object to this. If, then, it is known that you are willing to act jointly with everyone else and that the Poss[ibilists] want to exclude you, that will be enough to put the Poss[ibilists] in the wrong, even in the eyes of the D[utch] and the Belgians (the Flemings are good, but where foreign policy is concerned they are under the leadership of those false friends in Brussels whom you know); if, on the other hand, they agree, it will be your own fault if you are not capable of proving to everyone that it is you, and not they, who represent French socialism.

Here is what L[ieb knecht] says textually: "Ich richtete also am Dienstag 8. Januar nach Besprechung mit Bebel eine formelle Einladung an das Blatt (der Possibilisten). Kommt *kein* Delegierter derselben (zur Konferenz) so haben wir freie Hand. Kommt einer oder kommen mehrere, so werden wir schon mit ihnen fertig werden. Fügen sie sich, dann gut. Fügen sie sich nicht, dann sind sie iso-

¹ Liebknecht sent out notices calling a conference on January 18th at Nancy, but nothing came of it.

liert und werden von uns tot gemacht..." "In jedem Fall sichert die Konferenz das Gelingen des Kongresses und die Lahmlegung der Broussisten."¹

If all this is so, I do not think you could have anything to complain of; quite the contrary, it will be a fine opportunity for forcing the Poss[ibilist]s' hand. Nevertheless, before replying, I intend to verify the facts and to hear what you have to say. So write to me, after consulting with our people, and also after hearing the views of the Blanq[uists], and tell me what you think about it all—and quickly, it is urgent.

Kiss Laura for Nim and for me.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

297. LAURA LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Tuesday afternoon [January 15th 1889]

My dear General,

Paul has gone to town about the Boulé business. Pending his return I send you a line in haste.

In answer to the letter proposing the Nancy meeting, Paul urged that the *time* and *place* of meeting were inopportune. Our militants are busy with the elections and what little money they succeed in scraping together they hesitate to throw away in fruitless expeditions. Paul wrote to Liebknecht, Bebel, Anseele and Nieuwenhuis that if

¹ "Therefore, after having discussed it with Bebel, I addressed a formal invitation to the (Possibilists') journal on Tuesday, January 8th. If they send *no* delegate (to the conference), that gives us a free hand. If they send one or more, we shall know how to deal with them. If they toe the line, so much the better. If they do not toe the line, then they will be isolated and we shall put them out of action..." "In any case, the conference ensures the success of the congress and the neutrality of the Broussists."

they considered a preliminary meeting necessary, they must choose another *date* and *day* of meeting.

It is a question of time and money and of *form* (because all sorts of *groups* and *councils* and *federations* must be dealt with). Otherwise there is no objection in the world to the proposed conference.

Paul will write you as soon as he sees your letter which he hasn't read as yet.

YOUR LAURA

A kiss for Nim from me and Mémé. To-day is Paul's 47th birthday!

298. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Febry 1st 89

My dear General,

Here is a piece of news not to be found in the newspapers and which is sure to interest you. The *Cri du peuple* is doomed to die in a few days¹ and is to be replaced by a new paper to be called *L'Égalité* and directed by a "Comité de rédaction,"² the men proposed for which are Vaillant, Granger, Place, Blanquistes; Guesde, Lafargue, Deville, Marxistes; Hovelacque, Malon, Fiaux et Boulé. I ignore for the present how many of the proposed editors will accept; Malon is seriously ill and would not be much in the way; Hovelacque and Fiaux are two honest bourgeois, the others you know. Full particulars I shall only get this evening when Paul comes home; he left for Paris early this morning to meet Vaughan and his interesting "bailleur de fonds"³ who seems inclined to push the under-

¹ *Le Cri du peuple* came out for the last time on February 10th, 1889. From August 30th, 1888, it had been under the direction of Vaillant and the Blanquists. Articles by Lafargue, Deville and Longuet appeared in the final issues.

² Editorial committee.—*Tr.*

³ Money-lender.—*Tr.*

taking seriously. The failure of the *Cri* under the Blanquists' direction has had the result to make the leaders of that party less cocksure of being able to manage matters by themselves and to force them to accept the co-operation of the Marxists.

The *Parti ouvrier*, the *Bataille*¹ and other ministerial papers are calling on the government to "faire fort,"² while the government has just been saved by a very feeble majority.³ On the morning of the day of the election Floquet was still confident of success, though defeat stared him in the face at every corner, and after as before their defeat the government goes on blundering.

Longuet I saw on his return from Milan. He was delighted with himself and the Italians and has picked up such phrases as "Viva la Francia!" "È troppo bella." He has turned up at a few public meetings here and fought in a mild way for Jacques.⁴ The little girl goes to school and works at her spelling. She wants Nimmy to know that she has got 90 "bons points."⁵

Poor Zetkine was buried yesterday. He died on Tuesday evening after long and terrible suffering. Lavroff, Paul, a German and a Dane spoke over his grave.

¹ *La Bataille*, in articles signed by Lissagaray, had never ceased calling upon the government to act ever since the January 27th elections. In the February 1st, 1889, issue, Lissagaray concluded his editorial as follows: "Thus today France needs to hear the sound of a voice, a strong voice, and to feel an equally firm hand. Nothing is easier than to deal a blow to conspirators and hostile officials, to put consciences to rights, to speak the rallying word. But it must be done quickly. And, above all, it must be done **FORCEFULLY**." The editorials appearing in the *Parti ouvrier* on January 31st and February 1st—the second signed by Allemane—were in the same vein.

² Show strength.—*Tr.*

³ At the January 31st session in the Chamber, Floquet was forced into demanding a vote of confidence, following a speech by Jouvencel. The vote was passed by 300 to 240.

⁴ Jacques was the candidate of the rue Cadet committee who stood against Boulanger in the January 27th election.

⁵ Good marks.—*Tr.*

Good-bye, my dearest General, till I have further news for you.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

Love to Nimmy.

299. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 4 Febr. 89

My dear Laura,

The news about the *Égalité* (ominous name, *égalité devant la mort*¹ I hope not!) is good news indeed and I await anxiously the results. That the Blanquists would be brought to their senses, as to the extent of their journalistic capacities, was pretty clear—but that this necessary experience would eat up the necessary funds for a paper, was clearer still. So it's well that another speculative bailleur de fonds has turned up. That our people can make a paper a success they have proved at the *Citoyen* and the *Cri*² where in both cases other intruders tried to make capital out of our people's success and came to grief. And the composition of the comité is in their favour; the Blanquists secure them the majority on economic questions, and the Hovelacque element will help holding Blanquist madcap notions in check. But how long will these various elements hold together? Anyhow, let us wait till everything is shipshape.

The Boulanger election³ I cannot look upon otherwise

¹ Equal before death.—*Tr.*

² The editorial board of *Le Citoyen* had been composed of Guesdists in 1882. Lissagaray dismissed them and the paper went downhill. In 1884, Guesde and his team edited *Le Cri du peuple*, from which they were finally removed at the end of January 1887.

³ At the January 27th parliamentary by-election Boulanger polled 244,070 votes, Jacques, the Cadettist candidate, 162,050 and Boulé, the Socialist, 16,766.

than as a distinct revival of the Bonapartist element in the Parisian character. In 1798, 1848 and 1889, this revival arose equally from discontent with the bourgeois republic, but it took this especial direction—appeal to a saviour of society—entirely in consequence of a chauvinistic current. And what is worse: in 1798 Napoleon had to make a coup d'état to conquer those Parisians he had shot down in Vendémiaire; in 1889 the Parisians themselves elect a butcher of the Commune. To put it mildly, Paris has, at least temporarily, abdicated as a revolutionary city; abdicated, not before a victorious coup d'état and in the midst of war, as in 1798; not six months after a crushing defeat, as in December 1848; but in the midst of peace, 18 years after the Commune and *on the eve of a probable revolution*. And when Bebel says in the Vienna *Gleichheit*¹: “die Pariser Arbeiter haben sich in ihrer Mehrheit *einfach erbärmlich* benommen—mit ihrer sozialistischen und klassenbewussten Gesinnung muss es sehr traurig stehn, wenn nur 17.000 Stimmen auf einen sozialistischen Kandidaten fallen und ein Hanswurst und Demagog wie Boulanger 244.000 Stimmen erhält”²—nobody can say that he is wrong. The effect upon our Party everywhere has been that if Floquet has suffered a crushing defeat, *so have we*. Cutting off your nose to spite your face is no doubt also a sort of policy, but what sort?

Well, Boulanger is now sure to be master of France unless he commits some egregious blunder, and the Parisians will have their bellyful of him. If the thing goes off without war being brought on, it will be something

¹ Bebel's article appeared, unsigned, under the heading: “From North Germany, January 29th” in *Gleichheit*, No. 5 (p. 4), of February 1st, 1889.

² “The Paris workers have conducted themselves for the most part in a *perfectly lamentable* fashion—their socialist and class-conscious spirit must be in a very sad way for only 17,000 votes to be cast for a Socialist candidate whilst a mountebank and demagogue like Boulanger receives 244,000.”—*Tr.*

gained—but the danger is great. Bismarck has every reason to hurry on a war, because William is doing his best to ruin the German army by putting his favourites in the places of the old generals, and if he is allowed to proceed, in five years hence the Germans will be led by nothing but nincompoops and conceited jackasses. And how Boulanger, once in power, can outlive the effect of the universal désillusionnement which he must produce, without going to a war—that is more than I can see.

In all this mess it is but a poor consolation that the Possibilists have ruined themselves a little sooner than they would have done otherwise. But such as it is, let us rejoice over it. I send you two "*Recht voor Allen*"¹ in which you see how they are getting treated by the very man who insisted on their presence at the congress. Bernstein has given it them this week in the *S[ozial]-D[emokrat]*² too, and even Hyndman has not the courage to stick up for them in *Justice*.³ To take his revenge, he writes in a letter to Bax that Paul has been working for Boulanger. Paul might write to Bax (5 Canning Road, Croydon) and ask him what it was that he, Bax, said about this point at the office of the *Sozial-Demokrat* and what was repeated to me yesterday by Joos (one of the men there). I should be the more glad of this, as Bax was here yesterday too and never mentioned a word *to me* about it—it came out only after he had left. He can tell Bax that I told him so.

Well, I hope the new paper will come out; we must take the situation as it is and make the best of it. When Paul gets to work at a paper again, he will brace himself up

¹ *Recht voor Allen* (No. 25, 2nd year, of January 30th, 1889) contained an unsigned article: "Boulanger and the Bourgeois Republic." Souvarine's "Paris Letters XV" appeared in No. 27 of February 1st.

² The *Sozial-Demokrat* of February 3rd, 1889: "Boulanger's Victory in Paris" (p. 1).

³ *Justice* (No. 264) of February 2nd, 1889: "Boulanger, Member for Paris" (p. 1).

for the fight and no longer say despondingly: il n'y a pas à aller contre le courant.¹ Nobody asks of him *to stop* the current, but if we are not to go *against* the popular current of momentary tomfoolery, what in the name of the devil *is* our business? The inhabitants of the Ville Lumière have proved to evidence that they are 2 millions, "mostly fools," as Carlyle says, but that is no reason why we should be fools too. Let the Parisians turn reactionists if they cannot be happy otherwise—the social revolution will go on in spite of them, and when it's done they can cry out: Ah tiens! c'est fait—et sans nous—qui l'aurait imaginé!²

With Nim's love.

Ever yours,

F. E.

Doesn't Paul want any cash?

300. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 11 febr. 89

My dear Laura,

Well this *Égalité* anyhow is quite a relief after the dear dully deadly *Cri du peuple* (ennuyeux). The last few numbers of that defunct paper were really crushing. Poor Vaillant who can write a very good article when a critical point has been reached, but who is the last man in the world to spin out yarns by the yard day after day—you actually saw him perspire over his daily task, and it was a desponding[?] sight. The involutions, evolutions

¹ There's no going against the current.—*Tr.*

² Bless my soul, it's happened—and without us—who would have thought it!—*Tr.*

and circumvolutions of Longuet¹ in his attempts to set himself right (and at the same time wrong) with his Radical ~~ex~~-friends are at least amusing, and artistically done. Paul's night-work² is really good; though he might have tapé un peu plus dur³ on Boulanger. Today I had no *Égalité*—perhaps the snow has delayed it. We are six inches deep in it here.

I read your admonition yesterday to Tussy and she pleads guilty. How far she will mind is beyond my cognizance.

Nim was rather out of sorts last week, some sort of derangement of the bowels, but is all right now.

Of *Capital* III Vol. I finished Section IV yesterday—about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the whole cubic part of MS.

In the *Dispatch*⁴ I send you, please note A. Smith on page 2—full of lies as usual—but it shows what the Possibilists are after. That the Germans are going to their congress is a barefaced lie, and that the Danes, Dutch etc. are, is probably another. Bax told Tussy that Hyndman had sounded him as to what the Germans intended doing in this respect, and Bax asked him: are you then the representative of the Possib[ilists] in London? to which

¹ In a lengthy article in *Égalité* of February 10th, 1889 (p. 1/I-IV), entitled "What is to be Done?", Longuet criticised the Radicals for their alliance with the opportunists. They had been led into the same inactivity, said the article, and ignored the great working-class mass which was now questioning capital's right to exist.

² *Égalité* of February 9th, 1889 (pp. 1/V-2/I), contained an article by Lafargue: "Night-Work," concerning the recent legislation in the Chamber prohibiting night-working for women. In the second part of the article Lafargue attacked Boulanger, who was not present when the Bill was voted, despite his declarations protesting his "love for the working class" during his electioneering campaign.

³ Come down a bit harder.—Tr.

⁴ The *Weekly Dispatch* of February 10th, 1889 (p. 2/IV): "The International Workmen's Congress of 1889." The article reported the invitation to the congress being organised by the Possibilists and contained the statements Engels refers to.

H[yndman] said *he was* and in that capacity wanted the informations. Whereupon Bax said: then you better write me a letter which I can submit to Engels and Bernstein. There the matter rests at present. But you see how busy they are.

Is Paul going to the Hague 28th inst. (Conference)?¹ Bebel and L[ie]bk[necht] are going, from here perhaps Bernstein, I am pressing him to go.

As to the cash, herewith cheque £20.—which I hope will pacify M. Vautour.

Ever yours,

F. E.

301. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, March 5th, 89

My dear Engels,

Judge of my astonishment when, on my return from The Hague, I found that we had been turned out of *Égalité*.² M. Roques is a very cunning rogue, which does not prevent him from being a conceited ass. His plan from the very first was to get control of the paper and set himself up as a real political leader; he has availed himself of the first pretext to put it into effect. It was not laid down in the contract that the printers employed had to be Trade Unionists, in accordance with the practice of democratic

¹ This refers to a conference of the principal Socialist parties in preparation for the international congress.

² On February 26th, 1889, the list of the members of the editorial board (Daumas, Longuet, Vaillant, Fiaux, Granger, Guesde, Lafargue and Malon) was not printed on the title page of *Égalité*. It printed one further editorial by Lafargue on February 28th—"The Exhibition"—but the heading consisted only of the words: "Managing Director, Jules Roques." The issue of March 3rd published a statement (p. 1/1) that the political editors "find themselves unable to collaborate any longer with [M. Roques]."

and liberal journals. He employs women; the difference in the wages bill was 35 francs a day; after a week of negotiations, the management agreed to pay the difference between the wages of the women and those of the Trade Unionists, that is to say, 1,050 francs a month. Everything was settled the day I left; we had made this concession only to gain time and give us a chance to seek a different solution. But what is disheartening is the submissive way in which my colleagues have accepted their fate. They rebelled only in words; there was no attempt to return blow for blow. With the result that Roques remains in untroubled possession of 15 to 16 thousand readers of *Égalité*, to the high glee of the Possibilists and Radicals, who rejoiced loudly over our disappearance from the scene.¹ But all hope is not yet lost: since my return I have set to work to unite the scattered forces and to try to raise the 60 thousand francs needed to start another paper. Since Boulangism and the elections of the 27th we have risen in public esteem; we are seen as the Party destined to replace bankrupt radicalism. Tomorrow I am to get in touch with someone who may be able to put up 50 thousand francs. I have already found a printer who will make special prices and agrees to lose 500 francs a month for one year. The paper-merchants are more close-fisted. Vaughan is still as well-disposed as ever; he will give us a helping hand, but he does not wish to push himself forward; the Blanquists, with *L'Homme libre* and *Le Cri du peuple*, have run through 80 thousand francs. Pretty steep!

We have no luck. Roques has gagged us just as we were in a fair way to succeed. I counted upon *Égalité*, not only as a political weapon, but also as a source of income, and here I am, on my beam-ends once again. I have earned

¹ *Le Parti ouvrier* of March 3rd, 1889, published an article (p. 1/III) entitled: "*Le Cri du peuple* and *L'Égalité*," which concluded with these words: "Today *Égalité* is being interred; socialism will be all the better for it." *Le Radical* of March 3rd, 1889 (p. 1/VI), also devoted an article to the subject in the same vein.

just about what my journey to The Hague cost me. Rather thin.

Bebel, Bernstein and Liebknecht have behaved admirably; but for that damned Belgian from Brussels, Volders, we should have won the day and deprived the Possibilists of their mandate to call the congress. The resolutions, with which you must be familiar, were accepted more readily by our people in Paris than I had anticipated; they are so incensed against the Possibilists that I was afraid I should be accused of having made too many concessions. The Possibilists will no doubt refuse to comply with the conference resolutions, and the victory will rest with us.

Have you seen the latest idiocy of the government in prosecuting Déroulède for starting a fund in aid of Atchinov?¹ He is accused of compromising relations with Russia, and now here is *Le Nord*, the Czar's semi-official organ, claiming that, on the contrary, the fund was in the nature of reparations. They were trying to strike at Boulanger, and the whole thing will be turned to his advantage, as in the Caffarel affair, which was aimed originally against Boulanger and ended in the disclosure of Wilson, Grévy & Co.'s thimblerrigging. How can one fight Boulangism with idiots like that? Not a day passes but they commit blunder upon blunder and serve to heighten his popularity. Boulanger announces that he will stand in every depart-

¹ The Russian adventurer Atchinov had landed on the French coast of Somali, armed, at the head of a hundred Cossacks, with the intention of reconciling the Abyssinian Copts with the Russian Orthodox Church. He speedily ran into difficulties with the French authorities at Obock. On February 17th Admiral Orly issued a final call for him to surrender his arms. In face of Atchinov's refusal, the admiral fired several shots at Sagallo, causing five casualties. On hearing of this incident, the League of Patriots published an address, signed by Laguerre and Déroulède, accusing the French Republic of having "shed Russian blood at French hands," and opened a fund for the wounded in the Atchinov mission. Following their manifesto, the League's premises were searched, as was also Déroulède's home, and an action was brought.

ment: he will be nominated 300 or 400 times. The searching of the League of Patriots' premises was intended to bring to light the names of Boulangist officials and army men. It appears that the government is horrified by the discoveries it has made. The number of disreputable Boulangists is countless; they are only waiting for an opportunity to come out into the open.

What a triumph for Parnell,¹ but what luck for *The Times* that Pigott committed suicide! *The Times* will have some difficulty in recovering from this blow, for now Parnell will round on it and bring an action for damages; and that means ruin. The *Standard* and the other papers must be overjoyed at this downfall.

For the past ten days Laura has had a dreadful cold; that is what has prevented her writing to you. It is dreadful weather—wind, snow and cold.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

302. FREDERICK ENGELS TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, March 12th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

The Poss[ibilists] have behaved very properly—in relation to themselves and to us²—I had feared that they

¹ *The Times* had published some letters, purporting to have been written by the Irish leader Parnell, which it had obtained from Pigott. Parnell started proceedings against the newspaper in the course of which he proved that Pigott had forged the letters. The latter fled to Paris and thence to Madrid, where he committed suicide on the arrival of the police who had come to arrest him at the request of the British Government.

² Invited to participate in The Hague conference on February 28th, the Possibilists refused to be represented, claiming that they alone were entitled to convene the international congress.

would agree—with ostensibly unimportant reservations, which would in effect have been enough to upset the whole thing. Fortunately they seem to be too much taken up with following their chosen path: the financial exploitation of their position on the Town Council. This time they have given themselves the death blow.

As for the T[own] C[ouncil]'s 50,000 francs, they will probably get them; no one can stop it.¹ Let them hold their congress on that money, what does it matter? All the money of the Paris T[own] C[ouncil] will not suffice to launch a Socialist congress which would not be a laughing-stock.

The Germans have made enough concessions, they are hardly likely to make more. The Dutch have been attacked head on by the Poss[ibilists], the Swiss and the Danes will side with the Germans and the Belgians are split, for, though the Brussels crew may be, as you say, Poss[ibilists] at heart, the Flemings are far better; it is merely a matter of making them break through the circle of the Brussels influence. Up till now they have left their foreign policy entirely in the hands of the Brussels people; this may well be changed now.

The great misfortune is that you lack a journal at this decisive juncture. M. Roques is an idiot who is throwing his money away. His present editorial staff will cost him ten times over the 35 francs a day for which he got rid of the only editorial staff that could have made a success of his paper. But that does not alter the fact that this affair has happened at the most untimely moment.

If you have invited the League² to the conference without inviting the Federation³ from here, as I must conclude from your letter, it is a blunder. You should have ignored both or invited both. In the first place, the Fed[eration]

¹ The Possibilist group on the Town Council had asked for a grant of 50,000 francs to organise the international workers' congress.

² The Socialist League.

³ The Social Democratic Federation.

is undoubtedly more important than the League; and, secondly, it will give them an excuse for saying that the whole conference has been arranged without their knowledge. Hyndman would not have harmed any of you, quite the contrary; although he claims to be the Possibilists' representative here *for the purpose of the congress*, he has not dared to defend them in his paper recently; he has even scolded them, albeit very gently, and Bernstein, who knows all about this, could have kept him within the bounds of decency. However, it was the Germans' business to call the conference and, as usual, Liebk[necht] has acted—or failed to act—on the spur of some momentary impulse.

I am sending your letter on to Bernstein, so that he can make use of it for the paper which will come out on Thursday. I must still write by this post to Liebk[necht]—so I end. I enclose a cheque for £20, which I hope will relieve you of your difficulties for the time being.

Kiss Laura for me. I hope her cold has vanished.

Ever yours,

F. E.

303. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

March 21st, 89

My dear Lafargue,

You are both right—you and Bebel—and the matter is quite simple.

At The Hague it was decided that in the event of the Poss[ibilists] not accepting the conditions laid down, the Belgians and the Swiss *would take the initiative* to convoke a congress in Paris, and that a *joint declaration* against the Poss[ibilists] would be made; the congress to be held at the end of September.

¹ This letter is reprinted here from the text published in the *Populaire de Paris* on November 29th, 1920.

That was decided—if you were absent—in the presence of Bonnier who was your German interpreter and who must know of it. The Belgians explicitly agreed.

Now, if the Belgians and the Swiss take the initiative, *it will be your organisation that will have the responsibility for the organisation and all the preparations*, so that you will have everything you want, but do be a little patient.

If your groups are as unreasonable as the Poss[ibilists], it will be their own fault if it ends in a victory for the Possibilists.

It is a matter of making the Poss[ibilists]' congress come to nothing. That is well under way if your impatience does not spoil everything.

The Poss[ibilists] have been put in the wrong in everyone's eyes. Now, take care not to put yourself in the wrong too by appearing to want to dictate to the Socialists of other countries.

The Belgians must either comply or they will put themselves in the wrong also. I beg you not to give them a plausible excuse for getting out of the difficulty.

Even if the Belgians do not comply, the last word has not yet been spoken; at least, that is my view—provided you do not spoil things for yourselves by acting thoughtlessly.

Your congress cannot be held on July 14th, that much is certain, or else you will hold it by yourselves. I am not arguing about the suitability of this or that date, but, after all, as I see it, that was settled at The Hague and whatever you may do will not alter it.

One cannot get all one wants in negotiations. The Germans for their part have had to yield on many points to ensure united action. So take what is offered you. In substance it is all that you are entitled to ask and, unless you on your side blunder, it will result in the international exclusion of the Poss[ibilists] and the recognition of yourselves as the only French Soc[ialists] with whom there are relations.

The mistake was not to have given you officially a copy of the resolution passed on this matter at The Hague. But, as you know, this is not the first time that people have behaved carelessly at international conferences.

Ever yours,

F. E.

*Justice*¹ enclosed.

We are drafting a reply in which the intrigues of the Poss[ibilists] will be exposed to the English. You see we are doing our utmost, but it will all come to nothing if you are as obstinate as the Poss[ibilists].

304. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX²

London, March 23rd, 89

My dear Lafargue,

It is a positive fact that at The Hague it was agreed that, in the event of the Poss[ibilists] not agreeing, the Belgians and the Swiss, the two neutral countries, should convoke the congress; *that a joint declaration against the Poss[ibilists] should be issued*; and that the congress should be convoked for the end of September in Paris.

Bernstein tells me that he told you this, and in any case it seems to me impossible that a matter of such importance should have taken place without your knowing anything at all about it. And Bonnier, B[ernstein] says, was present, even if you were not.

¹ This refers to No. 270, March 16th, 1889, which contained an article attacking the Paris International Congress, entitled: "German 'Official' Social-Democrats and the International Congress in Paris."

² This letter, first published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 91-93) is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original in French which has been put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

Now, if we wish to bring the thing to a successful issue, it is absolutely essential that *everyone* abides by what has been decided.

You can perfectly well leave the initiative for the convocation to the Belgians and the Swiss; an *international* congress may quite well meet without being convoked by the *Soc[ialists] of the locality* where it is to be held. There is no doubt that the real work—the organising and preparing—will be in your hands, and that should suffice you. If you ask for more, you will have no congress at all, and the Poss[ibilists] will emerge victorious from the fight; under the eyes of all Europe they will hold *their* congress which will then be the *only international workmen's congress of the year*.

Were the matter still open to discussion, I personally would incline to your view that the congress should be held side by side with that of the Poss[ibilists], even at the risk of a fight with them. But the opinion was that it should be held in September, and that is what was voted. There is no going back on it; and if you insist, you will hold your congress by yourselves, to the derision of Europe and the high glee of the Possibilists.

At the same time I have written telling Bebel that he has no right to send you an ultimatum and to say: if the Belgians break their word, we are free and we shall not come to the congress; that they, the Germans, are also too far committed to back out in that way; and that the withdrawal of the Belgians, *should it take place*, which we cannot tell, would not release the others from their mutual obligations. Bebel is a man of great common sense and I have every reason to believe that he will think better of it, provided that you do not create any of these fresh difficulties by trying to go back on the resolutions taken once and for all at The Hague.

The thing is going the best possible way and cannot be *spoilt save by you*.

Even supposing that the Belgians withdraw; in that case

the Swiss would convoke the congress alone, and as they would be acting as the spokesman for the other nationalities, success would be assured.

But in fact there is only one way in which the Belgians could be absolved or given a pretext for breaking faith, namely, by you French acting [in] defiance of The Hague resolutions and being the first to contravene them. If you abide by them, I am practically certain that the Belgians will submit to them, in which case *the Possibilists will be isolated*—and that is, after all, the main aim to pursue.

Our reply to the attacks in *Justice*¹ (necessary since the *Sozial-Demokrat* is established in London) has been printed, I am sending you at the same time as this, 6 copies by book-post, of which there is one each for Laura, Longuet and Vaillant. On Monday the thing will be disseminated throughout London and given out at all socialist meetings and sent to the provinces. The Possibilist gentry and Mr. Hyndman will remember it, I hope.

You will have seen the attack in *Justice*, I believe I sent it in my last.

I repeat:

Be reasonable; carry out loyally what has been passed, do not make it impossible for your best friends to support you, "give and take," use the position won at The Hague as a starting point scoring the first victory over the enemy and as a base for future triumphs. But do not force down the throat of the other nationalities things which they certainly will not swallow. I tell you, half the battle is won, if you lose it now it will be entirely your own fault.

Ever yours,

F. E.

¹ The reply, signed by Bernstein and revised by Engels, was issued with the title: "The International Working Men's Congress of 1889. A Reply to *Justice*."

305. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 23/3/89

My dear Engels,

It is a great pity that I was not informed at The Hague of the resolution passed on the question of convoking the congress; it might have saved a great deal of confusion. On Monday the organising commission is to meet, I shall try and straighten matters out, but it will not be easy, for our people are in a hurry to announce our congress, in opposition to that of the Possibilists. (They are deucedly active; a letter I have received from Madrid announces the arrival there of the Possibilist André Gely who has gone there to recruit supporters; I am told there is nothing to fear from that quarter, save in the case of the Society of the *tres clases de vapor* (mechanics), which is Possibilist without knowing it.)

You for your part must urge the Germans to prod the Belgians and try to fix the earliest possible date for the congress: they should choose August.

Bebel says in his letter that it would be ridiculous to hold another international congress if the Possibilists organise one. On the contrary: we should profit by the occasion to demonstrate the difference. The Exhibition provides us with an outstanding opportunity to get a wide representation from France and abroad; we must not let it slip.

What idiots our rulers are! The action taken against the League of Patriots¹ is increasing Boulangerist enthusiasm. So far it was only Boulanger who was singled out for popular adulation, henceforward there will be a whole retinue of martyrs at small expense. The Discount Bank and the

¹ The premises of the League of Patriots and the private dwellings of its members went on being searched. Rogatory commissions had been sent out into the provinces.

Panama crashes¹ are trumps in Boulanger's hand: he will benefit by all these economic upheavals which ought to have benefited socialism. It is true that once he is in power the difficulties will start, for he will not be able to call a halt to the economic crisis; he will turn to thoughts of war; Russia will egg him on; but perhaps the declaration of war will usher in the revolutionary era. War means the people armed. In Paris and in many other towns there will be uprisings and attempts to form revolutionary governments.

As before 1848, anger mounts against the Rothschilds, who personify high finance. On all sides one hears complaints; they are the scapegoats for the misdoings of finance. That vast fortune is a nightmare. The Boulangists add fuel to these resentments, as you will see from *La Cocarde*²; once in power, Boulanger will certainly have to take measures against finance and that will cost him dear.

I speak of *Boulanger in power*; I am echoing the general belief, even that of his opponents, who are convinced that whatever they do it will not prevent him from succeeding. Millerand, whom I saw this morning, on behalf of Dormoy who is being prosecuted, said to me: "There is but one way of barring his path: assassination." But they are incapable of it, although the thought is in their minds.

Ever yours, P. LAFARGUE

¹ As a result of unsuccessful speculation in metals, the Discount Bank found itself in difficulties. Its director, M. Denfert-Rochereau, committed suicide on March 5th, which created a panic amongst the depositors. Despite help from the large credit banks and, above all, from the Bank of France, the Discount Bank Co. went into liquidation on March 17th. The Panama Canal Co. was already in liquidation.

² The Boulangist paper *La Cocarde* conducted a systematic campaign to create panic, printing after every 20 lines a box with the words: "Down with the robbers!" From March 19th onwards, every issue of the paper contained an article by Mermeix exposing financial scandals and laying the blame at Rothschild's door. The March 23rd issue carried an editorial by Le Hérissé: "Hands Off Rothschild!" and an article by Mermeix (p. 1/IV/VI): "He Should Be Decorated!"

306. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, March 25th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

You speak of a congress in *August*. Yet you know that the conference resolved to hold it at the *end of Sept[em]ber*. I repeat: if you deviate by so much as the millionth of a millimetre from what was agreed upon by everyone at The Hague, you provide the Belgians with a pretext for withdrawing, in which case, as Bebel has told you, everything will be jeopardised. I am quite willing to urge the Germans to prod the Belgians, but I will make no move until I know for certain that you French accept the conference resolutions as whole-heartedly as everyone else. Otherwise they will say, and with reason, How can you expect us to pledge ourselves for the sake of people who do not respect the pledges entered into?

Therefore: either you have the congress as decided upon at The Hague, or you will not have one at all. But on the very day that I have the assurance that you Parisians whole-heartedly and unreservedly abide by the resolutions adopted, on that day I shall be able to act and shall do so.

It is not a matter of thinking out which would be better, August or September: the question is settled and to raise it afresh is to play the Poss[ibilist]s' game.

As for Boulanger, personally I am almost certain that you will have to put up with him and that Rochefort,¹ that idiot, if he does not become a complete scoundrel, may find himself in Caledonia again as a reward for his services. The French go in for Bonapartist phases periodically, and this one is even more stormy than the last. They pay for

¹ Henri Rochefort, who had distinguished himself under the Second Empire by his hatred of Napoleon III and had been deported to New Caledonia following the Commune, was one of Boulanger's most active supporters and had put his paper, *L'Intransigeant*, at Boulanger's disposal.

the consequences of their own actions, that is the law of history, and they will probably pay for them on the centenary of their great revolution. That is the irony of history. The world is invited to witness the glorious spectacle of France celebrating the jubilee of the revolution kneeling before that adventurer!

No doubt he will bleed the financiers, but only in order to pay the debts of his dictator's campaign and to reward his gang. And the financiers' money will not suffice. As Marx said of Boustrapa,¹ he will have to rob the whole of France in order to bribe the whole of France with the money. And as for you, he will crush you.

On the question of war, it is the most terrible contingency to my mind. But for that, I would not care a straw for Mme la France's whims. But a war that will involve 10 to 15 million combatants, unparalleled devastation—merely to feed them—the compulsory and universal suppression of our movement, the recrudescence of chauvinism in every country and, in the end, an enfeeblement ten times worse than after 1815, a period of reaction based on the inanition of all the peoples bled white—all that against what slender hope there is that this ferocious war results in revolution—this is what horrifies me. Above all in relation to our movement in Germany, which would be overwhelmed, crushed, stamped out by violence, whereas peace holds out almost certain victory.

And France will not be able to make a revolution in the course of that war without throwing her only ally, Russia, into Bismarck's arms and being crushed by a coalition. The smallest revolutionary stirring would be treason to the motherland.

How Russian diplomacy will laugh!

Ever yours,

F. E.

¹ Nickname for Napoleon III.

307. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

London, March 27th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

You know what Hegel said: whatever is spoiled, is spoiled for the best possible reasons. And your Parisians take the utmost pains to prove it. This is the position:

With the end of the *Socialiste*, your Party vanished from the international scene. You had abdicated; you no longer existed for the other Socialist parties abroad. It was entirely the fault of your workers who did not wish to read and support one of the best organs the Party had ever had. But, having destroyed your medium of communication with other Socialists, they cannot avoid suffering the natural consequences of their behaviour.

The Poss[ibilists], remaining in sole possession of the field, took advantage of the situation you had created for them; they had their people—in Brussels and in London—with whose help they posed to the world as the only representatives of the French Socialists. They succeeded in winning over the Danes, the Dutch and the Flemings for their congress. And you know to what trouble we went to annul the successes they achieved. Now the Germans offer you the opportunity, not merely to reappear on the scene with glory, but to be recognised *by all the organised parties of Europe* as the only French Socialists with whom they wish to fraternise. You are offered the chance of wiping out at one stroke the effect of all the mistakes made, of all the defeats suffered; of rehabilitating yourselves in the position to which your theoretical knowledge entitles you, but which your incorrect tactics have jeopardised; you are offered a congress where all the genuine workers' parties,

¹ This letter was published in part in *Le Populaire de Paris* on November 29th, 1920. We give here the full text as communicated to us, transcribed from the original in French, by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism, which owns the original.

even the Belgians, will be present; you are offered the opportunity of *isolating the Poss[ibilists]* so that they will have to confine themselves to a bogus congress. In short, considering the position you had created for yourselves, you are offered far more than you had any right to expect. And do you seize it with both hands? Not a bit of it. You play the spoilt child, you haggle, you ask for more, and when at last they succeed in making you accept what is agreed by everyone, you try to impose additional terms, endangering everything that has been gained for you.

The point for you is that *there should be a congress*—and in Paris—where you will be acknowledged by one and all as the only internationally recognised French Socialist Party; and that, on the other hand, the Poss[ibilists]' congress should be a “bogus congress,” despite the lustre which July 14th and secret funds may lend it. Everything else is a side-issue and less than a side-issue. Your congress must meet in order to set you on your feet again, and what does it matter if in the eyes of the bourgeois public it should be a failure? To regain your position in France, you need, primarily, international recognition, and international censure of the Poss[ibilists]. It is offered you—and you turn up your nose!

I have already said that, for the effect *in France*, I believe your date to be the better one. But then this should have been raised at The Hague. No one else is to blame if, at the decisive moment, you went into the next room and it all took place in your absence.

I have conscientiously expounded your arguments to Bebel and asked him to take them into serious consideration; but I had to add that in my view the meeting of the congress, at no matter what date, must be assured and that any move which imperilled it would be a mistake. You cannot but be aware that by re-opening the question of the date, one will get embroiled in interminable discussions and dissensions and that perhaps towards the end of

October you might hope to get everyone to agree to the date of July 14th—if, that is, they were to agree to any other date without fresh conference, which would certainly not be held.

And then you say with wholly Parisian naïveté: “We await with impatience *the settling of the date* for the international congress!” But the date *was settled* for the end of September and the said “we” (who “await” etc.)—the said “we” try to shift the date and open a new debate! “We” should wait until the others have acquainted themselves with the new proposals of the said “we,” have discussed them and have reached agreement on them—that is, should any such agreement be possible.

“We also await protests from the Belgians.” But it is not only the Belgians who protest: everyone took the decision to protest jointly. That protest would no doubt be on its way by now had you not called everything into question again by demanding that the date be changed. And so long as there is no agreement on this matter, nothing will be done.

So just accept what is offered you; the really decisive point is: victory over the Poss[ibilists]. Don’t jeopardise the holding of the congress, don’t give the Brussels people an excuse for backing out of it, for tergiversation and intrigue; don’t bedevil everything that has been gained for you once again. You can’t have all you want, but you can have victory.

Don’t press the Germans, who are doing their best for you, to the point where they must needs despair of acting in common with you. Withdraw your demand for a different date; behave like men and not like spoilt children *who want to eat their cake and to have it*—otherwise I very much fear there will be no congress and the Poss[ibilists] will jeer at you, with good reason.

Ever yours,

F. E.

Of course I have written and told Bebel that you *abide by all The Hague resolutions*, but he will say that nevertheless you re-open the whole question.

I was not able to see Bernst[ein], so I cannot send you the Swiss addr[esses] until tomorrow.

Our pamphlet is beginning to have an effect here.

308. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, April 1st
(St. Bismarck's Day) 1889

My dear Lafargue,

If this matter of the congress serves no other purpose, it is at least an excellent lesson for me in patience, a virtue wherein I do not shine. One has barely succeeded in getting over one difficulty when, lo and behold, you raise another, and are offended over nothing. I again questioned Bernstein, on whose word I can place complete reliance, and he assures me again that no resolution whatsoever was taken *surreptitiously* in your absence. It is absurd to think that they were trying to hide something from you. Even if you happened to be absent, Bonnier was there, and he also understood everything that was said in German into the bargain. Until I hear otherwise, I must assume that he was sufficiently apprised to be able to inform you; if not, what the deuce was he doing there? Particularly since I called your attention to the fact more than once that B[ebel] was, or should be, kept fully informed and you have never replied to that, far less contradicted it.

The only result of these trumped-up quarrels will be to render any congress impossible and allow Messrs. Brousse & Co. to parade before the whole world as the victors.

I can appreciate that the Germans have no wish to lay themselves open to a bout of fisticuffs with the Poss[ibilists], protected and succoured by the police, nor to be set upon as Prussians and Bismarckians by the Parisian gapers, as valiant as those of all big cities when it is ten against

one. We know from experience at the time of the Lassalleans how unprofitable are hand-to-hand tussles with a rival party when that party is in league with the police and the government—and that took place on our own ground. You can certainly not hold it against them if they are reluctant to involve themselves in a similar fight on territory where the mere cry of Prussian or Bismarck agent would be enough to stir up against them an ignorant mob eager to demonstrate its patriotism on the cheap. And although I personally believe that the effect of a *July* congress would be much greater than one at any other date, I have no right to tell L[ieb knecht] or B[ebel] that if they agreed to it they would not expose themselves to this danger.

In any case, you can see for yourself that your July congress is an impossibility. The more you insist, the less you will get. The majority is against you and if you want to co-operate with it you will have to give way. You want everything and you will get nothing. Grasp all, lose all. Do bear in mind that the Germans, the Dutch, the Danes can quite easily do without a congress, but that *you* cannot. You must have this congress on penalty of vanishing from the international scene for years to come.

If only you had the smallest little paper which could give some sign of life! The weakest party in other countries has its weekly organ, but you have nothing to show your colours and keep you in regular touch with the others. This was because you had to have a daily paper or nothing at all. Are you going to repeat the same mistake with regard to the congress? All or nothing? All right, you will have nothing and no one will refer to you again, and in six months from now Boulanger will be in control and will smash you, you and the Possibilists.

I do not know that Antoine¹ ever did anything more

¹ This is thought to refer to Bebel.

in the Reichstag than protest. From his point of view, he could not have acted otherwise.

The Radicals are mad. It is the acme of stupidity to try and destroy Boul[anger] with a lawsuit¹ and to believe that the tide of universal suffrage (however stupid it may be) will be turned as a result of a political sentence. You will get your Boulanger notwithstanding, the good Boulanger whom you need, and the Socialists will be the first victims. For a First Consul must needs be impartial and for every blood-letting applied to the money market he will apply fresh brakes on the proletariat, to hold the balance. If it were not for war, this new phase would be most entertaining; it would be short-lived and there would be plenty to laugh about.

Ever yours,

F. E.

309. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX²

London, April 10th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

I have just seen Bonnier and we discussed the situation.

As I anticipated, your demand that the date of the congress be changed has spread confusion everywhere. Liebk[necht] announces in the Berlin press that there is little hope of a congress being held this year in Paris and that it will be a good thing to hold it next year in Switzerland. The Swiss press has taken up this idea with enthusiasm.

¹ Tirard's new government brought a legal action against Boulanger for an attempt against the security of the state. The High Court sat to try the case on April 12th.

² This letter, first published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 99-102), is reproduced from the photostat of the transcribed original put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

Bebel appears to be disgusted by all these difficulties and ready to leave everything to Liebknecht. And the Belgians reply neither to B[ebel] nor to L[iebknecht].

Fortunately we know the Belgians' secret. Anseele, who is decent, has written to Bernstein telling him. They intend to submit The Hague resolutions to their national congress at Jolimont on April 22nd, and their national committee will not proceed until their congress has given authorisation. That is how these upright Brussels fellows interpret international action.

The thing is transparent. The Brussels Possibilists gain a whole month in this way to compound and intrigue with the Paris Poss[ibilists]; at the Jolimont congress they will move a resolution coming from Brousse & Co., offering a few more or less derisory concessions (according to the situation at the time), the Belgians will agree and will suggest that the others should be satisfied by these great and generous concessions. And as the masses are always in favour of conciliation, and as the small nations dote on congresses, the Dutch, the Danes, even the Swiss, the Americans and—who knows?—possibly Liebk[necht] as well, will declare themselves in favour of uniting and of an 1889 Paris congress, subject to being able to go and get tipsy again in 1890 in Switzerland. For this much is certain: if the idea that the anti-Possibilist Paris congress of 1889 has been abandoned gains ground, the Poss[ibilists] will have carried the day and everyone will attend their congress, save, possibly, the Germans.

I told you so from the start. You wanted everything and you are running the risk of getting nothing.

There is still a chance to save the situation, and we have resolutely seized it.

Our pamphlet has had an enormous effect here, as I told you. You will have received a letter from the committee of the rebel Trades Unionists who have written to Bernstein and others as well. Although they have leanings towards

the Poss[ibilist] congress, they are still wavering. And in the S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation] there are rebellious elements, or Hyndman would not have written his article of last Saturday.¹ Thus we have undermined the Poss[ibilist]s' reserve and it is a matter of following up our advantage.

Bernstein has therefore written to *Justice*, in view of that paper's more conciliatory tone, saying—purely in his own name—that perhaps it is still not too late to reach an understanding; that if *Justice* desires this understanding so greatly it has but to urge the Poss[ibilists] to accept The Hague resolutions *unreservedly* and *forthwith*; that on the two points—the admission of everyone on an equal footing, subject to ratification by congress, *and* the sovereignty of congress—no compromise whatever is possible; that they must take it or leave it; but that if the Pos[sibilists] agree to this at once, he will do his utmost to facilitate agreement all round.

He and Tussy went to see Hyndman on Monday evening to hand him this reply, which will be published.² They availed themselves of the occasion to make him realise that they knew the situation abroad better than he did and, in England, quite as well as he, and that there was no hope of his bamboozling them with his customary tricks. They told him that if there were two congresses, ours would have, besides the Germans, Dutch, Belgians, and Swiss, also the Austrians, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Roumanians, Americans, and Russians and Poles living in the West. They made it clear to him that they knew precisely how far his personal position here was undermined by our exposure of the lies he has peddled concerning the situation in France, etc. They had the im-

¹ This refers to an article published in No. 273 of *Justice* (April 6th, 1889), entitled: "The International Workers' Congress of Paris of 1889 and the German Social-Democrats." This was the reply to Bernstein's pamphlet.

² *Justice* of April 13th, 1889 (p. 3/III).

pression that his friends the Possibilists had themselves deceived him on several points, and they came away with the conviction that he would do his best to make the Possibilists give in.

We have also had a letter from Liebknecht in which he undertakes to do what he can to bring about conciliation provided the Possibilists agree unconditionally to The Hague resolutions before April 20th. I am awaiting a further letter from Bebel and we shall make use of it when it comes. It is understood that in no circumstances shall we yield so much as a millimetre on the two main points.

Hyndman said that the Possibilists were afraid of being turned out of their own congress, *hinc illae lacrimae!*¹

The Brussels scheme we outwit in this way: we make it understood from the start that no compromise is possible. Either the Possibilists agree, in which case we have won a complete victory over them, have forced their hand, have made them eat humble pie and their claim to be the exclusive and only acknowledged French Socialist Party is trampled underfoot for all time; you have everything you need and the congress will do the rest if, as Bonnier tells us, you can flood it with delegates from the provinces. Or else they refuse, in which case we shall have the advantage of having gone to all lengths before the whole world to urge conciliation; we shall have all the waverers with us, we shall hold a congress in Paris in the autumn despite Liebknecht, for by that time there will be no hesitation anywhere.

I am sending you two papers with articles about the congress, from which you will see how much trouble we are taking.

After all, if we succeed in destroying the Possibilists by means of their own congress, that would be best of all.

Liebknecht fancied that he could rally the Possibilists round him despite Brousse, in opposition to Brousse and

¹ Hence these tears.—*Tr.*

over Brousse's head! The very idea of ruling the world with Borsdorf¹ as its capital!

Kiss Laura for me. What is she up to, not ill, I hope?

Ever yours,

F. E.

310. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, April 14th, 89

My dear Engels,

You can congratulate yourself on having saved the congress; but for you and Bernstein, the Germans would have left us and deserted to the Possibilists. Liebknecht behaved in a strange way: it was he who initiated the idea of an international congress, he wanted to have it in '88, he agreed to my suggestion to postpone it until '89; it was he who proposed the conference; I told him to invite the English to it; after the way in which you and Tussy had treated me for having attended a meeting where Hyndman was present, I ceased to have any relations with his group, I could not therefore invite them; I invited Morris, L[iebknecht] did not invite any of the English at all. To make me agree to go to the conference, he wrote to say that if the Possibilists did not attend he would denounce them as traitors to the socialist cause. He was full of bellicose fervour. The Possibilists refuse to be represented at the conference, snapping their fingers at its resolutions, and on March 16th L[iebknecht] writes a letter to Crespin which was read out last Saturday to the aggregate in which he says that to hold two congresses *would be criminal*. You can imagine the effect created; they were quite prepared to give up the whole idea of a congress

¹ Liebknecht was at that time living in Borsdorf, a village near Leipzig.

and to send L[iebknecht] and the Possibilists to the devil. I was able to save the situation--in the following way.

The key thing is the date of July 14th. As I told you, we had prepared everything for trade-union and socialist congresses to be held at the same time. To postpone them until September would have been to sacrifice them. We wanted them to coincide with the international congress to show the foreigners how strong we were. I expressed the idea of holding these congresses in July and of getting delegations elected at them to represent them at the international congress in September. I do not know how the idea will be received in Bordeaux, Troyes and elsewhere. There will be great disappointment.

If you should succeed in your endeavour, it would spell victory; what we want is to hold a congress with the Possibilists so that we can crush them by our numbers. They claim to be the most powerful party, why then are they afraid of coming to a congress which will be open to everyone? You might use this argument with Hyndman to induce him to urge the Possibilists to agree to The Hague terms. Should you detach the *Democratic Federation* from the Possibilists, you would strike a telling blow; I had begun to manoeuvre to this end in London, but you did not let me go on.

What idiots our rulers are! Boulanger's flight had produced the most deplorable impression; he had not consulted anybody except Rochefort; the Boulangists were ashamed of their leader. Instead of leaving it at that, the government, by bringing the Senate into action,¹ makes B[oulanger]'s flight excusable; people are beginning to

¹ Warned of the government's intentions through the good offices of the Minister of the Interior, Boulanger fled to Belgium on April 1st (under the protection of the police). On April 4th the government asked the Chamber to revoke Boulanger's parliamentary immunity. On April 8th a decree summoned the Senate to sit as a High Court on the 12th "to pronounce upon the attempt against the security of the state ... with which M. Boulanger is charged."

say that he has served the parliamentarians a good trick: they set him up as a Machiavelli.

Some students at the School of Chemistry and Physics with whom we are in touch, having learnt that Marx had written a work on the infinitesimal calculus, asked me if they could read it; could they perhaps, they said, publish it in a mathematical journal?

For the past week Mémé has been ill with measles; she is the sweetest, prettiest child imaginable. She is getting better; the fever is subsiding.

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

P.S. I was counting on an article in *Neue Zeit* to pay my April quarter's rent, which will be due on the 15th, but Kautsky has taken longer than usual to have it translated and printed. Would you be so kind as to help me out of the difficulty.

Braun has an article of mine in hand too, on criminality in France from 1840 to 1886: it is to come out this month, according to what he promised me. This article will interest you. In it I demonstrate the direct effect of bankruptcies and the price of bread on producing crimes and misdemeanours; it is an excellent illustration of Marx's law of history.

At the moment I am working on the same theme with regard to suicides and mental derangement: I think I shall be able to demonstrate that suicide and insanity are similarly governed by economic circumstances.

311. PAUL LAFARGUE

TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, April 16th, 89

My dear Engels,

The idea I put forward of holding the national congresses and the international congress on different dates was

rejected after discussion. They are determined to hold the two congresses simultaneously and have decided to accept the autumn date if the steps being taken by the English come to nothing. I am certain that the Possibilists will refuse any agreement. We have decided to write to the provinces giving notice to the groups to hold their delegates in readiness for July or September. It required time and patience to achieve this result.

But we demand satisfaction on two points:

1. After Hyndman's efforts there must be a public and thoroughgoing denunciation of the Possibilists' behaviour. In a letter addressed to Guesde, Liebknecht promised it sometime after the 22nd of the month¹; but I do not place much reliance on what L[iebknecht] says, so I would ask you to take steps yourself to see that the protest against the Possibilists and the congress is published as soon as possible. Our people are eagerly awaiting it; they say, quite justly, that they have submitted to all The Hague terms but that so far the promises made to them have not been kept.

2. The congress must be held during the early days of September, before the opening of the election period. I do not think there will be any objection to that change of date. Should the congress be a success, it would have some influence on the elections if held just then.

In neither your letter nor Tussy's is it definitely stated that Hyndman was opening negotiations with the Possibilists for holding a joint congress and that he would have a reply by the 22nd. I have this information from Liebknecht's letter; is it so?

The elections which have just taken place are a triumph for Boulanger²; in the suburban communes of Paris there were Boulangist committees everywhere which made

¹ That is, after the Belgian Workers' Party Congress at Jolimont.

² The election of an arrondissement councillor was held on April 14th in the Charenton division. Boulanger topped the poll with 2,457 votes.

people vote for the general. The bad impression made on the Boulangist camp by his flight has worn off: the senators are doing their best to re-furbish his reputation.

Thanks for the cheque.

Best regards to Bernstein, Tussy, Hélène and the others and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

The Possibilists want to hold a *working men's and not a Socialist* congress.

312. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, April 26th, 89

My dear Engels,

I was quite right not to want to take part in the Nancy and The Hague conferences. You will find that the Germans are copying the noble example of the Belgians,¹ or rather, walking roughshod over all the resolutions of the conference which they convened and not participating in any congress, so that they can remain neutral. What good-for-nothings!

I wrote to Liebknecht on the lines you indicated but I am certain that my letter will not do much good; the little courage that remained to him—as to Bebel also—will have forsaken him on seeing the Belgians turn their coat and line up on the side of the Possibilists. It is lucky that none of our people were at the Belgian congress; we should have been doubly defeated. Did you notice that, to avoid

¹ The Belgian Workers' Party, at its Jolimont congress, broached the subject of participation in the international congress at the April 22nd session and decided to send an official delegation to the congress organised by the Possibilists. It also, however, adopted a resolution agreeing to be represented at a second congress "which has been organised by the dissidents in Paris and elsewhere."

committing himself, Anseele refrained from attending the congress?

All that The Hague conference will have achieved is to ruin our national congresses and invest the Possibilists with an international importance they would not otherwise have had.

What is even more pleasant is that it is I who will be held responsible in France for all the mistakes and cowardice of the members of The Hague conference. I shall not let myself be caught again.

You must be delighted to have General Boulanger in England.¹ These trips and the extravagance in which he indulges would be enough to ruin him if his opponents were less asinine. Instead of keeping quiet about him during the Exhibition, which would have helped to make people forget him, they are going to hold public attention for months on end with his person. The newspapers have but one topic to write about at present: Boulanger and Boulangism.

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

313. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX²

London, May 1st, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Since my letter of yesterday Bernst[ein] has received the following from Liebknecht:

"In the existing situation, the congress can be saved

¹ On April 24th General Boulanger, accompanied by Rochefort and Dillon, left Brussels for England. It appears that thereby he avoided an expulsion order from the Belgian Government.

² This letter, which was published for the first time in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 106-07), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

only by a move on the part of the French that will constitute a *fait accompli*; so let them convoke a congress—on the strength of the Belgian resolution which makes combined action by the members of The Hague conference impossible—even without the sponsorship of the Germans, Austrians, Swiss (Danes, etc.), which, at this late date, can no longer be assured in advance.

“The congress must be convoked for the precise date of the opening of that of the Possibilists (July 14h), and on the precise lines of procedure laid down at The Hague, giving the reasons for holding it on July 14th with an explicit assurance that there is no intention of competing in any way with the other congress, but that, on the contrary, there is the firm hope that a spirit of solidarity will make the two congresses hold their sittings jointly.” (That would be silly: we, too, hope that this will be the outcome, but to say so would be playing into the Possibilists’ hands, and in that case they would dictate the conditions. It might be possible to say that the two congresses, sitting at the same time, could themselves resolve all their differences.)

“At the same time one would of course have to set out the position briefly—recent events (Troyes and Bordeaux congresses, negotiations to achieve unity, conference, etc.)—but without any polemics against the Possibilists.

“It will also be necessary to say: we invite the working-class and Socialist groups of other countries to support our convocation address by signing it, since there has not been time to obtain this support beforehand.

“If there is no *fait accompli*, there will be no congress; and the Belgian vote has given back to our French friends their freedom of initiative. Once there is a *fait accompli*, people will come to the congress.”

There you are! That’s Liebknecht all over. He is capable of heroic determination, but only after having himself so muddled matters as to be unable to extricate himself in any other way.

Nevertheless, I approve of what he says—with the ex-

ception mentioned above. You cannot be too fair-spoken in your convocation, which does not prevent you from saying that the *raison d'être* of your congress is the refusal of the Possibilists to recognise the full and absolute sovereignty of the congress.

After Lieb[knecht]'s letter there is no longer the smallest reason to hesitate. So go ahead then, hold your national congresses and do your utmost to make all the delegates present there attend the international congress to follow.

As soon as your circular shall have come out, we shall start an agitation, in the first place for your congress, and secondly to make sure that the delegates whom we cannot prevent from going to the Possibilists' c[ongress]—the Belgians, etc.—are instructed to insist upon the two congresses joining forces.

But now that you have a free hand, do not hesitate, do not lose a moment. If we have your circular on Monday or even Tuesday morning, it will get into the *Sozial-Demokrat* and be announced in the *Labour Elector*. As soon as you have settled the date for your congress we shall perhaps be able to do something further here, although the Belgian infamy has done us untold harm.

Ever yours,

F. E.

314. FREDERICK ENGELS TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

London, May 2nd, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Now things are advancing. This is what Bebel writes to me:

¹ This letter, which was published for the first time in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 107-09), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

“Liebk[necht] and I have agreed to ask Lafargue and his friends to call the congress at once for July 14th. We have done so in the belief that, once the two congresses are opened on the same day, it will become impossible for their sessions to meet separately and they will combine over the heads of the Possibilists.

“I think you people will be satisfied now. As soon as the convocation circular is published by the French, we shall issue a public appeal to the Germans to elect delegates to the congress and shall indicate the procedure by which this can be done” (under German legislation). “I have written in similar terms to the Austrians and Danes, and the Swiss will also be informed. In this way, I hope, we shall succeed in expropriating the Poss[ibilists]—at all events, their plans will be fundamentally balked.”

4:30 p.m. I have just returned from Bernstein's, whom I missed. He has had a card from Liebk[necht] in which the latter says that you are at liberty to use “their names” as supporters of your congress. I take it that “their names” means those of B[ebel] and L[iebknecht], as *officially* they are not yet entitled to commit the German Party. I did not see the card but Bonnier, who called here in my absence, said the same thing to Nim.

I hope to have a few lines from you tomorrow morning so that I can set about prodding Bebel again by reporting that you are going ahead.

That reminds me—don't forget to send back to me, deciphered, the letter from Lyons.¹ I cannot leave those workers unanswered.

Now that you have several provincial journals, select one of them as your official paper for the congress period and make sure that it goes, with all your publications, to

¹ Engels had received a letter from a group of Lyons workers asking him to send them his writings, but the signature and the address were illegible.

the various parties.¹ I give you some addresses below; others will follow.

Kiss Laura for me; I shall write to her as soon as the confounded congress leaves my right hand free.

Ever yours,

F. E.

- A. Bebel, Hohestrasse 22, Dresden-Plauen, Germany
W. Liebknecht, Borsdorf-Leipzig, Germany
Editorial Board of *Socialdemokraten*, Rømersgade 22,
Copenhagen, Denmark
F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 96 Malakkastraat, The Hague,
Holland
Editorial Board of *Recht voor Allen*, Roggeveenstraat 54,
The Hague
Editorial Board of *Arbejderen*, Nansensgade 28A, Copen-
hagen, Denmark
Editorial Board of *Gleichheit*, Gumpendorferstrasse 79,
Vienna VI, Austria
Editorial Board of *Memoitoriul*, 38 Strada Sarariei, Jassy,
Roumania
Editor *Justice*, 181 Queen Victoria St., E.C., London
Editor *Labour Elector*, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C.
Editor *Commonweal*, 13 Farringdon Road, E. C., London
A. Reichel, Barrister-at-law, Berne, }
Switzerland } the 2
Henri Scherrer, Barrister-at-law, St. Gall, }
Switzerland } Hague
delegates

¹ On April 20th, 1889, *Le Socialiste*—the weekly organ of the Workers' Party in Central France, published in Commeny—appeared for the first time. It issued twelve numbers and went out of existence on July 14th. But it carried all the information concerning the congress with, amongst other matters, articles signed C. B. (probably Bonnier) reporting the fight conducted against *Justice* in London.

Editorial Board of *Sozial-Demokrat*, 114 Kentish Town Rd., N. W., London

Editorial Board of *Volkszeitung*, Box 3560, New York City, U.S.A.

Editorial Board of *Sozialist*, 25 East 4th St., New York City, U.S.A.

(To be continued)

The (German) Americans, although pressed by the Poss[ibilists] and Hyndman, have nevertheless declared themselves in your favour and against the Poss[ibilists]. If your circular reaches them in time I have no doubt of their support, but they will certainly go to *some congress or other*.

Arbejderen is the Radical opposition paper run by Petersen (who knew Rouannet and Malon in Paris, but who has changed a great deal since then) and Trier, the translator of my *Origin of the Family*. You would do well, for tactical reasons, to send them nothing which is not sent to the *Socialdemokraten*, the organ of the moderate majority, at the same time.

The address of P. Christensen, a delegate to London (good) is 9 Rømersgade, Copenhagen.

Belgians: *Vooruit* (Editorial Board), Marché au fil, Ghent. Same address for Anseele (E.). The Ghent people declared at the Jolimont congress that they would not attend the Poss[ibilists]' congress so long as the latter persisted in their claims. The report in the *Prolétariat*¹ is full of Possibilist lies.

¹ This refers to a report which appeared in *Le Prolétariat* on April 27th, 1889 (p. 2/II/IV) under the heading "At the Belgian Congress," in which the writer seems to attribute the views of the Possibilists to the whole of the Belgian Workers' Party.

315. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 3/5/89

My dear Engels,

You will know from Laura's letter that Liebk[necht] wrote to Vaillant in the same terms as to Bernstein. The heroism of Bebel and L[iebknecht] is nothing but fear of the Possibilists: they do not want to come out openly against them and they still hope to win them over and unite with them by holding the two congresses together. They are deceiving themselves; they don't know Brousse & Co.

The inactivity to which we were condemned thanks to Bebel and L[iebknecht]—for from the start we knew what to expect from the Belgian gentry—has spread discouragement throughout our ranks. At its first sittings, the organisation commission included amongst those present representatives of all the groups; since the German tergiversations, they have gradually stopped attending. So the convocation could not be drafted by the Paris organisation commission; it will have to go through Bordeaux and Troyes—that was Vaillant's view. I do not know how long those two committees will take to act. I wrote to Bordeaux yesterday and now we must needs wait.

It is strange that the Germans, after having made us lose precious time, now interfere and dictate to us what the tenor of our circular should be. We have been too patient; we shall act as we see fit; we have no need of their advice, nor of their signatures. They are pledged and must go on.

I wrote to Bordeaux telling them to consider themselves mandated by The Hague and to convoke the congress for the 14th to 21st of July on behalf of the trade-union and socialist organisations of France and of the Socialist parties represented at The Hague conference.

In the circular we shall ignore the Possibilists and their

congress and shall not mention the absurd and humiliating advances made to them. I said at The Hague that we should consider it a disgrace to put our signatures alongside those of the Brousses, Joffrins and Lavys, whom everyone calls traitors; that we had agreed to swallow the insult for the sake of the foreign Socialists who do not know the political worth of these fine fellows; but now that we have recovered our freedom of action and are taking the risk of convoking the congress, we cannot speak of conciliation with the Possibilists; indeed, we could not so much as mention them in the circular save to denounce them otherwise our conduct would be incomprehensible to our French friends; and we set more store by their good opinion than by that of the Belgians and Germans, who thought and still think only of how to humour the Possibilists. We shall not attack them gratuitously, but we shall deal with them only in order to counteract their underhand methods.

As soon as I have news from Bordeaux and Troyes I will communicate it to you.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

P.S. I have just received a letter from L[iebknecht] full of enthusiasm and counsels of conciliation. He tells me to draft the manifesto and send it to him. It is going to be difficult to reconcile the facts with the spirit of unity animating the Germans.

I have had a letter from Domela,¹ he is incensed by the behaviour of the Belgians.

Things are going better than I expected; now we must go straight ahead without paying attention to the Possibilists, or the foreign unionists. We shall take no steps whatever in France to unite.

¹ Domela Nieuwenhuis, Dutch Socialist.

316. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 6/5/89

My dear Engels,

Herewith the convocation.¹ Please note that it is drafted in the name of the congresses of Bordeaux and Troyes

¹ This is the text (reproduced here from the English version as it appeared in *Commonweal* on May 25th, 1889 (p. 166/I-II/—*Tr.*)

“National Federation of French Trade Unions and Workingmen’s Groups—National Council—Bordeaux 1889.

“Executive Committee of the National Socialist Workingmen’s Congress of Troyes, 1888-1889.

“International Socialist Workingmen’s Congress—July 14th to 21st—Paris—1889.

“Address to the Workers and Socialists of Europe and America.

“In October 1888 a National Congress was held at Bordeaux at which were represented upwards of 200 Trades’ Union and Socialist groups. This Congress resolved that, during the Exhibition, an International Congress be held in Paris.

“A like resolution was adopted by the National Congress held at Troyes in December 1888, at which were represented all the fractions of the French Socialist Party.

“The National Council appointed by the Bordeaux Congress and the Executive Commission appointed by the Troyes Congress were charged with the common organisation of the International Congress, and with the invitation, without distinction of party—of all workers and Socialists of Europe and America whose aim is the emancipation of Labour. All this has been carried out.

“On the 28th February 1889, an International Conference took place at The Hague, attended by delegates of the Socialist parties of Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and France. W. Morris of the Socialist League and the Danish delegates, sent in excuses, declaring their adherence to the resolutions that should be adopted.

“The Conference at The Hague resolved:

1. That the Paris International Congress be held from 14th to 21st July, 1889.
2. That the Congress be open to workmen and Socialists of all countries on conditions compatible with the political laws in force in each.
3. That the Congress shall be sovereign with respect to the verification of credentials and for the fixing of the order of the day.

and of The Hague conference—and that the executive committee is composed of representatives of trade-union

“The Conference resolved, provisionally, that the following questions be treated:

- a. International Labour Legislation. Regulation by law of the working day (day-work, night-work, holidays, work of adult males, women and children).
- b. Inspection of factories and workshops, as well as of domestic industries.
- c. Ways and means to obtain these demands.

“In fulfilment, therefore, of the mandate conferred on us by the Congresses of Bordeaux and of Troyes, and in conformity with the resolutions adopted by The Hague International Conference—

1. We convoke the Paris International Congress to be held from 14th to 21st July, 1889.
2. The questions to be treated are those fixed by The Hague Conference.
3. We invite Socialist and workingmen's organisations of Europe and America to this Congress, which will lay the foundations of the union of the workers and the Socialists of both hemispheres.

“We have appointed in Paris an Executive Committee to definitely organise the International Congress and make arrangements for the reception of the foreign delegates.

“We send our fraternal greetings to the workmen and the Socialists of the whole world.

“May the universal emancipation of the workers be achieved!

For the National Council of Bordeaux
The General Secretary,
R. Lavigue, 16 rue Sullivan.

For the Executive Commission of Troyes:
The General Secretary, G. Batisse,
22 rue de la Grande-Planche, St. André, near Troyes.

ORGANISING COMMISSION OF THE CONGRESS

For the Federation of Paris Trades Unions—Boulé, Besset, Manceau, Roussel and Féline.

For the Socialist Organisations of Paris—Vaillant, Guesde, Deville, Jaclard, Crépin and Lafargue.

For the Socialist Group in the Paris Town Council—Daumas, Longuet, Chauvière and Vaillant (Town Councillors).

For the Socialist Group in the Chamber of Deputies—Ferroul, Plan-teau (Deputies).

and socialist organisations. We do not regard the Possibilists as Socialists, but as carpet-baggers who use socialism to obtain political positions and municipal grants. It is thus the workers or the Socialists of France, without distinction of party, who are convening the congress: this distinguishes us from the Possibilists, who form a closed coterie, who excommunicate and mutually expel each other. That feature of our congress must be brought to the fore.

Bonnier's letter in the *Labour Elector*¹ is very clumsy; he counterpoises the Marxist congress to the Possibilist c[ongress], so to speak, the congress of one Socialist fraction against that of another. He must be prevented from committing such blunders.

It has been decided that this circular shall be followed by a further one including foreign signatures. I have those from Holland, Spain and Germany already; get me Socialist League ones and those of other foreign Socialist organisations.

Things are going well. Whatever the Possibilists do will benefit our congress: we shall carry off their delegates; they may even, in view of our action, change the date of their congress. So much the better.

Regards,

P. LAFARGUE

Correspondence to be addressed to:

Secretary for France: Besset, Boot and Shoe Section, Labour Exchange, rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Paris.

Secretary for Foreign Countries: Paul Lafargue, Le Perreux, Outer Paris."

¹ In its May 4th issue, the *Labour Elector* published a letter from Bonnier (p. 4/II-5/I) in reply to a circular emanating from the Labour Exchange in Paris, published in *Justice* on April 27th. Bonnier makes it clear that this circular was issued by the Possibilists and that the French Guesdists would be unable to participate in an international congress whose terms and conditions of organisation would guarantee the Possibilists a majority from the start. This letter, signed Bonnier, was in fact written by Engels. (See Engels' letter to Laura Lafargue of May 7, 1889.)

317. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 7 May 1889

My dear Laura,

I was very glad to receive this morning the Convocation. As you say, there is no time to lose, and Paul who seems boiling over with virtuous indignation had made me expect an interminable series of bureaucratic difficulties and delays. Now, as there has been such quick and determined action, everything is all right. The Convocation is short and sweet, contains the needful and no more, and all the fault I can find with it is that it would have been better to state *in it*, that a second circular with the signatures of the foreigners, unobtainable on account of want of time, would follow. Moreover I hope that the announcement, that the Soc[ialist] League had beforehand adhered to The Hague resolutions, is founded upon fact and not upon a misunderstanding, as a disavowal on their part would be awkward. As to obtaining their signature, we ought to be informed of the contents of Morris' reply to Paul, so as not to be quite in the dark.

Now will you make an English translation and Paul put at the bottom: "For the English translation, Paul Laf[argue]"—and will he authorise me to do the same with a German translation to be made by me? We will then get them printed here at once and spread them by the thousand; also forward your copies as you may require them.

The loss of time is entirely due to Liebk[necht] who considers himself, or would like to figure as, the centre of the international movement, and who, being cocksure of bringing about a union, allowed himself to be led by the nose by the Belgians for six or eight weeks. Even now he is certain that if only *he* shows himself on the scene at Paris, the union will follow. But as it is not too late now, the lost time is not lost in reality. It has rallied round to

the date desired by the French the mass of foreigners who at first objected and certainly would have abstained, had the date been settled without these preliminaries and against their wishes. Nobody suffers in reality through L[ie]bk[necht]'s action, but we here, who, having entered upon our campaign with uncommon success, were entirely left to our own resources, as all the letters addressed by the working men here whom we had stirred up against the Poss[ibilist] congress, were replied to in the most uncertain and vague way by Danes, Dutch, Belgians and Germans; and nobody could tell them anything about the other congress, in consequence of which they fell into the hands of Smith Headingley and Hyndman. Well, as soon as the English Convocation is out, we must begin afresh and I hope with better success.

But if Paul thinks we can cram down people's throats, here in England, the *factio juris*¹ that the Poss[ibilists] are no Socialists, that consequently their congress does not exist at all or does not count, he is strangely mistaken. He says Bonnier's letter to the *Labour Elector*² was a *bêtise*,³ because it did not start from that point of view. Now I am responsible for that *bêtise* as I wrote the letter and B[onnier] only signed it. The Poss[ibilists] may be all that Paul says, and I believe him, but if he wants us to proclaim that publicly, he ought to have proved it first publicly, and *before* there was any question of a congress. Instead of that, our people made a conspiracy du silence against themselves, left the whole wide world of publicity to the Poss[ibilists], who anyhow were recognised as Socialists by the Belgians, Dutch and Danes and some English last autumn in London⁴; and the decree of excommunication launched by a party which even now

¹ Legal fiction.—*Tr.*

² See Paul Lafargue's letter to Engels of May 6, 1889.

³ Blunder.—*Tr.*

⁴ That is, the International Co-Operative Congress held in London in 1888.

has not a paper in Paris in which it can make itself heard, cannot and will not be accepted by the rest of the world without further proof. We must speak to people here a language which they understand and to talk in the way Paul wants us to do, would be to make ourselves ridiculous and to be shown the door at every office of a paper in London. Paul knows too well that the Poss[ibilists] are a power in Paris, and though it may be very well for our *Parisian* friends to ignore them, we cannot do the same, nor deny the fact that there will be *two rival* congresses on 14. July. And if we were to tell people here that *in our Congress* "ce sont les ouvriers et les socialistes de France sans distinction de parti qui convoquent le congrès,"¹ that would not only be a bêtise but a gross untruth, as Paul knows well enough that the *ouvriers* de Paris, as far as they are Socialists at all, are in their majority Possibilists.

Anyhow we shall here continue to work for the congress *in our own way* and never mind faultfinding. I have not yet done a single act in this affair but it has been found fault with by someone. So I am quite used to that sort of thing and go on acting as I think is right.

The finest thing of it all is that three months after these two congresses Boulanger will be in all probability dictator of France, do away with parliamentarism, epurate the judges under pretext of corruption, have a gouvernement à poigne² and a Chambre pour rire,³ and crush Marxists, Blanquists and Possibilists all together. And then ma belle France—tu l'as voulu!⁴

Six months after that, *we may* have war—that depends entirely on Russia; she is now engaged in vast financial operations to restore her credit and cannot well go in

¹ It is the working men and Socialists of France, *without distinction of Party*, who convoke the congress.—Tr.

² Strong government.—Tr.

³ Mock parliament.—Tr.

⁴ It serves you right! (Usual misquotation from Molière's *George Dandin*.)—Tr.

for a fight until these are finished. In that war the neutrality of Belgium and Switzerland will be the first thing that goes to smash, and if the war becomes really serious, our only chance is that the *Russians* be beaten and then make a revolution. The French cannot make one while allied to the Czar—that would be high treason. But if no revolution interrupts the war, if it is allowed to run its course, then that side will win which is joined by England, if England goes in for the war at all. For that side can then, with the help of England, starve out the other side by cutting off the corn supplies from abroad, which all Western Europe requires nowadays.

Tomorrow there will be a deputation to the *Star* to protest against last Saturday's article on the Congress¹ (Bax, Tussy, Edward) which article was smuggled in, probably by Hyndman and Smith H[eadingley] in Massingham's absence.

Love from Nim and from

Ever yours,

F. E.

318. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX²

London, May 11th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

We have never called you anything other than "the so-called Marxists" and I would not know how else to designate you. If you have another name which is as short,

¹ This refers to an unsigned article appearing in the *Star* on May 3rd, 1889 (p. 1/VII), entitled: "The Paris International Congress."

² This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 111-13), is reproduced from the photostat of the transcription from the original which has been communicated to us by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

tell us and we shall apply it to you duly and with pleasure. But we cannot say: Aggregate,¹ which no one here understands, nor anti-Possibilists, which would shock you quite as much and would not be accurate, being too comprehensive.

Tussy will have sent you back yesterday your letter to the *Star*. As the *Star* had been in possession of the Convocation, translated by Tussy, since the previous night, your paraphrase of the document had not the least chance of being printed.

What we need are letters from Paris, *sent direct to the "Star,"* bearing the Paris postmark, and *refuting the Possibilist slanders in Saturday's and Tuesday's issues to the effect that Boulé's election campaign was run on Boulangist money, that Vaillant had acted in concert with the Boulangists, etc.*² It seems to me that you can perfectly well do this without ruffling your new High Church and exclusive dignity where French socialism is concerned.

The *Star* is the daily paper which is the most read by the workers, and the only one that is open to us, however little. In Paris, Massingham had A. Smith as mahout and interpreter who put him in the hands of the Brousses & Co., who monopolised him, would not let go of him, made him tipsy with absinthe and vermouth and thus succeeded in winning over the *Star* for *their* congress and in making him swallow their lies. If you want us to be useful to you here, help us to recover some influence with the *Star* by showing him that they have set his feet on a dangerous path, that the Brousses & Co. have in fact made him tell lies. And to that end there is no way other than letters of protest against these articles, *reaching him*

¹ The Paris organisation of the French Workers' Party was called the "Paris Aggregate" (Agglomération parisienne).

² The *Star* of May 7th, 1889 published an unsigned article (p. 3/I-II) "The Workmen's Party—a Chat with Some Practical Socialists at the Hotel de Ville," criticising Vaillant.

direct from Paris. Otherwise he will keep on telling us: Nobody in Paris protested, so it must be true.

Apart from the *Star* we have only the *Labour Elector*, a very obscure and very shady paper, run on money from unavowed sources and therefore very suspect. It is surely of some moment to you to have a little publicity here in England, so bombard the *Star* with protests—you, Vailant, Longuet, Deville, Guesde and tutti quanti. But if you do nothing to help us, don't complain if no paper mentions your congress and if the Poss[ibilists] are regarded here as the only French Socialists, and you as a futile clique of intriguers and nincompoops.

For the last three months Tussy and I have done practically nothing but work in your interests; we had won the first battle with Bernstein's pamphlet when Liebk[necht]'s inaction and wavering lost us one after another all the positions gained. Now that we have been driven on to the defensive and are in danger of losing even the positions that we previously held, it is very hard on us to find ourselves deserted by the French as well, when a few letters of a few lines each, coming at the right moment, might have been so telling. But if you are determined to forego every means of publicity here in England just when it could be of the utmost importance to you, there is nothing we can do about it; it will certainly be a lesson for me; I shall go back to my Volume 3, laid aside three months ago, and I shall feel consoled if the congress does not end in smoke.

It is a very good thing that lodging and restaurants for the delegates are being arranged—Bebel wrote to me about this, and as Paris in July will be a positive ant-heap, it is of the greatest importance.

We shall have Laura's translation printed. As for the German translation, the *S[ozial]-D[emokrat]* has published one in which Bernstein has altered a sentence towards the end (No. 3 in your invitation), as being too risky for the Germans. Send the *French text* of the Con-

vocation which is to be signed by *everyone* to B[ebel] and L[iebknicht], so that they can point out to you the passages which they will be unable to sign without compromising themselves legally—otherwise you run the risk of not having any German signatures. I shall await news from Bebel before having a German translation published here and I shall submit to you beforehand the alterations he proposes.

For some while past Labusquière's name has not appeared in the Poss[ibilist] papers—does that mean he, too, is amongst the malcontents?¹ The onset of disorganisation amongst the Poss[ibilists] is of course a welcome fact for us, but the attacks from our side and the congress may well induce a return to unity. At all events, the disintegration has not yet gone far enough to have an effect upon the Poss[ibilist]s' allies abroad.

Enclosed cheque for £20.—As for Ferry's coup d'état,² it may quite easily fail, for the young foot-soldier is far more Boulangist in 1889 than he was Republican at the time when he caused the failure of Mac-Mahon's coup. The worthy Boulanger is not such a fool as to provoke a call to arms over the High Court business, but that proves nothing where it is a matter of the direct violation of the Constitution. That Ferry will not surrender direct or indirect power without a struggle I firmly believe. But there's a risk.

Ever yours,

F. E.

¹ Between April 26th and May 19th *Le Parti ouvrier* did not publish any articles by Labusquière. There was a crisis amongst the Possibilists just at that period, resulting in a certain number of expulsions decreed by the Central Federative Union.

² On May 6th Jules Ferry made his reappearance in politics with an important speech at Saint-Dié, calling for the defence of the Republic. The expression Engels uses here refers no doubt to a passage in one of Lafargue's letters not in our possession.

319. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Sunday May 12th/89

My dear General,

Confusion has come to be our natural element and we shall no doubt feel unhappy when things grow less chaotic. Liebknecht's juvenile ardour bids fair to run away with him: after having sent the people here half distracted by his "*laissez faire aux Belges*"¹—tactics, he now complains of the "slowness" of the French. "*Et il ose pour eux.*"² As regards England no end of conflicting news. After having been told to expect Massingham and "to keep him warm," we learn to our sorrow that he has been "nobbled," and a few days later we get what Vaillant calls the "grotesque" article of the *Star*.³ Tussy suggests "bombarding Massingham with letters," which is impracticable. The circulars published by the commission will keep the English public posted as to the congress, and Batisse and Paul, the secretaries, can send an occasional letter to rectify any mis-statements about the same, but to enter into personal discussions through the medium of the *Star*—seeing Massingham's attitude—is out of the question.

The forced inaction imposed by the Belgians had made people so irritable that everybody took to abusing everybody else—sans distinction de parti ou de personne⁴—every Socialist charging his fellow-Socialist with committing "*des bêtises*": poor Liebknecht, who has been the "*gaffeur royal*"⁵ during the proceedings, writes Paul a letter every other week adjuring him "*de ne pas faire*

¹ Leave it to the Belgians.—*Tr.*

² And he is *chancing* his arm for them.—*Tr.*

³ This refers to the article in the *Star* mentioned in the preceding letter.

⁴ Without distinction of Party or persons.—*Tr.*

⁵ Right royal blunderer.—*Tr.*

des bêtises.”¹ It is the finest comedy of errors. With the French, Paul pulls together very well, but from abroad he gets half a dozen contradictory orders and instructions per week and he now declares with you and La Fontaine: “Est bien fou du cerveau, qui prétend contenter tout le monde et son père.”²

I hope there may be something to show for all the trouble taken. I feared, for a time, that your patience would have to be its own reward, but there has been such a revival since the Germans have lifted the Belgian incubus from men’s shoulders that things seem to look up again. From Switzerland there is good news: Reichel has written very nicely to Vaillant promising his signature and Brandt, the vice-president of the Swiss Grütli Society (counting, I hear, upwards of 15,000 members) has seen Vaillant and gives his name. Domela Nieuwenhuis has never swerved since The Hague conference.

2 p.m. I had written thus far when your letter came; I enclose my letter to Tussy, together with Vaillant’s reply³ which will show you that I had acted in accordance with Tussy’s suggestion and offered to translate for Vaillant.

It appears to me extremely difficult to rebut such charges as those brought by the *Star*; none the less have I tried to get the letters proposed by you, but I cannot make people write. Paul has sent Massingham a letter on the congress; if he inserts that, Paul will see what can be done for Boulé.—Shall I write and ask Vaillant to reconsider his decision?—

Your very affectionate,
LAURA

As Laura has sent her letter to you in *open* envelope, I enclose this. Shall see you tonight at Sam’s.⁴

¹ Not to commit any blunders.—*Tr.*

² He who thinks to please the whole world and his father has taken leave of his senses.—*Tr.*

³ See Paul Lafargue’s letter of May 14, 1889.

⁴ This is written on the back, in Engels’ hand; no doubt he passed on the letter to Tussy.

320. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 14 May 89

My dear Laura,

Could not your people in Paris, now that things are mending and going on swimmingly, look with a little less nervousity upon what we are trying to do in order to help them? Nobody has asked them to enter into polemics with the *Star*, nor write long refutations. But supposing Vailant wrote to the *Star*: "In your No—you assert, on the strength of possibilist assertions made to you, that I... (did so and so, *Star*, May 7th). I have not the time nor you the space to refute in detail such rubbish. I merely ask you to allow me to state, in your next issue, that this is an infamous calumny" (or something of the sort).

And supposing the Treasurer, Chairman, or Secretary of Boulé's Committee wrote "In your issue etc. you say that Boulé's election was supported by Boulangist money. As Chairman (or whatever he was) of Boulé's Committee, I know where the very small amount of money we could dispose of, has come from—all from working men's subscriptions. I therefore declare the above assertion which was made to you by Possibilists, to be an infamous lie" etc.

And so a few more by different people. That would strengthen our hands with the *Star* very much.

Especially at this moment. This morning's *Star* has Paul's invitation¹—I am afraid, put in in order to give him an excuse not to put in the official Convocation with *all the signatures*. Still, Bernstein shall try him again with that (copy enclosed) in a day or two. And Edward and Bonnier saw him this morning, when he promised to put in a letter of Bonnier's tomorrow and asked Bonnier to dinner for next Monday where B[onnier] must try and

¹ The *Star*, May 14th, 1889 (p. 4/II), under the heading: "The People's Post Box."

work him. You see the iron is still a little hot and may be welded if only we could be supported by a few blows from Paris. If we do not strike now, it will be too late soon.

You say the Paris Committee will work by its numerous proclamations and that is better than letters to the Editor. Most certainly; but the letters to the Editor are wanted exactly for the purpose of getting him *to insert the proclamations when they come*. What use will be all the proclamations here when we cannot get them into any paper except the *Labour Elector*, which does perhaps more harm than good if it is the *only* paper to notice them?

As part of the conversation with Massingham was carried on in English, not understood by B[onnier], I do not yet know all that happened. Anyhow I hope you will see that our plan of campaign—to maintain the positions we had from the beginning and to keep the *Star* open for communications from our side—was the only one possible, and not quite so absurd as our Paris friends seem to think. *We know* that at the *Star* office great weight is laid upon such bombardments with letters from the outside public, and in this case it is the more important as you know yourself that Possibilists, Smith H[eadingley] and Hyndman all unisons shout into M[assingham]'s ears that the whole affair is a personal affair of the Marx family and nothing else.

I have written to Bebel to write to Danes and Austrians to hurry on with their signatures, and through the Danes, work on the Swedes and Norwegians, and also I have consoled him about his fear of not getting lodgings and meals in Paris at the impending festive time. Bebel never having seen anything bigger than Berlin (for here he was only a few days and under good protection) is a little kleinstädtisch¹ in these matters. The sooner the circular with *all* the signatures appears, the better; that will tell best with people here.

¹ Provincial.—*Tr.*

I am sure your people in Paris have every reason to be content. They have got what they wanted, and there is plenty of time left for everything. Why then should they be so anxious to take revenge on friend and foe alike, look glum at every proposal made to them, try to find out difficulties where there are none and grumble like John Bulls? Surely toute la gaieté française ne s'est pas évanouie¹—let them become French again, the road to victory is open before them; it is we here that have suffered defeat but this is not the decisive position and, as you see, we keep fighting on as well as we can.

Ever yours,

F. E.

321. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 14/5/89

My dear Engels,

Laura has communicated to you Vaillant's letter refusing to answer the idiotic calumnies of the *Star*; since you and Tussy say that we stand no chance of being published unless we keep off generalisations and concentrate on replying to the personal slanders, I do not see how I, who have not been personally attacked, can deal with the personal question of Boulé and Vaillant having been accused of Boulangism. Tussy writes to say that the English are quite uninterested in what we think of the Possibilists; they must be equally uninterested in knowing whether Boulé and Vaillant are Boulangists. These personal replies could not be *crisp*, as Tussy demands, unless, instead of defending ourselves, which is always tiresome, we attacked. The only way to answer the reports from Paris in the *Star*, would be to show—which would be easy—that the Possibilists treated Massingham as an imbecile, who

¹ Not all French gaiety has vanished.—*Tr.*

could be made to believe that black is white and the Brousses, Lavys & Co. are honest and loyal fellows. You must admit that this would be an unlikely way of winning over the director of the *Star*. After the receipt of Tussy's letter and before that of yours, I wrote an official letter on the congress to the editor of the *Star*; if he prints it, I shall write again about the Possibilists and their behaviour, if you see fit. But at all events, there is no hope that Deville, Guesde, and Vaillant will *bombard* the *Star*, as Tussy puts it, with letters, which would probably not be printed.

The congress puts you out of patience; one would need to be an angel not to be irritated by the enemies' attacks and the blunders of our friends; but I can assure you that my position is not particularly amusing; so long as the Germans had not made up their minds, I had to restrain the French who wanted to go ahead notwithstanding, and now I am obliged to behave diplomatically to avoid friction within the commission and curb the rivalry between Bordeaux and Paris. The Parisians are very annoyed that the National Council, which it was part of our tactics to keep away from Paris all along because of intriguers, is not in Paris; the Blanquists are jealous of the influence we have exercised over the leadership of the Trade Unions ever since the Lyons and Montluçon congresses, where the Collectivists (the so-called Marxists) had the upper hand.

I told you and I repeat: it is you who have saved the congress, as but for you, Bebel and Liebknecht would have left us in the lurch. You must go on giving us your invaluable help for a few more weeks despite the disagreements, disappointments and blunders.

I send you herewith the international circular¹ which I have drafted and Guesde has revised. Please read it and

¹ See the text of the draft circular with Engels' annotations, p. 252.

alter anything which could lead the Germans into legal snares. It is Liebknecht's whim that the convening circular should deal with the Possibilists, whereas we want to ignore them completely; so we must manage to make the circular acceptable to Bebel and L[iebknecht] without their injecting us with their unionist brew; to that end they must be sent a completed circular and be told that this is the one that has been adopted and sent to all the parties already supporting the congress.

The success of the opening of the Exhibition¹ was so great that the opportunists have lost their heads over it. They talk of adjourning parliament, suspending the vote on the Budget and postponing elections till next year and leaving Boulanger and Rochefort to cool their heels in England. My view is that Boulanger has lost the game by fleeing from France; in any case his money-lenders are disillusioned and furious; they had expected Boulanger to open the Exhibition instead of Carnot.

I have let Lavrov know the news you gave me of Lopatin, which confirmed what he had already heard.

It is no doubt Danielson who sent you news of my article, published without my knowledge, in the *Revue du Nord*: it was an article (Manual and Intellectual Proletariat) in *Neue Zeit*² which the *Revue* reprinted. Write to D[anielson] and tell him to put me in touch with the editors of the journal, so that I can send them articles direct which, in that case, would be paid for. I have an unpublished article which would just suit that journal.³

Thanks for cheque; it arrived at the psychological moment.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ The 1889 Exhibition was opened on May 6th, the day after the centenary celebration of the meeting of the States General.

² *Neue Zeit*, Sixth Year, No. 3, pp. 128-40.

³ This refers to an article on the evolution of private property, which was later sent to Danielson by Engels. (Letter to Danielson of July 4, 1889.)

322. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

London, May 16th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Here are my notes on your draft appeal which I have discussed with Bernstein. However, if you say that the Troyes c[ongress] represented the whole of the French working class, you are putting yourself in flagrant contradiction to the facts and exposing yourself to protests and refusals from foreigners, and this without the slightest necessity. You will not cause the Possibilists and their Paris majority to disappear by your edicts.

I have sent the English circular to the weekly press; tomorrow it goes out to the daily press, to the radical clubs in London, to the Socialist organisations and to influential persons who take an interest in these matters.

That comes to about 1,000 copies; Tussy will dispose of 500 more and K[eir] Hardie in Scotland of another 500. The addresses and wrappers are ready, everything will go off tomorrow, so that on Saturday evening, when the clubs, trade unions etc. hold their meetings, it will be distributed.

The *Star* has published Bonnier's letter.²

Clara Zetkin has written an excellent article in the *Berliner Volks-Tribune*³—had we had so precise an account

¹ This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 113-14), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original, put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

² The *Star* of May 15th, 1889, contained a letter from Charles Bonnier, "The Paris Congress" (p. 4/I-II), in which he denounces the collusion between the Possibilists and reactionaries on the Paris Town Council.

³ In the May 11th, 1889, issue there was an article entitled: "The International Workmen's Congress and the Differences Amongst the French Workmen."

of the facts three months ago it would have been of great value to us. Bernstein is to see Massingham tomorrow and will make good use of it. Also of the business of the 13th,¹ whose significance was not brought out by the article in *Égalité*, but of which she has given all the details to Bernstein.

It was quite right not to have the National Council in Paris; since it is the provinces that constitute your strength, they, and not Paris, should also be the official leadership. Moreover, that the provinces are better than Paris is a splendid omen.

Tomorrow is the first night of a new play by Aveling. Although he has not taken the public by storm, the critics pay him some attention, even those who up till now have had a conspiracy of silence.

The miners' strike at home² (the coal-field district begins at two or three leagues' distance from Barmen) is a matter of the highest importance. No matter how it ends, it opens up ground so far closed to us and from today on is worth 40,000-50,000 votes more at the elections. The government is horribly frightened, for any attempt at vigorous action or, as they now say in Prussia, "schneidiges Handeln"³ (the term, as a matter of fact, is Austrian), could precipitate a week of bloodshed like that of Paris '71. Henceforward the miners throughout the whole of Germany belong to us—and that means real strength.

¹ The reference is to the 13th arrondissement section (Paris), which dissociated itself from the Possibilist Party, by disagreement with possibilist tactics.

² Towards mid-May a great strike movement broke out among the German miners. There were 90,000 strikers in Rhine-Westphalia, 13,000 in the Saar, 10,000 in Saxony and 17 to 19,000 in Silesia. It was a sign of the upsurge of working-class struggles in Europe which characterised the year 1889.

³ Brisk treatment.—*Tr.*

As for Boulanger, I hope you are right and the mountebank has lost the game. But. . .

Post-time!

Ever yours, F. E.

I shall write to D[anielson].

**322a. DRAFT OF THE CIRCULAR
CONVENING THE 1889 CONGRESS
WITH ENGELS' ANNOTATIONS¹**

Workmen and Socialists of Europe and America,

The Bordeaux congress, composed of delegates from over 200 *French*² trade-union bodies, with headquarters in the industrial centres of France, and the Troyes congress, composed of delegates from 300 workmen's *and*³ Socialist groups, representing the whole of the *French*² working class and revolutionary socialism, resolved that, during the period of the Exhibition, an International Congress open to the proletariat of the entire world be convoked in Paris.

This resolve has been joyfully acclaimed by the Socialists of Europe and America, glad of the opportunity to meet and reach agreement on the grave events which threaten the civilised nations.

The capitalist class is inviting the rich and powerful to come to the World Exhibition to contemplate and admire the products of working men condemned to poverty in the midst of the most colossal wealth ever possessed by human society. We Socialists, who stand for the emancipation of labour, the abolition of wage-labour and the establishing of a system in which one and all, without

¹ This text is printed from the photostat of the transcription of the original (in French) as communicated to us by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

² Added by Engels.

³ Underlined by Engels.

distinction of sex and nationality, will have the right to the wealth produced by common labour, invite the producers to come to Paris on July 14th.

We bid them *seal the pact*¹ of fraternity which, by consolidating the efforts of the proletariat of all countries, will hasten the advent of the new world.

Workers of all lands, unite!

—²to *seal the pact* may give rise to difficulties. The Germans are forbidden to have any kind of organisation whatever, and such as they have in defiance of the law is regarded as a secret society. Hence one must avoid any expression which suggests the idea of formal organisation. Bid them to a fête of solidarity, to a public demonstration of fraternity—anything you please, so long as you do not invite them to form an official organisation or words to that effect, as the English jurists say.

It also seems to me that one or two good sentences are needed to make an effective ending.

And you might tell the international Socialists who are going to sign this that the details of place of meeting, etc., will be communicated later by the Paris commission. A little prose after so much rhetoric would not come amiss. It would be more businesslike.

323. FREDERICK ENGELS TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX³

London, May 17th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Here are 25 English circulars.

When are you going to send me back the letter from

¹ Underlined by Engels.

² From here on in Engels' hand.

³ This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 115-16), is reproduced here from the photostat of the original (in French) put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

Lyons—deciphered?¹ I would not wish to appear negligent and discourteous to French working men.

As the *S[ozial]-D[emokrat]* and the *Volksblatt* of Berlin have given German versions, there is no longer any need for a separate publication printed here. In any case—which text should be used:

1) French text: *The S[ocialist] L[eague] of England and the Danish Soc[ialists]* have ... agreed in advance to the resolutions to be adopted.

2) English text: *W. Morris of the S[ocialist] L[eague] and the Danes*, etc., etc.

3) German text, Berlin version (probably by Liebknecht): The *S[ocialist] L[eague]* and the Danes sent apologies for absence AND THE *S[OCIALIST] LEAGUE* has agreed in advance to the resolutions, etc. (according to this version, the Danes *did not agree*).

Since the Poss[ibilists] have German friends in Paris and English ones here, it would not be impossible for them to get wind of these discrepancies. That would be most unpleasant; let us hope it does not occur—but at the same time, you can see what a new circular, in which you set yourselves up as “the whole of the French working class,” could lead to: the translations would again vary, for you may be sure that Liebknecht would alter that in the German.

Tomorrow 100 English circulars will go off to America.

The *Star* has not yet printed the circular. Bernstein missed Massingham yesterday.

Aveling's play went off better than I had expected—it is a sketch, very well done, but which ends—in Ibsen's manner—without a solution and the public here is not accustomed to that. This piece was preceded by another—by Baby Rose and someone else—a very free English

¹ See Note 1, Letter No. 314.

version of Echegaray's *Conflicto entre dos deberes*.¹ This one, being highly spiced with sensationalism, was very well received, although it is heavy and vulgar and to the English taste.

Ever yours,

F. E.

324. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX²

London, May 20th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

I am sending you two journals: 1) *Reynolds* [*Weekly Newspaper*]³ which, at Tussy's request, published the circular, but *without the signatures*. This provides you with an excellent opportunity to write to them:

The Commission of organisation is very much obliged to you for publishing in your paper our circular of convocation for the Inter[national] W[orking] M[en] and Soc[ialists] Congress at Paris to be opened on July 14th, but as you have not given any address, will you allow us to state through your columns that all communications from abroad are to be sent to the undersigned Foreign Secretary to the Commission. Yours, etc. P. L[afargue].⁴

Le Perreux, Outer Paris, May, etc., or something of the sort.

2) The *Sun*,⁵ a new radical weekly, with a paragraph

¹ José Echegaray's play *The Conflict of Two Duties*, written in 1882.

² This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 28, pp. 116-17), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original (in French) put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

³ *Reynolds Newspaper* of Sunday, May 19th, 1889 (p. 6/II), under the heading: "International Workmen's Congress."

⁴ This paragraph was in English in the original.—*Tr.*

⁵ The *Sun* of May 19th, 1889, under the heading "Political Men

similarly due to Tussy's influence. We shall see if there is any means of making further use of this journal, but the influence of the *Star* may do us harm.

In *Justice*, which I shall send you as soon as I have some copies, Hyndman emits a shout of triumph, thinking that, with the *Star*, he has deprived us of all means of publicity in London. He says that, amiable and estimable though you be, you have made yourself, as well as Bebel, Liebknecht and Bernstein, ridiculous; and he hopes that we shall at last cease our futile intrigues, etc.

Have you seen the *Prol[étariat]*¹ (or *Parti ouvrier?*) in which the Poss[ibilists] say that they can count on the Danes? Besant has written to Germany to find out what is going on.

Rocheport, now that he no longer has the pavement of the boulevards under his feet, is anxious to make a laughing-stock of himself—at Geneva by his quarrel with old Becker, here by drawing his revolver in Regent Street after having received a box on the ears.² The story will figure today in the Police Court, I will send you the paper.

Ever yours,

F. E.

and Matters" (p. 2/IV), printed two paragraphs signed Alec Rubie in which reference is made to the two congresses and the hope that they will unite is expressed.

¹ *Le Prolétariat*, No. 268 of May 18th, 1889, published a short article (p. 1/V), which opened as follows: "The Irish-Guesdo-Blanquists assert in their foreign circular that Denmark has given them her adherence. This appears to us most unlikely. We have had the support of the Danish Federation of Trade Unions for a long time past and, a few days ago, citizen Knudsen made certain remarks to us concerning the organisation of the congress, which give every evidence that the Danish Workers' Party intends to honour the obligations it accepted at the London congress."

² In Regent Street on the evening of May 18th Rocheport met Pilotell, a well-known caricaturist of the Commune days, who boxed his ears. Rocheport drew his revolver, but was disarmed. The matter ended in the English Courts.

325. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Monday afternoon [May 20th 1889]

My dear General,

A letter was sent by us to the *Star* yesterday from Okecki, treasurer on the Boulé committee.

On Friday night the Paris executive commission laid their heads together and discussed, among other questions, that of the 50,000 frs demanded by the Possib [ilist]s. The latter have caught another Tartar in Daumas who swears that the Council is sick of their money-begging and that they won't get the subvention. It was decided that a number of *Chambres Syndicales*¹ should simultaneously apply for subventions and so make the Council refuse the same all round. Among other items, stated by the Lavys in their demand, figures a banquet to workmen at 15 frs per head. Smith-Headingley, as interpreter, would also, no doubt, come in for a pot of money. Anyhow the Possibilists fume at the rival congress: you see what they say in the *Prolétariat*. They complain of its being *panaché*.² Their own congress is likely to be self-coloured, with a sprinkling of Belgians, Danes, a stray Portuguese—whom Lavy has rushed down to Lisbon to win over— and half a dozen Jack Bulls.

Meanwhile Squabble Congress continues to set fire to the socialist world. Paris and the Provinces are at it

¹ Trade-union bodies.—*Tr.*

² (Mixed.—*Tr.*) *Le Prolétariat* of May 18th, 1889, published an article (p. 3/I), entitled: "A Mixed Congress," in which the writer sifted the list of organisers, who struck him as too heterogeneous. Amongst other things he says: "M. Lafargue, the permanent agent of all international splits, the man who has left a rather unsavoury memory amongst the refugees who found themselves in London at the end of the Empire... M. Jaclard, the ex-Communard, who has become Clemenceau's loyal servant... M. Longuet, that grown-up *enfant terrible* whose peculiar brand of humour excuses everything... etc."

again, fighting over the National Council. Paris wants to have everything its own way and the Provinces—who are ahead of the Capital—protest. Lavigne is sensible and methodical and manages well and it is to be hoped that Bordeaux will keep the Council. Paul acts the peace-maker and comes in for his share of strokes.

Respecting the latest proclamation, I had objected to “l'ensemble de la classe ouvrière”¹ before you wrote, but though I can sometimes lead the horse to the water I can never make him drink. Anseele leaves a demand for the Belgian signatures unanswered and asks if it is true that the congress has been prohibited. The Danes are mute (the words referring to them in the address are of course a literal translation of the French copy given me); Adler announces a dozen signatures from Austria. Nieuwenhuis writes to object to the opening sentence of the address—I mean the international convocation. Autant de cloches, autant de sons²; if every cloche is listened to, there will be no ringing in of the congress at all.

I have to copy a lot of letters for this post, my dear General, wherefore, good-bye for the present.

There is no occasion for Bebel to worry about the meat and drink which are sure to be good: the sleeping accommodation is in worse case; always bad here, it is like to be infernal this summer.

My love to all of you.

Your affectionate,

LAURA

¹ The whole of the working class.—*Tr.*

² Literally: as many notes as bells; meaning, as many opinions as people.—*Tr.*

326. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

London, May 24th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

For mercy's sake hurry up with the circular bearing the foreign signatures! It will be of the utmost importance to us here and everywhere. Never mind the content, whether it be tame and bare of high-flown phrases: it is the *signatures* that will make the splash. If we have it in 8-10 days, we shall have won here; if not, we shall lose the battle for a second time and this time it will be the Parisians' fault. Is it really so difficult to draft a circular which everyone can sign?

Herewith *Justice*² with a manifesto whose fury and impudent lies demonstrate only too clearly the impression that, even at this date, the Convocation has made here. It is plain that [the] S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation], or rather Hyndman, knows perfectly well that the point at issue is their position here, quite as much as that of the Poss[ibilists] in France. Of course we shall reply. But if we could attach to the tail of our loose sheet of paper the Convocation with the foreign signatures, the effect would be enormous.

The Convocation was printed in *Commonweal*³ and Morris has openly declared himself for our congress. In the *Labour Elector*⁴ W. Parnell, a delegate to the London

¹ This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 121-23), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original (in French) put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

² This refers to *Justice* of May 25th, 1889, which published on its front page (c. I-III): "Manifesto of the Social Democratic Federation—Plain Truths about the International Congress of Workers in Paris in 1889."

³ *Commonweal* of May 25th, 1889 (p. 166/I-II), under the heading: "International Notes."

⁴ The *Labour Elector* of May 18th, 1889, published the Convocation (p. 12/I-II). But there is no reference to W. Parnell in this

congress, a very honest and capable boy—working class—announces that he has copies of the Convocation for anyone who wants them. A very useful acquisition. Tussy has arranged a function for tomorrow where Bernstein (we call him *Ede* here, so if I happen to write that, you will know to whom I refer) will meet Burns, Tom Mann and other influential working-class men. Burns has been nominated for the Poss[ibilist] congress by his branch; it will be a very good thing to have people of his sort at the Poss[ibilist] congress if we cannot have them at ours.

The *Star* has not yet printed Okecki's letter, but the one from *Bax* on *Vaillant*.¹ We shall remind him of the other one. As he wants to push the sales of his paper in Paris, we shall introduce him to the Radical Socialists on the Town Council—Longuet, Daumas, etc. What does Ok[ecki]'s letter say? Does it flatly repudiate the accusation of Boulangist money for Boulé? You have no idea of the importance of this daily paper here for us—and for you—and how valuable it would be if we could capture it from Hyndman.

In the *Justice* manifesto it says that *Farjat* voted for the *Possibilist* congress (at the London congress).² Surely that cannot be true. I am writing to ask him by this post for a letter which we could publish. No, on second thoughts, I do not have his address and the man of whom I was thinking is Fréjac of Commentry, not Farjat. So you would be doing us a great service if you could obtain such a letter for us—and quickly, for here one cannot afford to lose time, otherwise one's public is lost.

issue, nor to copies of the Convocation being available to the public. Possibly there is some confusion here with the issue of May 4th, in which it is stated that Mr. Parnell has copies of a petition inviting the British Government to participate in the Congress of European Powers convened at Berne by the Swiss Government.

¹ The *Star*, May 22nd, 1889 (p. 4/I).

² This refers to the International Congress of Labour Unions of November 1888.

I have written to Denmark to find out the reason for the delay there, but my correspondent belongs to the radical opposition and not to the moderates who lead the Party. We have therefore written to Bebel to say that it is very important to have the Danes who, in their turn, will be followed by the Swedes and the Norwegians, and we have suggested to him that one of the Germans should go there personally if things do not go well.

Now, my dear Lafargue, hurry up with the Convocation signed by everyone. It is the only effective way to stifle the slanders and lies of the other side, and it is very important for the countries still hesitating that this should reach them before they have made up their minds. Liebknecht, with his indecision and delays, lost us a great many positions; do not follow his example, for I can assure you, if you cause us to lose yet another battle owing to delays which no one understands, we here will be justified in losing patience and letting you shift for yourselves. There is no means of helping people unless they are willing to help themselves a little. So send any kind of circular—albeit one which cannot arouse opposition—without further delay, to the foreign parties, collect the signatures and have it printed, or send it to us for that purpose—with an English translation by Laura to save time. The outlook is so favourable if only all of you would agree to put the principal and important thing first and leave aside the petty rivalries and matters of detail. Don't spoil your own congress; don't be more German than the Germans.

Good wishes to you and Laura,

F. E.

I am sending you *Justice* and *Commonweal*.

327. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

London, May 25th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

I learn from a letter from Guesde to Bonnier that the Convocation with the foreign signatures is in the press. You can add to it:

K. Cunninghame Graham, English Member of Parliament, and also, if you do not have a telegram of cancellation by *Monday*,

W. Parnell
Tom Mann } delegates to the 1888 London congress.

We have not had the *official* assent of the last-named two. Bernstein saw them this morning, as well as Graham and Burns; the latter says that he intends to dissociate himself entirely from the Soc[ial] Dem[ocratic] Fed[eration], that he has had enough of H[yndman]'s underhand methods which have ruined the association, that the circulation of *Justice* has fallen from 4,000 to 1,400, etc. Although elected to the Poss[ibilist] congress by his organisation, he will act in our support, and negotiations on the manner in which he can best do so are still pending.

Send copy of the Convocation as soon as possible,

Ever yours,

F. E.

We shall probably have further signatures later.

¹ This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 123-24), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original (in French) communicated to us by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

328. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 26/5/89

My dear Engels,

Herewith proof of the circular with Laura's translation: I hope it will be corrected and printed tomorrow, Monday, and sent to the papers in Paris and elsewhere. Send me fifty of the English version. We have decided to put out two issues, instead of waiting for all the signatures; in the 2nd we shall print the latest signatures. We shall keep the type standing for the 2nd issue; you might do likewise.

We have not been wasting our time, as you seem to think. We had to send out the circular and wait for replies, comments and signatures. Laura was endlessly sending out letters everywhere.

Morris is full of enthusiasm for the congress; you must keep him up to it and make use of *Commonweal*. Cunningham Graham has given his support with the greatest pleasure. I expect others from England. Domela and we here in general are of the view that there should be no polemics at all against the Possibilists, who continue to insult us and call us Boulangists—which clearly demonstrates their anger. We let them go on saying what they please. The circular will make them laugh on the wrong side of their mouths; the support already received is enough for an international congress and the circular is as yet nothing but a convocation. By not replying to them we play the better part; we are content to say: there are two congresses, one sponsored by the representatives of socialism and the other by the Possibilists; it is for the workers and Socialists to choose: they will not hesitate.

Okecki, in his capacity as treasurer to the Boulé-committee, wrote to the *Star* saying that it was a slander to say that they had received Boulangist money; that the 2,600

francs received were derived from subscriptions from working men and Socialists, with the sole exception of 100 francs which came from the deputy, Andrieux, sent as a protest against the present electoral usage in which money plays the chief part; and that would not have been accepted had he not given this as his reason for sending it.

Good wishes to you and to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

I will write to Farjat, but I do not know whether he will reply. Add to the signatures:

For Socialist Poland

S. Mendelson (Walka-Klas group)

L. Anielewski (Warsaw Workers' Committee).

My dear General,

I copy the Austrian names as you will hardly be able to make them out in the proof Paul sends you. Liebknecht sends a very cheerful letter announcing a dozen delegates from Berlin alone: he says we shall have "une nouvelle invasion allemande"¹ and bids us look sharp about the creature comforts. He says the cry is all à Paris! à Paris.—
Post-time.—

Your

LAURA²

¹ A fresh German invasion.—*Tr.*

² Laura Lafargue's post-script in English.—*Tr.*

329. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX¹

London, May 27th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

By this post I am sending you the report on the *Alliance*.²
Do you also want the *Alleged Splits*?³

Send me the article for the Russian journal, I will send it to D[anielson].

Since Lavrov is putting on airs, write to

N. Axelrod, Kephir-Anstalt,
Hirschengraben, Zurich

and ask him to get for you the signatures of Vera Zasulich (whose address you do not have), his own, that of G. Plekhanov and other Russian Marxists. That will dumbfound our worthy eclectic.

The English Convocation is already in the hands of the printer; tomorrow I shall have the proofs, the day after, it will be distributed.

Parnell has refused us his personal signature, but he gives it as the Hon[orary] Sec[retary] of the Labour E[lectorat] Association.

As you will have received this signature together with those of other members (Champion, Mann, Bateman), I did

¹ This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 124-25), is reproduced here from the photostat of the transcription of the original (in French) communicated to us by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

² This refers to *The Democratic Socialist Alliance and the International Working Men's Association*, London and Hamburg, 1873. This pamphlet, drafted by Marx, Engels and Lafargue on the instructions of The Hague congress, laid bare Bakunin's manoeuvres against the International.

³ This refers to *The Alleged Splits in the International*, a private circular issued by the General Council of the I. W. A., Geneva, 1872.

not telegraph, for naturally you will have used those signatures which have come to you direct rather than according to a letter.

The reason is that Parnell is going to be sent by his Trade Union (cabinet-makers) to the Poss[ibilist] c[on]gress], where he and Burns will act on our behalf. It may even be that, should the Poss[ibilists] oppose their proposition to merge, they will leave them and come over to us. But that's still a matter for the future.

I prodded you because of new contradictory statements received from Paris and because I did not know whether the text of the Convocation had been agreed upon. Now things will go smoothly here too. It will be a thunderbolt.

Your tactics are quite right, particularly since you have no journal and since everybody in France has already taken sides. Here, where there are not only quite a few wavering elements, but where it is still a matter of shaking those who have already passed over to the enemy—which can be done—one must attack.

Tomorrow I hope to be able at last to put in a little work against Hyndman¹; to-day, revising the Convocation in English and doing errands have taken up the whole day.

The Lyons letter was in the enclosed envelope, I sent it to you to decipher the address for me and the name of the signatory. They asked me for copies of my works. After all, you did receive my letter accompanying it and asking you for this enlightenment.

Ever yours, in haste,

F. E.

We absolutely must have a yes or a no from Farjat—had he perhaps left before the vote was taken?

¹ This refers to the reply to the Manifesto of the Social Democratic Federation which appeared in *Justice* on May 25th, 1889, and was then published in pamphlet form, signed by Bernstein, on June 1st.

330. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 30/5/89

My dear Engels,

Guesde has just shown me *Justice*¹ with the D[emocratic] F[ederation]'s manifesto. What a sorry argument! It is unalloyed Brousse: everything is there, including threats to publish private letters. The Possibilists realise that their congress is in a bad way and they try to confuse the issue with trumped-up quarrels. What does it matter whether Grimpe, Farjat or the pope himself voted in London or in Paris for a Possibilist international congress? What does it matter whether the Nancy and The Hague conferences were convoked by Lafargue or Nicodemus, or whether the Possibilists were the last to be invited?

Even allowing that everything in this scurrilous statement were true, and more than true, what does it show? That the Possibilists were given a mandate in London which the Socialists at the congresses in Bordeaux and Troyes did not recognise, for the simple reason that they see in the Possibilists nothing but servants of the bourgeoisie who have sown disunity in the Socialist Party to the point of splitting in two the annual demonstration at the Confederates' tomb, who did the police a good turn by scotching the unemployed movement, who did Ferry a good turn at the time of the presidential elections, etc. Never have the Possibilists taken part in any socialist agitation; they have always fought against them, openly or covertly.

The foreign Socialists who have observed the Possibilists' behaviour share the opinions of the French: at The Hague Bebel said that following the January 27th elections the Socialist Party could not trust the Possibilists. Domela stated that he was loth to sign a circular jointly with the Possibilists.

¹ See the immediately preceding note.

As far as the Possibilists are concerned, the International Congress was nothing but an excuse for pocketing 50 thousand francs; the report in the *Star* shows that the 50,000 francs was their main objective. To justify the request for that huge sum, they had to draw up a statement of how it was to be spent: it includes a banquet at 15 francs a head, interpreters at 20 francs a day, visits to the château at Fontainebleau accounting for 3,000 francs, etc., and the rest on the same scale.

Our trump card is the international convocation; those whom it fails to win over to us are either not interested or unshakable; and one must not waste time in splitting hairs with them over trifles that, while of no interest to anybody, confuse the issue, which is what the Possibilists are after.

Our congress is gaining ground in England. I have received, in reply to a letter I wrote, the support of the secretary of the *Ayrshire Miners' Union*; if there is still time to put his name on the English circular—*J. Keir Hardie, secretary of the Ayrshire Miners' Union*. A delegate is coming to Paris next month to see me. He asks me whether one could not use the opportunity to set up an international miners' union. I am writing to Germany, Belgium and France about it: take up this important question.

I have received the support of Stepniak; that will make Lavrov laugh on the wrong side of his mouth.

Guesde has had a letter from Bonnier in which he says that Cunninghame G[raham] has withdrawn his support. Is this true?

I have received the pamphlet on the *Alliance*, but not *Justice*, nor have I had news from America, Sweden, Norway or Denmark.

The congress hall is fixed and the arrangements for food and lodgings completed; I do not know the details.

Kind regards to all,

P. LAFARGUE

Send 30 copies of the English translation of the international convocation.

331. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 2/6/89

My dear Engels,

Yesterday I received Sweden's adherence with a delightful letter in which they announce that three delegates will represent Socialist Sweden at the congress.

Liebkecht writes to say that the Danes have made up their minds not to attend either of the two congresses: they will only go to a joint congress.

L[iebkecht] tells me that the Germans will assemble in Nancy, to arrive in Paris together at the same time. The English should do likewise, that would simplify the work of reception: there is a dearth of polyglots in Paris. Could not the Londoners supporting the congress set up some sort of committee to provide information and organise the send-off of that caravan of delegates? If you are willing, I will write to Morris, Champion, etc., to enlist them for such a committee, unless you would prefer to do it yourself.

I have this instant received the *Kent Times and Tribune* with a very good article by Field on the congress.

Send me the 30 English circulars that I asked you for. The English circular is very well set out; we shall adopt its method of classifying the adherents for the second edition.

Kind regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

332. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Tuesday afternoon [June 4th 1889]

My dear General,

The signatures for Sweden are: Aug. Palm, Hjalmar Branting, Axel Danielsson.—The second name I cannot make out exactly.—Danielsson writes that all their available men are—or *will be* in prison at the time of the congress, wherefore they intend delegating *Palmgren* who lives in Paris and one or two comrades from London.—He says that the Danes belonging to the reform party are afraid of the Marxists and that Trier and Petersen who represent the genuine Socialists of Denmark are in a minority.

This morning a document has come from the Danes stating their reasons for their abstention. Paul is writing them in reply and will send you his letter, as it may be useful for Trier and Petersen to know the contents of the letter.

Axelrod, Zassoulitsch and Plekhanov Paul has written to, as also to Stepniak, telling him that he can sign in his individual capacity.

I am happy to say that my peregrinations in search of a roof and 8 beds for the Domela Nieuwenhuis clan have ceased. I have found a house facing the Marne with four bedrooms, a large dining-room, a kitchen and garden for 400 frs for two months: close by is another house with half a dozen bedrooms, two sitting-rooms and kitchen for 300 frs for two months—the cheapest thing I have found—for July and August are the top of the season.

I am writing in hot haste—so that you may get the signatures in time.

Your affectionate,

KAKADOU

333. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO THE LEADING COMMITTEE
OF THE DANISH SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Le Perreux, 4/6/89

Dear Citizens of the Leading Committee of the Danish Social-Democratic Party,

I acknowledge the receipt of the document containing your decision not to attend our international congress convened by the most authoritative representatives of the European Socialist parties.

It is true that the Possibilists received a mandate at the London International Trade Union Congress to organise an international congress in Paris. The London congress was not a Socialist congress, but a congress of more or less reformist working-class trade unionists, with some Socialists present. From this congress, indeed, the Social-Democrats of Germany and of Austro-Hungary had been excluded, as also Socialists who were not manual workers; the Possibilist Lavy and the revolutionary Socialist Viard were not admitted because they were not manual workers. Revolutionary Socialists were therefore not required to attach any importance to a mandate issued by such a congress.

Furthermore, no French Socialist would have consented to attend a congress convoked by the Possibilists who have openly rallied to the bourgeois politicians of the rue Cadet, who have stood in the way of all socialist agitation—as, for example, at the time of the unemployed workers' demonstrations, of the labourers' strike, of the national campaign for the eight-hour day, etc.—and who openly assisted the opportunists at the time of the presidential election of Carnot, and the combined opportunists and Radicals at the time of the January 27th election, when they opposed the working-class Socialist candidate Boulé and supported Jacques. I confine myself to citing these undeniable and notorious facts.

Nevertheless, out of a spirit of unity and in order to meet the wishes of foreign Socialists who know little about the Possibilists' activities, the French Socialists whom I represented at The Hague conference would have consented to participate with the Possibilists in an international congress to be convoked by the Socialists of France, Europe and America, including the Possibilists. These last-named rejected this proposal, which did them too much honour.

We who know how, at the Saint-Étienne congress, they forged credentials in order to split the French Socialist Party—closely united until then—and to expel such Socialists as Guesde, Deville, Bazin and Lafargue, we could not permit the validation of delegates' credentials to be left in their hands. The Hague conference decided that the validation of credentials should be undertaken by a commission elected by the congress, as was the custom at congresses of the International. The Possibilists rejected this demand also. Since then, at your request, they have slightly modified their attitude, but in an inadequate manner and one that did not satisfy us. Allow me to say that you are mistaken in thinking that you will be faced by two international congresses: the Possibilist congress, which will be international in name alone, is convoked by a group which has no existence outside Paris. The other congress is the only genuinely international one; it is convoked by the Socialists of the principal European countries and is being organised in Paris by a commission on which are represented the Federation of Trades Unions and every shade of French socialism, from reformist socialism, represented by Daumas and Longuet, to the revolutionary communism of the Blanquists and Marxists.

The commission, to whom I shall convey your decision at its next session, will regret that the Danish Social-Democratic Party does not adhere to an international congress, where, in all probability, Denmark will be the only country not represented.

334. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 10/6/89

My dear Engels,

Your pamphlet¹ is excellent; unfortunately it is rather long, which means that it will be read only by militants interested in the subject: of course it is addressed only to these. Its length was inevitable, since you were determined to refute Hyndman's manifesto point by point. What you say about the London congress is most important; it is unfortunate that I did not know those details at The Hague, to contest the famous mandate of the Possibilists. Your pamphlet will help me greatly in my report to the congress: all I shall need to do is to quote many of its passages.

Our international convocation has utterly confounded the Possibilists; they talked of our congress as a thing of no account and which might not be held at all: it was by talking in this vein that they won support in France. But our circular alters the case: several of the French delegates to their congress have decided that as soon as it opens they will demand the fusion of the two congresses.

A rather ticklish point: our people are quite willing that the two congresses should unite, but they do not wish on any account to betake themselves to the Possibilist congress which, Tussy writes, is how Burns intends to raise the matter. We shall make no concession whatsoever: they can join us, we shall not join them. It would be too stupid; it would mean a definite victory for them; it would be their congress and not ours that would be held.

¹ This refers to the answer to the Manifesto of the Social Democratic Federation, mentioned in Engels' letter of May 27th. (See p. 266.)

The article in *Figaro*¹ which I sent you yesterday is of decisive importance. The Paris press tried to ignore our congress: I supplied 22 newspapers in Paris with the international convocation and not one of them, with the exception of the *Intransigeant*,² mentioned it: not even *Le Temps*, which prides itself upon publishing everything impartially to keep its readers well posted. The article in *Figaro* breaks through this conspiracy of silence: the contemptuous way in which it speaks of the Possibilist congress is typical; compared with ours, their congress is reduced to nothing; that is the view which is gaining ground.

The news from Germany is capital: Liebknecht announces 40 delegates; there will be others, besides Frankel, from Hungary. I have just had a letter from Finland asking for information. No news from America; that is a nuisance. I am having the 2nd issue of our Convocation printed and announcing a third.

From Nuremberg, where the lithographic workers are on strike, they have written asking me to stop workers coming from Paris to replace the strikers: Brunner, the employer, has left for Paris to engage some.

Everything is going well in Paris, except the collection of funds for the congress; the commission's coffers are empty, I have had to pay an advance for the hiring of the hall. I myself am exceedingly straitened at the moment and would beg you to come to my aid.

Remember me kindly to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ *Le Figaro* published an article by Charles Chincholle on June 8th, 1889: "The Socialist Congress" (pp. 1/VI-2/II), which included the text of the Convocation to the congress. The Possibilist congress of which the writer speaks is the national congress. He makes no reference to the Possibilists' call for an international congress.

² *L'Intransigeant* of June 1st, 1889, summed up the circular convening the congress in an article: "The Workers' International Congress." (p. 2/I-II).

Laura is busy copying out my article for Russia; I shall send it to you as soon as she has finished the copy.

The Russian refugees in Paris have selected Lavrov to represent them; it is not known whether he will agree. The adherence of Vera Zas[ulich] and others has put them in a flutter.

Will you send us a few more copies of your answer to Hyndman, my dear General, we have given ours away.¹

335. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 11th June 89

My dear Laura,

At last, I can find a few minutes for a quiet chat with you. And first of all let me thank you for your charming invitation to Le Perreux for the congress. But I am afraid I shall have as yet to delay accepting it. There are two things which I avoid visiting on principle, and only go to on compulsion: congresses and exhibitions. The din and throng of your "world's fair," to speak the slang of the respectable Britisher, is anything but an attraction for me, and from the congress I must keep away in any case; that would launch me in a new agitation campaign, and I should come back here with a load of tasks, for the benefit of a variety of nationalities, that would keep me busy for a couple of years. Those things one cannot decline at a congress, and yet I must, if the 3rd volume is to see the light of day. For more than three months I have not been able to look at it, and it is too late now to begin before the holidays I intend taking; nor am I sure that my congress troubles are quite over. So if I do not come over to Le Perreux this year, *aufgeschoben ist nicht aufgehoben*,² but this

¹ Although not stated, this post-script, in English, is obviously from Laura.—*Tr.*

² To postpone is not to abandon.—*Tr.*

summer I shall take a little rest in a quiet sea-side place and try to put myself in condition again to be able to smoke a cigar which I have not done for more than two months, about a gramme of tobacco every other day being as much as I can stand—but I sleep again, and a moderate drink does no longer affect me unpleasantly.

Here is a bit of news for Paul: Sam Moore gives us tonight a parting dinner; he sails on Saturday for the Niger, where, at Asaba, in the interior of Africa, he will be Chief Justice of the Territories of the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited, with six months' leave to Europe every other year, good pay, and the expectation of returning in 8 years or so an independent man. It was chiefly in honour of Paul that he consented to become Lord Chief Justice of the Niger Niggers, the very cream of Nigritian Niger Niggerdom. We are all very sorry to lose him, but he has been looking out for something of the sort for more than a year and this is an excellent place. He owes his appointment not only to his legal qualifications, but very much, also, to his being an accomplished geologist and botanist and ex-volunteer officer—all qualities very valuable in a new country. He will have a botanical garden, and make a meteorological station; his judicial duties will mainly consist in punishing German smugglers of Bismarck's XXX potato spirit and of arms and ammunition. The climate is far better than its reputation, and his medical examination was highly satisfactory, the doctor telling him he would have a better chance than young men who kill themselves out of pure ennui—with whisky and black harems. Thus when the 3rd volume comes out, a portion, at least, of it will be translated in Africa as I shall send him the advance sheets.

To return to our beloved congress. I consider these congresses to be unavoidable evils in the movement; people will insist on playing at congresses, and though they have their useful demonstrative side, and do good in bringing people of different countries together, it is doubtful wheth-

er le jeu vaut la chandelle¹ when there are serious differences. But the persistent efforts of the Possibilists and Hyndmanites to sneak into the leadership of a new International, by means of their congresses, made a struggle unavoidable for us, and here is the only point in which I agree with Brousse: that it is the old split in the International over again, which now drives people into two opposite camps. On one side the disciples of Bakounine, with a different flag, but with all the old equipment and tactics, a set of intriguers and humbugs who try to "bow" the working-class movement for their own private ends; on the other side the real working-class movement. And it was this, and this alone what made me take the matter up in such good earnest. Debates about details of legislation do not interest me to such a degree. But the position we conquered upon the anarchists after 1873 was now attacked by their successors, and so I had no choice. Now we have been victorious, we have proved to the world that almost all Socialists in Europe are "Marxists" (they will be mad they gave us that name!) and they are left alone in the cold with Hyndman to console them. And now I hope my services are no longer required.

As they have nobody to come to them, they fall back upon non-Socialist or half-Socialist Trades' Unions and thus *their congress will have a quite distinct character from ours*. That makes the question of fusion a secondary one; two *such* congresses *may* sit side by side, without scandal.

My dear Laura I was going to write a lot more but I cannot see hardly, it is so foggy, and thus I had to interrupt for brighter intervals; until now it is post-time. So I can but enclose the cheque £20.—about which Paul writes.

As to money for congress, the Germans ought to do something—if I can, will write to Paul about that tomorrow.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

¹ The game is worth the candle.—*Tr.*

336. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, June 15th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

I have written telling Bebel that your contributions are coming in rather slowly, that you are hard up for the necessary funds for the congress, etc. I explained to him the reasons (your numerical weakness in Paris, the necessity for the provincials to scrape up their funds for the delegates, the habitual sluggishness of the French in paying dues, etc. . .) and I suggested to him that the German Party could opportunely make a grant, as a good international investment. It would be a good thing if you roused Liebk[necht]'s enthusiasm for such a grant, you could describe your position to him better than I and tell him that I made you promise to write to him on the matter.

I am sending you *Justice* with Hyndman's reply.¹ It is the outburst of impotent rage on the part of a man who knows himself thoroughly beaten. What he says about Parnell and Stepniak is a plain lie.² I have a letter here from St[epniak] written to Tussy yesterday as soon as he had seen *Justice*, in which he says that it is untrue and that he will write to *Justice* forthwith. As for Parnell, his name was given to us *officially* by the Labour Electoral Assoc[iation] and so long as he does not resign from his function as secretary of that assoc[iation], he cannot challenge the validity of the signature. He refused to sign in his *individual capacity* and we respected his scruples in this regard.

¹ *Justice* of June 15th, 1889, contained an article by Hyndman (p. 3/I-III): "The International Workers' Congress and the Marxist Clique."

² Hyndman claimed in his article that Parnell's and Stepniak's signatures had been put on the circular without their consent.

Nobody knows this Field¹ who is throwing himself so ardently into the defence of our congress.

The Danish paper of Trier and Petersen openly takes our side, but they are right not to go further than that. By proposing a delegation to our congress, they would push the Danish officials into possibilism. We have the satisfaction that these crypto-Possibilists do not dare to go to the other congress.

The two congresses now having a totally different character—ours that of a concourse of Socialists, the other that of people who do not go beyond trade unionism (for they will not get anyone else except the Possibilists and the S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation])—it looks doubtful whether the fusion will take place. And if it does not, it will be no disgrace. For it is a known fact that socialism does not yet unite the whole working class of Europe under its banner, and the existence of the two congresses side by side would do no more than give recognition to the fact.

At the same time, our congress being more advanced than the other one, we now have different responsibilities. If both congresses were avowedly socialist, we could make many a concession on matters of form, to avoid any trouble. But since the lining up in two camps, under two different banners, has taken place independently of us, we have to look to the honour of the socialist banner; the fusion, should it take place, will be, not a *fusion*, but rather an *alliance*, and it is a matter of carefully considering the terms of that alliance.

In any case, one will have to see how things go and not bind oneself in advance by irrevocable decisions. The main thing is always to put your opponent in the wrong; to act so that, should the rupture take place, it is he who will bear the blame for it. You may be sure that, after what has happened, neither the Possibilists nor the S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation] will be animated by a wild desire for

¹ Mentioned in the letter of June 2nd, 1889.

fusion, but rather by an ardent hope that we shall be blamed for the breach which, secretly, they want and which alone can give them some semblance of continued existence. To do them the favour of *provoking* the breach would be to give them a new lease of life. It is not our fault if they cannot recover from their defeat, but it would be our fault if we acted under the influence of emotion or any kind of feeling. It is a matter of pure calculation and nothing else.

Kiss Laura for me and for Nim. This morning Sam Moore left Liverpool for your African motherland.

Ever yours,

F. E.

337. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 16/6/89

My dear Engels,

Now that we are relieved of the worries over the success of the congress, we are concerned about the fusion for which the Belgians, Bebel and other neutral people will call. At our last session it was decided that we should not oppose it if the foreigners insisted upon it, but that we ought to arrange things in such a manner as to forestall it. So far the Possibilists have benefited by our silence, even though our contempt for their abuse has stood us in good stead; we have decided to break that silence by making a report on the preliminary moves, in which we shall relate without comment the advances made to the Possibilists for the holding of a single congress. I have been made responsible for this report together with three others. I have made use of what you say about the London congress, adding the fact that *Lavy, the Possibilist delegate of the teachers, was not admitted because he was not a manual worker*. I have been challenged on the accuracy

of the fact. Could you let me know about this as soon as possible; just a postcard will do. On Saturday I have to submit the report to the Commission.¹

What imbeciles these bourgeois rulers are: the unprecedented and unexpected success of the Exhibition diverted attention from Boulangism, which lost ground, and now, with their idiotic prosecutions, they are reviving the Boulangist fever and offering a martyr's crown, minus thorns, to Laguerre & Co. The Boulangists are jubilant: it was just what they needed for the opening of the election campaign.

Laura has told you about the constituency which has been proposed for me in the fifth arrondissement; yesterday they offered me another constituency in the Vaucluse, at Avignon; they say there is a good chance of succeeding there. Guesde will probably stand in Marseilles, in Clovis Hugues' constituency, he having become impossible owing to his Boulangist associations.

Liebkecht has just written to say that he expects to come to Paris a few days before the congress—no doubt to enter into negotiations with the Possibilists. He'll be worsted.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

What a sorry reply from Hyndman²; he would have done better to keep quiet. Stepniak has sent me his adherence, but I never received anything from Parnell.

338. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 28th June 89

My dear Laura,

As to your "free and easy" translation of my Aufgescho-ben etc., I am afraid I can, in this tropical heat, muster

¹ This Report of the Organising Commission of the Congress is given as an Appendix.

² See Note 2, p. 278.

no more energy than to entirely leave to you the responsibility of the same and to do so, as lawyers say, "without prejudice." All I know is that if this weather lasts, I don't envy you the congress; the only congress I care for is one with Nim over a bottle of beer from the cool cellar.

As to this congress of yours I see from your letter to Maggie Harkness that it is intended to keep the administrative sittings in private. Now I am fully convinced that this question can only be decided by the congress itself, and after having heard the Germans, Austrians, etc. But as far as the order of the day questions are concerned, I do not see any necessity for insisting upon private meetings at all, and should think the Germans themselves would prefer public sittings all through—unless there is in some quarters a hankering after a restoration of the International in some form or other, and that the Germans would and ought to oppose with might and main. Our people and the Austrians are the only ones that have a real struggle to go through, real sacrifices to make, with always a hundred men or so in prison, and they cannot afford to play at international organisations which are at present as impossible as they are useless.

On the other hand, the Possibilists and Co. will do everything to give retentissement¹ to their congress, will probably have no private meetings at all, after the vérification des pouvoirs,² and perhaps not even for that—and with the odds in their favour in their connection with the bourgeois press in France and here, they will get the pull of us—handicapped heavily as we are—unless we act boldly and have the press admitted as often as ever possible.

From all this, I conclude that it will be best not to have any settled opinion upon this or other questions connected with the congress, but to wait until the others have been

¹ Publicity.—*Tr.*

² Validation of credentials.—*Tr.*

heard and then come to a conclusion. This I would apply also to what Paul writes about making the fusion of both congresses impossible. It strikes me that when that question crops up there will be so many practical difficulties that, unless the Poss[ibilists] give way on every point, nothing is likely to come of it. But the Poss[ibilists] won't give way, and as they are sure to make up by Trades Unions what they lack in Socialists, and will have a pretty fair show of French and English (which two nations, as you know, make up, in their own opinion, the whole civilised world) and as they will have one Knight of Labor, representing, on his own statement, at least 500,000, and one American Federationist of Labor, representing 600,000, they will represent, on paper, an immense number of working men and expect us poor Socialists to give in. All I fear is that they may make a sham move to put us in the wrong before the public (a trick they understand to a T) and that Liebk[necht] will fall into the trap. In that case I reckon upon you especially, upon Tussy and D. Nieuwenhuis to open Bebel's eyes and to prevent the success of Liebk[necht]'s Vereinigungswut.¹

Tussy has replied to Paul's question about Lavy; I was not there, she knows all about it.

In my opinion the two congresses might sit side by side without any harm—they are essentially different in character, the one of Socialists and the other chiefly of *aspirants* to socialism, and I do not think Bebel would under these circumstances be prepared to go for union at any price. He wrote to me that the fusion could only take place on the footing of perfect equality, and that will no doubt be the minimum of his conditions. But he has never lived outside Germany, and is no judge of English or French conditions of life or ideas—and there Liebk[necht] may become dangerous, especially as he is unfortunately, for want of a better informed man, the foreign

¹ Mania for unity.—Tr.

minister of the Germans. One point you must press upon Bebel is that the Poss[ibilists] and S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation] intend using the congress as a means of restoring the International, a thing the Germans cannot countenance without calling down upon themselves prosecutions innumerable; and that therefore the Germans had better keep away from such a congress.

My congratulations to Paul for his double candidature—at Avignon he is sure to win, c'est la ville de Laure!¹ he ought to have cards engraved P. L., candidat, succr. (plus heureux) de Pétrarque.² But I suppose you have heard these bad puns long and often enough at Paris without me.

I suppose our people in Paris are preparing a projet de règlement³ for the congress? That is absolutely necessary to save time, and it should be very short and leave all details to the chairman.

If I have time, I shall send Paul a few lines on the question of national armament and suppression of standing armies.

Sam will be about Senegal or Gambia now, we expect to have a few lines from Madeira in a day or two.

Of Schorlemmer not a word. Shall try and stir him up a bit. But perhaps he has written to you, he has said to M. Harkness that he intends to be at the congress in Paris.

Parnell has had a letter published in the *Labour Elector*⁴ that he *did* sign in his quality of Hon[orary] Sec[retary] of Labour Ele[ctoral] Assoc[iation]—e ciò basta.⁵

Love from Nim. Ever yours,

F. E.

¹ It is Laura's town.—*Tr.*

² Candidate, (more fortunate) successor to Petrarch.—*Tr.*

³ Draft of rules.—*Tr.*

⁴ *Labour Elector* of June 22nd, 1889 (p. 8/II).

⁵ And that's enough.—*Tr.*

5 p.m. Just received your letter to, and from Tussy; she writes the enclosed on the subject of the private meetings which I fully endorse. I shall also write to Bebel tomorrow on the same subject.

339. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 2/7/89

My dear Engels,

On my return from Rheims and Épernay, where I went to give some lectures, I found your letter enclosing one from Tussy about closed meetings. Our practice in France is to hold private sessions during the day when the matters on the agenda are discussed; at these private sessions those who are to speak at the public meeting in the evening are appointed. Naturally it will be up to the foreigners to decide if there should be closed sessions. Personally I am in favour of closed sessions; though not despising publicity in the bourgeois press, I am not so concerned about it as Tussy and do not hold with the idea that anything should be sacrificed for the gentlemen and ladies of the press, which will not prevent it from being an impressive demonstration of international socialism. The press will have to take notice of it whether it likes or not.

An international congress where different languages will be spoken is unlikely to be much frequented by the Paris public, particularly just now; international congresses are being held every day—on peace, on women, on the agrarian question, etc.—and the public is wholly indifferent. With this indifference in mind we have hired a very small hall seating from 200 to 300 people over and above the delegates. It is better that the newspapers should say that we turned people away than that the hall was half-empty. If the meetings are well attended, I shall propose holding a great assembly in one of the largest halls in Paris and

announcing it on posters. The small hall has this additional advantage that in the event of the police trying to interfere with our meetings, which is a possibility, we could see that our people occupied it every evening.

So far I have received news of the arrival of only 8 English delegates—Morris, Kitz, Dard, Kitching, Carpenter, Jarleton and the ladies Schack and Tochat: very poor.

At Épernay, in the champagne-producing district, I met a large number of revolutionary socialist wine-growers: they are small growers who have been completely ruined by the big champagne manufacturers. For some time past these gentlemen have been buying up their land and, to force them to sell it cheaply, they surrounded the peasants' small vineyards, hemmed in by their estates, with acacias and Jerusalem artichokes: the shade and more particularly the roots of these plants spoilt the vines. But nowadays they have no need to resort to this practice; they simply buy up their wine, or even their grapes by the kilo. The large producers have formed a syndicate and they fix the prices which they are to pay the peasants for their wine; what was formerly worth 500 francs a hectolitre is now bought for merely 150 or 100 francs. It means ruin. One peasant offered to sell me his wine at the rate of 85 francs for 200 litres; the manufacturers are offering him only 50 francs; five years ago, he sold his wine at 200 francs a hectolitre. The fury of these peasants is terrible: the manufacturers will pay for it dearly when the revolution comes—the peasant has a long memory.

Laura sends you her love.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

I am sending you my article for Russia by registered post.

Herewith a post-script to our report of which I sent you a proof yesterday.¹

¹ This Report of the Organising Commission (see Appendix) was

*Post-script.*¹ At the last moment we have received a correction from citizen Farjat which, sent to the paper *Le Parti ouvrier* but not printed, states that not only did he not vote for the motion empowering the Possibilists to organise an international congress, but, moreover, that this motion was never put to the vote at the London congress. He furnishes, and is at any time ready to furnish, proofs of his statement.

340. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX²

London, July 5th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

I appreciate fully that a congress of delegates from an association holds private sessions to discuss matters of concern to none but its members and indeed that would be obligatory in most cases. But that a congress of workmen and Socialist delegates, called to discuss such general questions as the 8-hour day, legislation on women's and children's labour, the abolition of standing armies, etc.—that such a congress should close its doors to the public and deliberate in camera, strikes me as quite unjustifiable. Whether the Parisian public comes to it or not is of little moment, although the interest which your Party is bound to take in the congress should be enough to guarantee it some audience. But the open sessions will not suffer any harm at all, in my opinion, even if the usual gapers are conspicuous by their absence. What we need is

published by the Polish *Walka Klas* and *Przedswit* printers in Geneva (15 pp., of which one is a frontispiece).

¹ The post-script, which appeared at the end of the Organising Commission's Report, is not written in Lafargue's hand.

² This letter, published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 133-35), is reproduced here from the photostat of the typed transcription of the original (in French) put at our disposal by the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

publicity in the press, and for that it must be open to the public: the press can only deal with things to which it is admitted. And the evening speechifying sessions, where the French language is compulsory, since it is the only one understood by the public, will have small attraction for the delegates who do not speak it. After a long session in the afternoon or morning, they will want to see Paris rather than listen to incomprehensible speeches. That should not prevent you from holding one or two evening meetings in a large hall; but to shut the doors lest someone should say that the hall was only half filled strikes me as altogether overrating the importance of the Paris public. The congress is being held for the benefit of the whole world and the absence or presence of a few Parisians more or less does not matter. You, who are always saying that the Possibilists are without any strength, that it is you who represent the French proletariat, are now afraid that they will have a larger audience than yours!

In any case, Bebel writes that *for them* there can be no question of closed meetings; that publicity, for the Germans, is the sole safeguard against fresh accusations of secret societies. In face of this argument, minor considerations concerning the Parisian public and its possible abstention will probably have to give way.

For the rest, he says that probably 60 German delegates will come. There seems to be unbounded enthusiasm in Germany.

The S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation] is thoroughly in the sh. . . . Who do you think is to come to the rescue? Poor H. Jung,¹ who, in a letter this week, declares that our congress means absolutely nothing, that it is a happy family of enemies, that Longuet is not a Socialist, that Jaclard is not a Socialist, that Liebk[necht] voted for Bismarck's colonial policy (which is a lie), etc. Poor fellows, they are at bay.

¹ *Justice*, July 6th, 1889 (p. 3/II-III).

You will have heard that D. Nieuwenhuis is going to move for fusion "insofar as the agenda of the two congresses are the same." As the agenda are not the same, I do not see who will be able to vote for this resolution. In any case I have written to Bebel to draw his attention to the fact that things are no longer the same as they were at The Hague; that since then you were authorised to call your congress; that all Socialist Europe is supporting it and therefore you are entitled to propose new terms for an eventual fusion; that the mania for unity may drive the unionists into a position where they would finish up by finding themselves united with their enemies and alienated from their friends and allies; in short, that there will be a host of minor difficulties. Indeed, there will not be the smallest chance, in my view, of a useful fusion unless detailed conditions are hammered out by the committees of the two congresses and agreed upon by both. Otherwise the union would not last more than two hours. And to reach a solution, time is needed, hence the fusion will only take place towards the end, if at all.

Your article went off yesterday to Russia, registered.¹

What you tell me about the Champagne wine-growers is extremely interesting—the ruination of the peasants is accomplished fast nowadays by means of advanced capitalism!

It is a very good thing that Lieb[knecht] is to lodge with Vaillant; I strongly suspect that he still longs for union with the "good elements" of the Poss[ibilists], and "over Brousse's head," as in March and April.

Kiss Laura for me and for Nim.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

¹ See Engels' letter to Danielson of July 4, 1889.

341. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 8/7/89

My dear Engels,

I believe there is a vast plot being hatched behind our backs by Liebknecht to bring about the fusion of the two congresses even before they have assembled.

I have received a lengthy Danish document in which we are asked to reply *yes* or *no* by telegraph whether we want fusion, and if we will put it on the agenda at the opening session of our congress, to be held on the 14th, whereas the Possibilists do not open their congress until the following day. Hence it would be we who would be asking for fusion, as a favour, and the Possibilists who would grant to it.

I have replied by telegraph: Will accept fusion demanded by foreign Socialists. And I followed up my telegram with a letter in which I said that we had gone to The Hague to bring about fusion, but that their friends the Possibilists had consistently opposed it there. We had decided to submit to union as a graceful gesture to our international friends, but we were not going to ask for it.

1st. Because it was pointless, since it was not a question of two Socialist congresses, the Possibilist congress being purely a trade-union congress.

2nd. Because we regarded the Possibilists as agents of the radical and opportunist Ministers, paid to do electioneering work and split the Socialist Party.

You and Bernstein must help us to foil this plan: fusion, if it has to take place, should only do so after the congress has assembled, and as it is we who represent the Socialist element, the trade unionist workers of the Possibilist congress must come to us.

Tussy, Aveling, Domela's cousin and her daughter have arrived at Le Perreux; we spent the day together yesterday. My expenses have been heavy this month; this con-

founded congress not only absorbs my time but also involves me in a heap of unforeseen expenses; and we are again compelled to seek your help.

Vera Z[asulich], Plekhanov and Axelrod have been expelled from Switzerland; they will arrive in Paris this week. Liebknecht is coming tomorrow, Tuesday, and so are six Swiss delegates. Bebel arrives on Thursday.

I must be off, for lunch is ready and Tussy and Aveling have come.

Regards,

P. LAFARGUE

342. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

July 11/89

My dear General,

We're in the thick of congress preliminaries. Liebknecht, three Hungarians, and three or four Swiss arrived on Tuesday morning. They were received at the station by Vailant, Roussel, Jaclard, Cluseret, Paul, Deville, Aveling, etc. Tussy and Mme Vernet (a cousin of Domela's) and her daughter and myself went up to Paris at about 11 a.m. and we all met at the Palais Royal and lunched together at one of the restaurants there. In the afternoon some of the party started for the Exhibition and the wonders of the Tour Eiffel, while I went to the "Grands Magasins du Louvre" for Edward who wanted *braces*, a *sponge* and "*caleçons*."¹ He also wanted a sleeping draught which I could not get as he had not given the proper prescription. To-day Bebel comes; after that come the Russians and on Saturday and Sunday the German and English delegates. Liebknecht says that many a German is like to get lost on the way and not to turn up till after the congress. Domela is

¹ Pants.— *Tr.*

expected today, but he may be tripped up by the police in Belgium and never get here. How things will go off as regards the fusion of the congresses, I don't know: all or next to all the foreign delegates appear to clamour for it. "Fusion at any price." A union imposed by such pressure from without and not the outcome of organic internal working is sure "de vivre, ce que vivent les roses, l'espace d'un matin."¹

The Belgians write to say that they cannot possibly be present on the Sunday and beg for a deferring of the opening till Monday. This is in our favour. An American delegate, a German, representing the Trades Unions of New York, has arrived: the Danes send a delegate to the Marxist congress in despite of the Knudsen set.

Tonight Cluseret feeds a party of delegates; tomorrow Daumas gives them a dinner. Edward goes to all of these with note-book in hand.

I quite share your dislike of congresses and shall be glad when this memorable international business is over. Meantime I hope that you and Nim congress over a bottle now and then and drink to our healths and the confusion of anarchy and possibilism.

I am writing by fits and starts: letters in various languages come by all posts and require answering. . . .

We thank you, my dear General, for your cheque and I, for my part, wish you were well rid of both of us.

Your

KAKADOU

Love to Nimmy and to Pumps and Percy and the little 'uns.

¹ To live, to live as the roses, for the space of a single morning.--
Tr.

343. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux 23/7/89

My dear Engels,

The congress is over at last! I can sleep to my heart's content. For the past fortnight I have been going to bed at 2 o'clock in the morning and rising at 6 o'clock. And during the day I had to work like the very devil. The proposition to merge staggered the French both in Paris and the provinces, and they had to be restrained or they would have exploded. It is safe to say that had the fusion taken place there would have been a pugilistic set-to in the congress and complete disunity. Domela, though a fervent champion of unity, realised this and so proposed that the two congresses should continue to sit and come together only to vote on resolutions with no discussions.

This nightmare averted by the Possibilists,¹ we are pleased with the success of the congress. The most genuine fraternity prevailed at our congress; the French, who are so eager to speak, showed the greatest deference to the foreigners, above all to the Germans. The assembly was never so quiet as when a German was speaking. Bebel and the others who had been afraid of coming to Paris are now reassured. One German said to me at the banquet: "I am not pleased, I am gladdened to the depths of my heart."

The Possibilists are thoroughly demoralised; at the last session they had but 58 people, including delegates. No one remains to the Possibilists except the Belgians; and they ought to be left to them. At the last session, Allemane, who is half insane, attacked Bebel and Liebknecht,

¹ Concerning the problem of merging the two congresses, the Possibilists adopted a resolution at the session of Tuesday, July 16th, which, by making no concession on the matter of the validation of credentials, virtually rendered the merger impossible.

accusing them of being Bismarck's accomplices; the Danish delegates protested, but the Belgians kept quiet.

In one of your letters to Tussy you speak of taking steps to start a campaign in France and in England against the Possibilists. We shall do nothing of the kind in France; by attacking them one serves their ends; instead of wasting our time, energy and money on fighting them, we shall work to organise the First of May demonstration. Brousse & Co. will have nothing to do with such a demonstration, they are going to oppose it and that will be their death-blow. In any case they will get the lesson they deserve at the next elections.

Liebknicht and Bebel were very effective, for they had to overcome some resistance amongst the Germans on the question of fusion. L[iebknicht] was admirable throughout the congress.

The Belgians thought that by remaining neutral they would be asked by both sides to organise the next congress, and were greatly disappointed when they realised that we had selected Switzerland as the headquarters for the executive committee.

I fancy that Brousse is not very eager to take part in another international congress. His aim in this one was to cheat the Town Council of 50,000 francs on which to do electioneering. He has succeeded in wriggling out of a Council resolution whereby this sum is put at the disposal of the Labour Exchange to be drawn on as and when the use of amounts already received can be justified before a special tribunal. Daumas has just discovered that the Possibilists have already drawn 9,000 francs at various times without having produced any justification whatsoever. I saw him yesterday evening; he spoke of bringing an action in the Courts for embezzlement of public funds, pointing out that should the matter be raised on the Council, the Possibilists and their friends would succeed in stifling it. If Daumas has the courage to go through with it, he will finish off the Possibilists. He is very determined, but is held

back by a question of form. It would be the first time that an application to the Courts had been made to settle a matter falling within the province of the Council.

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

P.S. In a few days you shall have the list of delegates and resolutions. Yesterday we met to prepare the work for the printers to-day.

344. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 29/7/89

My dear Engels,

Boulangier is victorious¹: he was returned 16 times with an overwhelming majority, and where he was defeated an impressive number voted for him. To understand the significance of this triumph one has to realise that politics usually play a very small part in the County Council elections; the winner is generally a local figure, chosen by virtue of the services he has rendered or could render to the constituency; the Republican electors often nominate a political opponent because he is a banker, a big landlord, etc. These elections give one a glimpse of the future.

Following his flight, B[oulangier] lost his popularity; many of the Boulangists were ashamed of their leader; there were startling defections; but the blunders of Constans and his associates and, above all, the nasty disclosures made about them not only restored B[oulangier]'s diminished popularity, but increased it. The latest

¹ This refers to the county elections of July 28th, 1889, in the course of which Boulangier was elected in the first ballot in the following 16 counties (cantons): Amiens (South-West), Bordeaux (4th), Saint-Macaire, Montluçon-East, Commentry, Corbeil, Nancy (West), Bourbonne, Tours (Centre), Bastia, Issoudun (North), Niort, Rennes (South-East), Le Mans (2nd), Mayet and Lorient (2nd).

electoral law,¹ imposing a 10,000-franc fine on any candidate putting up in more than one constituency, and prosecuting the printers, bill-posters and distributors of his leaflets, has aroused righteous indignation; everyone has seen it as an attack on universal suffrage. These idiots are reproducing the 1848 situation. B[oulanger] is becoming the representative of Republican decency, of legality and the defender of universal suffrage.

Boulangism is a popular movement with many claims to justification; but the strange thing about it is that though it wins the masses, it does not attract political men of any standing. There were barely half-a-dozen Boulangists in the Chamber, and in the country as a whole, apart from some members of the League of Patriots, the active Boulangists are disreputable men like Mermeix, or completely unknown and insignificant ones like Boeuf. Finding candidates is one of the Boulangists' great difficulties, although the Boulangist national committee undertakes to pay all election expenses. The Bonapartists and Monarchists give themselves out as revisionists and even Boulangists to make sure of getting in, so that though many Boulangists may be elected to the next Chamber, there will nevertheless be extremely few genuine Boulangist deputies. The composition of the next Chamber will be very heterogeneous; and it may happen that a Boulangist majority is formed against Boulanger, Naquet, Laguerre & Co.: there will be strife and internal strife in the heart of parliament. If the danger of war were averted, the Socialists could want for nothing better as a means to rouse the country and train it for revolution.

Longuet's friends have just played him a dirty trick. He is one of the top candidates elected to the Town Council;

¹ This refers to the Act of July 17th, 1889, concerning plural candidatures introduced by the government to defeat Boulanger's plebiscitary manoeuvres and opposed by Jaurès amongst others.

he is well liked in his locality and he was sure of being returned as a deputy. But in order to find a Paris constituency for Floquet, the opportunist-radical committee has decided to put up Lockroy in Longuet's constituency and to leave that of the latter to Floquet, and to compensate Longuet they have offered him a constituency in the suburbs¹ which is rapidly Boulangist and where he will certainly be defeated. Longuet has meekly agreed.

Tussy and Edward, who have left this morning, will be in London before my letter.

Kind regards to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

345. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 30/7/89

My dear Engels,

After my letter had gone I received this note from Cluseret² who has taken it into his head to make us put up a candidate in the South. He has reached an understanding with the socialist committees in the Var and Bouches-du-Rhône who have promised to support our candidates, Guesde and myself, Deville having declined.

Till the last minute I expected to stand in Paris, in the 5th; I had some chance of getting in provided there was no Boulangist candidate: I was given to understand that the general had decided not to stand Boulangists against socialist revolutionaries; I was even informed that I would have no interference in the 5th constituency. But it appears that this is no longer so, for the revisionist committees of the arrondissement have decided to put up candidates in

¹ In the September parliamentary elections, Longuet did in fact stand in Courbevoie.

² See Letter 345a.

the two constituencies; their candidates are Naquet and Lenglé. Our people in the 5th thought that to put me up in those circumstances would be to subject me to a rather ignominious defeat; for, as in the January 27th elections, the fight will be between opportunists and Boulangists, and the Socialists will be absolutely nowhere. The workmen, even those who are Socialists, will vote for the Boulangist candidate rather than for the Socialist as a means of protesting more forcefully against the present government. They have decided that, instead of standing me they will nominate one of their own, quite unknown people so that we can conduct an electioneering campaign against the Boulangists and opportunists.

So I have to fall back on the provinces; but that unfortunately represents a big outlay; for example, the journey from Paris to Marseilles costs 58 francs third class, it means 24 hours in the train. The committees will pay the electioneering expenses, but the personal expenses of the journey and the hotel are the candidate's own responsibility. One would have to make at least 2 or 3 journeys to Marseilles; the meeting on the 11th of which Cluseret speaks is merely to inaugurate the campaign; it will have to be followed up by a series of lectures and meetings. The election will cost me at least a thousand-franc note. If I were to be returned it would not matter, for I should have the means of paying the expenses, but that is problematical.

The Boulangists are insatiable: it is not enough for them that B[oulangier] should have been returned by 17 counties; they had expected 80. That would have been a bit too thick.

Have the Avelings arrived?

Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

345a. G. CLUSERET TO PAUL LAFARGUE
AT LE PERREUX

Marseilles, July 28th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

We have decided to hold a meeting on the afternoon of August 11th, with myself in the chair, at which all the candidates will speak. I do not know which constituency will be reserved for you but what I can say is that all except one are good, the Socialist element predominates everywhere.

Make arrangements with Guesde, whom I am informing by the same post, to come together, and let me know your decision by return.

Deville is wrong to decline; the circumstances which I foresee will be such as to make him regret it.

Cordially yours,

G. CLUSERET

Hôtel du Cheval blanc, Toulon

346. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 4/8/89

My dear Engels,

Thanks for your cheque. I shall use it to pay for my journey to Marseilles to attend the election meeting on the 11th. You may rest assured that I shall do my utmost to get elected: in the first place it would solve my personal problems in an agreeable fashion; and secondly I do not believe there will ever be a finer opportunity for furthering socialism. The next parliament will be worse than that of 1871; the Royalists and the Bonapartists who will have run on the Boulangist ticket to get in will revert to their true colours once they are returned to parliament. The Radical Republicans and even the Socialists will employ the

same method to get elected—the Blanquists, for example, apart from Vaillant who has publicly protested against any compromise with Boulanger; but though he is the head, he does not lead his party but is swept along by the current. An active Socialist minority will act as a snow-ball and attract all waverers to it; the Boulangists will not be able to fulfil the hopes which the voters have pinned on their election; it will be the right moment to attack them, to discredit them and to secure some part of their popularity for ourselves.

Cluseret who knows the electoral field of the Var and Bouches-du-Rhône has high hopes that we shall be elected; he was anxious for us to accept nomination; he has written again telling me to make up my mind, for in my reply, not knowing whether I should have the means to conduct the campaign, I was evasive.

The new electoral law reduces universal suffrage to a private charter. In the South and the North, Guesde and I could have stood in several constituencies against bourgeois candidates, as, for example, in Aix, where they wanted me to oppose Pelletan; of course we should not have got in, although Vaillant and Guesde had every reason to expect to be returned twice over; but we could have taken a count of the Socialist votes.

Burns is opening a campaign against Hyndman, Besant & Co. in the *Labour Elector*¹; it is all to the good that the English are settling their own affairs themselves; they will do the job better than any foreigners. Champion asked Tussy what our plan of campaign was. In my view the only tactic to pursue is to press forward with the eight-

¹ The *Labour Elector*, founded by Champion to fight against Hyndman, had been financed from Liberal and Tory sources. These coming to an end, Champion had been obliged to accept the offers of a committee consisting of Burns, Mann and Cunninghame Graham, and the paper passed to their control. The issue of August 3rd, 1889, published (pp. 73/1-75/11) a long article signed by John Burns: "The Paris International Congress."

hour agitation and, above all, with the First of May 1890 demonstration. Keir Hardie is to raise the question at the Dundee congress¹ and force the Trades Unions to make a decision. The Possibilists in France are opposed to any demonstration; by this fact alone they put themselves in opposition to the international movement which they have always deceived with their socialist-revolutionary phrasemongering.

Enjoy yourself. Here's wishing you cool drinks.

Regards to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

347. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

4 Cavendish Place, Eastbourne 27th Aug. 89

My dear Laura,

That letter writing at the sea-side is well nigh an impossibility, I thought you knew long since. And if, as in my case, a lot of people whom I never saw seem to have conspired to overwhelm me with letters, visits, inquiries, requests of all sorts, the impossibility becomes a complete fact. Austrian student-clubs, a Viennese inquirer after "truth" who wishes to know had he not better devour Hegel (better not, I replied), a Roumanian Socialist *in propria persona*, an unknown man from Berlin now in London, etc., etc., all have come down at once upon me and all expect to be attended to at once. So, with six people around me in the room whither they are but too often driven by rain, nothing remains for me but to retire from time to time to my bedroom and to turn that into my "office."

¹ The Trades Union Congress was to open at Dundee on September 3rd, 1889 (under the chairmanship of R.D.B. Ritchie, of the Dundee Trades Council.—*Tr.*)

You had your adventures with Séraphine, Nim had hers with Ellen. Which Ellen having been long suspected by the knowing ones was one morning reported by the doctor to be six months gone in the way all flesh comes into the world and had consequently to leave—about a month before we came here. When we return there will be fresh engagement of some one—perhaps worse.

I am glad Paul is off on his election trip and moreover with funds from his Mamma. Of the three put up for Marseilles, one, perhaps two, may get in; I hope Paul may be one. But anyhow it is a distinct step in advance to have once been put up as candidate for the party, and facilitates further moves; especially with a rising party as ours at this moment undoubtedly is in France, once a candidate generally means always a candidate.

I do hope Boulangism will come to grief next elections. Nothing worse could happen to us than even a succès d'estime of that humbug which might prolong, at least, the apparent dilemma: either Boulanger or Ferry—a dilemma which alone gives vitality to either scoundrel. If Boulanger got well thrashed, and his following reduced more or less, to the Bonapartists, it would prove that this Bonapartist vein in the French character—explicable by the inheritance from the great Revolution—is gradually dying out. And with the elimination of this incident the regular development of French republican evolution would reprendre son cours¹; the Radicals would, in their new incarnation Millerand, gradually discredit themselves as much as in the incarnation Clemenceau, and the better elements among them pass over to us; the opportunists would lose their last pretext for political existence, that of being at least defenders of the republic against pretenders; the liberties conquered by the Socialists would not only be maintained but gradually extended, so that our Party would be in a better position for fighting its way than any-

¹ Resume its course.—*Tr.*

where else on the Continent; and the greatest danger of war would be removed. To believe as the Boulangeo-Blanquists¹ do that by sustaining Boulanger they can get a few seats in Parliament is worthy of these ignorant *purs*² who would burn down a village in order to fry a cotelette. It is to be hoped that this experience will do Vaillant good. He knows perfectly what sort of fellows the mass of those Blanquists are, and his delusions as to the work to be got out of such materials must have received a severe shock.

Hyndman's campaign with regard to the discredit to be thrown on the Marxist credentials seems to have utterly broken down. Burns' disclosures³ were a ready blow, and our further revelations⁴ especially about the Austrian Possibilist credentials did the rest. These people never know what a glass house they are living in themselves. And as in France the Possibilists seem to have kept quiet with regard to that point (these fellows are far cleverer than Hyndman & Co.—in their small way), there will be no further necessity to follow up the victory unless fresh attempts are made. The whole trick was calculated for the British market, and there it has failed—cela suffit.⁵ Then there is the resolution about the 1st of May demonstration. That is the best thing our congress did. That will tell immensely here in England, and the Hyndman lot *dare not oppose* it; if they do, they ruin themselves; if they don't, they must follow in our wake; let them choose.

Another great fact is the Dock Labourers' strike.⁶

¹ Towards the middle of 1889, a section of the Blanquists, including Granger, Breuillé, Rouillon, Henri Place and Ernest Roche, went over to Boulangism and canvassed Boulanger's endorsement.

² Out-and-outers.—*Tr.*

³ See Note 1, p. 300.

⁴ Engels had published an article entitled: "Possibilist Credentials" in the *Labour Elector* of August 10th.

⁵ And that's enough.—*Tr.*

⁶ Starting on August 20th, 1889, the London dockers went on strike, drawing the related industries into the movement. They won

They are, as you know, the most miserable of all the *miserable* of the East End, the broken down ones of all trades, the lowest stratum above the Lumpenproletariat. That these poor famished broken down creatures who bodily fight amongst each other every morning for admission to work, should organise for resistance, turn out 40-50,000 strong, draw after them into the strike all and every trade of the East End in any way connected with shipping, hold out above a week, and terrify the wealthy and powerful dock companies—that is a revival I am proud erlebt zu haben.¹ And they have even bourgeois opinion on their side: the merchants, who suffer severely from this interruption of traffic, do not blame the workmen, but the obstinate Dock companies. So that if they hold out another week they are almost sure of victory.

And all this strike is worked and led by *our* people, by Burns and Mann, and the Hyndmanites are nowhere in it.

My dear Laura, I am almost sure you are in want of some cash and I should have sent a cheque with this if I was not myself hard up. My balance at the bank is at the lowest ebb; a dividend of some £33.—due generally about 18th August has not yet been paid and Edward has borrowed £15.—till end of month, as he was quite fast. So I have hardly room to turn round in, but as soon as I receive a supply I shall remit; at latest next Monday, I hope before.

Domela becomes quite incomprehensible. Is he perhaps after all not Jesus Christ but Jan van Leiden?² *Le prophète* de Meyerbeer? Vegetarianism and solitary confinement seem apt to produce queer results in the long run.

5d. an hour, having demanded 6d. ("the dockers' tanner"), as well as the abolition of sub-contract work, a minimum engagement of four hours and 8d. an hour for overtime.

¹ To have lived to see.—*Tr.*

² Hero of Meyerbeer's opera *The Prophet*.

Edward and Tussy will be going to Dundee to report Trades Union Congress and then we shall get the boys¹ here in the meantime.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

348. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

Septbr 1st 1889 Sunday

My dear Laura,

Yesterday evening late I had news from my bank that the long expected dividened of £36.—has been paid in and so I hasten to send you cheque for £30.—, ten of which are the second half of the money I promised Paul for his electioneering expenses and for which he applied in a letter, to hand here last Friday, from Cette.² His prospects in the town seem good but then Cette is but small and the country votes will decide—hope I shall hear more from him in a few days. Let's hope for the best.

Cannot write much being Sunday and our people always in and out; moreover have to write to Tussy about the strike which was in an important crisis yesterday. As the dock directors kept stubborn, our people were led to a very foolish resolution. They had outstripped their means of relief and had to announce that on Saturday no relief could be dealt out to strikers. In order to make this go down—that is the way at least I take it—they declared that if the dock directors had not caved in by Saturday noon, on Monday there would be a general strike³—reckoning chiefly on the supposition that the Gas works for want of coal or of workmen or both would come to a stand and London

¹ That is, Longuet's children.

² Since c. 1930 spelt Sète.

³ Strikers' proclamation of August 30th.

be in darkness—and this threat was to terrify all into submission to the demands of the men.

Now this was playing *va banque*,¹ staking £1,000.—to win, possibly, £10—; it was threatening more than they could carry out; it was creating millions of hungry mouths for no reason but because they had some tens of thousands on hand which they could not feed; it was casting away wilfully all the sympathies of the shopkeepers and even of the great mass of the bourgeoisie who all hated the dock monopolists, but who now would at once turn against the workmen; in fact it was such a declaration of despair and such a desperate game that I wrote to Tussy at once; if this is persisted in, the Dock Co.'s have only to hold out till Wednesday and they will be victorious.

Fortunately they have thought better of it. Not only has the threat been “provisionally” withdrawn but they have even acceded to the demands of the wharfingers (in some respect competitors of the docks), have reduced their demands for an increase of wages, and *this has again been rejected* by the Dock Companies. This I think will secure them the victory. The threat with the general strike will now have a salutary effect, and the generosity of the workmen, both in withdrawing it and in acceding to a compromise, will secure them fresh sympathy and help.

On Friday we shall return to London. Schorl[emmer] has left about a fortnight ago for Germany, where he is now; what he is doing and what his intentions are I don't know.

As to Boulanger his weakness is shown in his electoral proceedings: he takes Paris and leaves to the Monarchists all the provinces. That ought to disabuse his most obstinate adherents if they pretend to be Republicans. Paul wrote to me that a Marseilles Boulangist has owned to him that B[oulanger] has had from the Russian Government 15 millions. That explains the whole dodge. The

¹ Staking one's all.—*Tr.*

Russian dynasty, now allied by Denmark to the Orléans,¹ wishes for an Orléans restauration and *one brought about by Russia*; for then the Orléans would be its slaves. And only with a monarchical France can the Czar have a sincere alliance, such as he requires for a long war with dubious chances. To bring this about, B[oulanger] is put forward as the tool. If he is successful as a stepping stone to monarchy, he will, at the proper time, be bought off or in case of need put out of the way, for the Russian Government will not have in that case the scruples which our Socialists have: "denn die abzumurksen ist uns Wurscht"² is their motto. As to Millerand, I believe you are right. In his paper³ there is, for all its attempted radicalism, a tone of weakness, half-despondency, and above all so much of the milk of human kindness (stale as it is, it has not the stuff in it to turn sour) that compared even with *La Justice* as I have once known that paper, it inspires pity mingled with a drop of contempt. And these be the successors of the old French Republicans, les fils des héros de la rue Saint-Merri!⁴

Ever yours,

F. E.

Love from Nim and all the lot here.

¹ Czar Alexander III's wife was a Danish princess, the daughter of Christian IX. Her brother, Prince Valdemar, had married Princess Marie of Orléans, daughter of the Duc de Chartres, in 1885.

² We don't give a damn about polishing them off.—*Tr.*

³ On August 20th, 1889, Millerand had brought out his paper *La Voix*. Its final number appeared on November 9th, 1889.

⁴ (The sons of the rue St. Merri heroes.—*Tr.*) An allusion to the fight which took place on June 5th and 6th, 1832, following General Lamarque's funeral.

349. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS AT EASTBOURNE*

Tuesday evening [September 3rd 1889]

My dear General,

I thank you for your letter and cheque. I have just written to Paul inquiring whither and what I am to send to him. Though I presume he is at Cette, I have only his Marseille address and therefore cannot send him any funds until I hear from him again.

I have been eagerly reading the *Labour Elector* for details of the Dock Labourers' strike. It is the grandest fact that has occurred in England for the last decades. That continued relief to the strikers had become impossible is disastrous.—The impression made on our bourgeois has been immense: all the big papers discuss it: read the enclosed cutting, with the report of the grave *Débats*.¹ If we only had an organ just now; here would have been an opportunity of stirring up a bit of international solidarity among our French workmen. But the Parisian socialist press is as dead as any nail.

Vaillant has just sent a telegram inquiring: "Lafargue pourrait-il venir aujourd'hui même Vierzon?"² I telegraphed back: "Impossible: Lafargue est à Cette."

The Domelas, or the *Vernets*, as Madame Lugol, their landlady, says, decamped on Sunday. Mme Vernet has been doing Paris with a vengeance: theatres, café-concerts, cirques, Exposition, Tour Eiffel, grands magasins,³ Saint-

¹ From August 27th onwards *Le Journal des Débats* reported the dockers' strike and daily, until September 8th, a well-informed article appeared. The paper stated amongst other things that this movement marked a new era for the British working class, that it sounded the knell of the old type of trade unionism, that the Dock Companies showed small sense in appealing for Belgian workers to replace the dockers out on strike, and this on the morrow of the Paris congress.

² Could Lafargue come to Vierzon this very day?—*Tr.*

³ Circuses, Exhibition, Eiffel Tower, department stores.—*Tr.*

Cloud, Versailles, Enghien, Suresnes etc., etc., and finally des visites chez le coiffeur *pour se faire coiffer à la mode*.¹ For a woman who carries such a weight and who has a daughter taller than herself, I must say that she exhibits a quite morbid love of pleasure. This fondness is coupled with an unexampled indolence. She does not even go to market with the children—and our country market-going is real good fun—never attends to a thing in the house, leaves the girls and her old mother, who doesn't speak French, alone all day and goes gadding about early and late avec ce bon Domela.² Poor Domela! If I didn't know that he has already, Blue-beard-like, buried three wives—and is courting a fourth as actively as a vegetarian lover can—I should say that he was *en carton*.³ Again and again his own daughters come to blows with Mme Vernet's daughters, and Domela looks on and says never a word, but smiles and smiles. He gets up early of a morning to prepare the fat and fair and fascinating and barely forty Mme Vernet's breakfast and then goes forth to pump the water wanted for the vegetarian lunch to follow. No, I don't think Jesus was as meek as that! Their apartments are close to our house and on Sunday they stopped at our place to say good-bye on their way to the station. I had not seen them for a long while, Mme Vernet-Benoiton being invariably *out*. Before saying how do you do they called for a drink of wine and water. I gave them wine and grapes and peaches. When the fair Vernet had finished her peaches she remarked that it was a pity she had eaten them for she would have enjoyed them on her journey. As there were more peaches on the table there was nothing for it but for me to offer her some more. A singularly naïve woman for her size and age!

That Boulangist band is too wonderful! Russian money

¹ Visits to the hairdresser to have her hair done in the latest style.—*Tr.*

² With dear Domela.—*Tr.*

³ Spineless.—*Tr.*

ought to have managed something more presentable. Mermeix—Elie May, Vergoin, Crié, Massart, en voilà un état-major!¹ The fool Déroulède is the only decent fellow amongst them!

The heat has been excessive and if it weren't for the beer in the cellar I don't think I should have survived to kiss you and Nim and Pumps and to subscribe myself

Your ever affectionate,

KAKADOU

350. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 7/9/89

My dear Engels,

The enclosed cutting from a *Cette* journal will show you that my nomination has been rejected by the Socialist congress. The *Cette* Socialists, who represent the advanced party in the Hérault department, had nominated me as their candidate, but at the congress where less advanced Socialists and Radical Socialists, representing the 74 communes in the constituency, foregathered, I was set aside. The *Cette* committee wanted to put me up just the same: I refused, for I should only have created disunity where unity had barely been achieved, and have pushed back into the enemy's camp people whom in the end we shall win over. I returned to Paris and am setting out again for the Cher, where I shall put forward my nomination for the St. Amand constituency. It is Vaillant who has arranged it all: he believes that success is possible despite a wasted week.

He even thinks that three Socialists might get in on the second ballot. In any case the thing is worth trying.

Laura will leave next week for the Cher; she will spend a week or two at Madame Vaillant's. I shall be able to visit her from St.-Amand.

¹ There's a fine General Staff for you!—*Tr.*

As soon as I know what the situation is in the Cher I shall write to you.

Love to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

351. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 9 sept 89

My dear Laura,

Today I have the pleasant task of remitting you cheque for £14.6.8, one-third share of Meissner's Remittance of £43.—the account is to follow. A fourth edition of Vol. 1¹ is impending, maybe before New Year we shall begin printing it.

Tussy was here yesterday with Liebknecht, his son and daughter, Gerhard, Singer, Bernstein, Fischer, etc., etc. She is still over head and ears in the strike. The Lord Mayor's, Cardinal Manning's and Bishop of London's² proposals were ridiculously in favour of the Dock Co.'s and had never a chance of acceptance. This is the busiest time; from Xmas to April nearly no work is done at the Docks, so that the real purport of delaying the advance to January would have been to delay it till April.

You will have Liebk[necht] in Paris in about a week, that is if you are there still. And also his wife and one or two more of the family.

Domela and his Dutchmen seem to stick to their new line.³ Another proof that the little nations can play but a

¹ Of *Capital*.

² On September 7th the Lord Mayor of London invited Cardinal Manning and the Bishop of London, John Lubbock, to mediate between the Dock Companies and the strikers. After a conference with John Burns and Ben Tillett, they recognised the justice of the dockers' claims, but proposed that the increase should not come into operation before January 1st, 1890, to allow the companies time to make the new arrangements.

³ It was after the 1889 Paris congress that Nieuwenhuis began to criticise the Marxists and draw closer to the Possibilists.

secondary part in socialist development, while they expect to be allowed to lead. The Belgians will never give up the idea that their central situation and neutrality give them the manifest destiny of being the central seat of the future International. The Swiss are and always were philistines and petits bourgeois, the Danes had become the same and it remains to be seen whether Trier, Petersen and Co. can move them on out of this their present stagnation. And now the Dutch begin the same way. None of them can forget and will forget that at Paris the Germans and French led the way, and that they were not allowed to occupy the congress with their pettyfogging troubles. Never mind, there is a greater hope of French, Germans and English pulling together, and if the little babies get obstreperous nous en ferons cadeau aux possibilistes.¹

Liebk[necht] now is awfully anti-possibilistic, says they have turned out rogues and traitors and it's impossible to act with them. Whereupon I told him we knew that six months ago and told them—him and his party—so but they knew better. He pocketed that in silence. He is not at all as cocksure of his own infallibility as he used to be—at least if otherwise, he does not show it. Otherwise he is personally the opposite of what he is in correspondence—he is the old jovial hail-follow-well-met Liebknecht.

But I must conclude. I have got the two boys² here who were enchanted at little Marcel's letter. They have been to the Zoo and want to write to their cher papa and I must clear out from the desk.

Success to Paul in the Cher—I fully expected his fate at Cette, the town being too small not to be outvoted by the 74 hamlets making up the circonscription.³

Nim's love.

Affectionately yours,

F. E.

¹ We'll make the Possibilists a present of them.—*Tr.*

² Jean and Edgar Longuet, Marcel's brothers.

³ Constituency.—*Tr.*

352. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

Saint-Amand, 9/9/89

My dear one,

I have arrived on the field of my electoral battle. So far as I can judge, it is not very favourable; the people with whom I have had dealings, though they call themselves Socialists, don't know the first thing about socialism, and these are the great minds in the area. But they are decent people who want at all costs to have a Socialist like Vailant and be rid of their Radical deputy—an incompetent—who has become an opportunist. They are all small artisans, blacksmiths, plasterers, mechanics, clogmakers, carpenters, etc. . . . I find myself transplanted into a pre-1848 town.

This evening, Monday, I am holding a public meeting. We shall see how things go; I shall be as mild as rose-water.

It was touch and go whether I should stand. This morning, talking to Bertrand, the leader, I mentioned the matter of electioneering expenses; he had supposed I was going to meet all of them, but I told him I could not go beyond five hundred francs, that if the committee could not raise the rest, I should be forced to refuse nomination. The expenses, according to his calculations, will amount to 12 or 15 hundred francs. My decision staggered him and, having consulted a wealthy local man, citizen Caro, he told me that the committee would meet the expenses—which I should refund in the event of being elected, to which I agreed. This Bertrand is animated by two feelings: he thinks it is possible to get in and he wants to be revenged on the outgoing deputy, he wants to see him beaten. These parish-pump enmities are fearful; they loosen the peasants' purse-strings.

Try to come on Thursday. I have arranged things so

that I can be in Vierzon on that day, I shall spend the night there and then return to Saint-Amand.

Kiss Marcel. Ever yours,

P. LAFARGUE

353. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Saint-Amand, 12/9/89

My dear Engels,

Since Monday I have been in the heart of my electoral constituency.

The St.-Amand committee is very good; there are four men of great intelligence and energy; they are the ones who pilot and guide me.

They anticipate getting a good many Socialist votes in the town; the majority on the municipal council is Socialist; but there is the countryside. The population is not scattered but herded together in large villages of from 2,000 to 3,000 inhabitants. In practically all of them there is a Socialist element which has some influence and, oddly enough, the peasants, who are almost all small holders, are not afraid of socialism but, on the contrary, have a vague and undefined hope that socialism will bring reforms beneficial to their position; they are Republicans and detest the opportunists who produce Tong-Kings, killing their sons. All in all, it is a good constituency.

I have given four lectures: one at St.-Amand and others in 3 villages. The halls were filled to capacity and in the villages (Bruère, Meillant and Châteauneuf) there were people standing in the street, at the windows and in the open doorways. I criticised the opportunists and the Radicals who had jeopardised the Republic and brought Boulangism into existence; I said a few words on agrarian socialism, on the concentration of property, on the impotence of bourgeois governments to come to their aid, par-

ticularly at this moment when phylloxera is starting to ravage their vineyards; I was continually applauded and my few gainsayers were booed.

If I had six weeks to go about lecturing in all the villages I should be sure of getting in. The peasant, always suspicious, is frightened of a stranger: they want to see and hear me. But in another respect I am fortunate. There are 3 candidates: an old aristocrat, an out-and-out Legitimist, and an opportunist Radical-Socialist, the outgoing deputy. Pajot and I will poll two-thirds of the votes; the Legitimist, the Marquis de Mortemart, will get barely a third. If he reaches the second ballot, one of the Republican candidates will have to stand down. Probably the M[arquis] de Mortemart will give up the fight, to prevent the opportunist getting in, and will make people vote for the Socialist; in which case I should stand a good chance of getting in.

The election will cost about 2,000 francs and I have promised to contribute 500; the committee is undertaking to raise the remaining 1,500 francs.

That, then, is the electioneering situation; if it changes I shall let you know.

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

354. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Paris, 25/9/89

My dear Engels,

The Socialist Party has suffered a defeat¹; it put up very few candidates and they were beaten pretty well every-

¹ In the first ballot in the September 22nd parliamentary elections no one in the Socialist Party was successful. Dormoy, who stood in the Montluçon (2nd) constituency, polled only 2,137 votes; Delcluze, in the Pas-de-Calais, only 2,251.

where. Socialists like Vaillant, Dormoy and Delcluze did not even get the votes of those who had elected them as town councillors: Vaillant, who had been elected by Belleville to the Town Council with over 5,000 votes, polled only 2,995 in the same constituency.

Wherever Boulangism had penetrated the elections were conducted for or against Boulanger, for or against the opportunists; nobody wanted to hear a word about socialism, nor even about radicalism. Where there were no Boulangists, as in the Cher, the parties opposing each other were the Republic, represented by the party in power, and reaction, represented by the Monarchists or the Bonapartists. In the Cher two Legitimists were returned, the Prince d'Arenberg and the Comte de Montsaulin.

In my particular case everything was against me: I was unknown in the constituency, which gave rein to every sort of calumny; in order to split the Republican vote the rumour was spread that I was in the Comte de Mortemart's pay. There was a good deal of pressure from officialdom. My opponent Pajot stated at an open meeting that we should make a holocaust of officials; they noted all the functionaries who did not attend the meetings of the official candidate; no one who had the remotest connection with officialdom dared so much as bow to me. Teachers are very effective election agents in the countryside: they were all enlisted against me.

The only consolation to be derived from these elections is the routing of the Boulangist party²; they were beaten. Boulanger will have to stay in London, as will Rochefort: Russia will grow tired of putting up millions without any return and as soon as the coffers are empty, the Bou-

¹ The outgoing deputy Pajot was re-elected at Saint-Amand in the first ballot with 8,194 votes, against 5,485 for Mortemart and 1,224 for Lafargue.

² Of the 387 deputies elected in the first ballot, there were 170 Moderates, 57 Radicals, 87 Royalists, 51 Bonapartists and 22 Boulangists.

langist agents' enthusiasm will ebb. In a few months' time, when the election fever has abated and economic difficulties arise, socialism will show some signs of life again.

In the Cher I was able to see for myself the depth of the economic crisis. There was a numerous peasant class side by side with immense estates belonging to the old aristocrats. All the farmers own small holdings producing the wine, corn, wool and hemp required for their own consumption: in the Cher the peasant spins his wool and gives it out for weaving. Phylloxera is starting to attack their vineyards; round Issoudun they are completely laid waste. To pay their taxes and make both ends meet these peasant farmers did day-labour for the rich landowners, but for some time past the big landowners have shown a preference for cultivating livestock and forests; farm work has become scarcer, more particularly since the introduction of machinery (mechanical threshers). The peasant has found his labour-wage diminish; he is paid 25 sous a day; he cannot even get enough to keep him busy. He lives in poverty off his own land and is forced to borrow to pay his taxes.

The Exhibition will do untold harm to small provincial trade and manufacture. Everyone wants to go to Paris: for the past year they have been saving up, even mortgaging the future to realise this wish. All these savings will be squandered in Paris instead of being spent in the little provincial shops.

It is going to be a very hard winter in Paris and in the provinces. There will be widespread unemployment in Paris and many bankruptcies and failures. The opportunists will learn that it is easier to defeat Boulanger than to tackle the economic crises which always follow World Exhibitions in France.

Guesde is standing in Marseilles; he has a chance of being elected. It would be a triumph, for he could restore the Socialist Party single-handed. If he does get in we should have a journal in Paris and that is imperative.

So not everything is lost: we have been beaten, but not vanquished; we shall rally. In France one must always be ready for the most extraordinary surprises.

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

PAUL LAFARGUE

355. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Oct. 3, 89

My dear Lafargue,

When all is said and done, the only party which can register increased strength in the elections is ours. We can count—and our information is still far from complete—60,000 votes cast for our candidates, i.e., those from groups represented at our congress, and a further 19,000 which are probably ours (the candidates being neither Possib[ilists] nor “Radical Socialists”) but which we do not venture to claim without further information.

But how does it come about that we are left here without information about the election statistics other than that in the bourgeois newspapers, in which it is impossible for us to make out the position of all these unknown candidates? How can we tell the number of votes cast for us when the papers classify the candidates in only the vaguest manner? Nevertheless, it does seem to me that the German and English Soc[ialists] deserve to be kept abreast of our doings, since you have no journal to report these to them. And you know that all of us here are ready to work for the interests of your party and that we have always done so with all our might; but if the French cannot take the trouble to keep us posted in las cosas de Francia,¹ we are helpless and more than one of our number will weary of

¹ French affairs.—*Tr.*

work so little appreciated by the people for whom it is being done.

So send us, as soon as possible after the poll, a complete list of the Socialist candidates belonging to the groups represented at our congress and of other Soc[ialists], with the number of votes cast for each, both in the 1st and 2nd ballots. We cannot lay ourselves open here to have our data challenged by the Hyndmans & Co., which would happen if we were again reduced to our own sources of information.

At the congress you set up a National Council which took certain decisions. None of you judged it necessary to mention a single word about any of this to us. Had I not come across it by chance in the Madrid *Soc[ialista]*, it would not have been published in either the German *Soz[ial]-Dem[okrat]* or the *Labour Elector*,¹ and that two months after the event.

You must be able to see for yourselves that by going on it this way you play into the hands of the Possib[ilists] and their friends here.

I have written to Bebel asking for some money to be sent for Guesde's election campaign whose importance I perfectly appreciate. I hope they will agree, but one must take into account that the Germans have already given 500 francs for the congress, 1,000 for St.-Étienne, 900 for the congress report (of which the first issue does not do too much honour to those responsible who, I may say, have been at excessive pains to garble the names), 2,500 for the Swiss journal, for which they are in addition reserving over 3,500 francs. That makes 8,400 francs voted for international purposes, and this on the eve of their

¹ The *Labour Elector* of September 28th, 1889, under the heading "Foreign Notes: France" (p. 198/I) reported that the French delegates to the International Congress had met on July 12th and 19th, formed a National Congress and elected a National Council, consisting of Camescasse, Crépin, Dereure, Deville, Guesde, Lafargue and Laîné.

own general election! And on top of these sacrifices Mr. Jaclard gratuitously insults them in *La Voix*,¹ by calling them machines who vote [?] by order! As if it were the Germans' fault that the Paris workmen are Possibilists, or Radicadets or Boulangists, or nothing at all! It appears that, in Mr. Jaclard's eyes, the Germans' ability to accept a majority vote and to act in unison constitutes an insult in itself to the Paris gentlemen, and that when Paris marks time others are not allowed to go forward.

But if my memory serves me, Mr. Jaclard is a Blanquist and must therefore look upon Paris as a holy city: Jerusalem and Rome combined. To return to the elections. If it is true that Guesde and Thivrier² stand a chance, and should they be successful, we should be far better placed in the Chamber than the Poss[ibilists]. Baudin seems to be a certainty, and then there are Cluseret, Boyer, and Basly,³ of whom one or other will be successful, and with four or five of them Guesde could form a group which

¹ Every week there appeared an article by V. Jaclard in *La Voix*, entitled: "Socialist Mondays." In the article of Monday, September 30th, 1889 (pp. 1/V-2/II), Jaclard, commenting on the elections, compared the French socialist movement with the German. He contrasted the heroic upsurge of the French working class with German organisation and wrote: "To claim, on the grounds that we are soldiers of the social revolution and wage war against capitalist exploitation, that nothing can be achieved without a military organisation, conferring officers, sergeants and corporals on democracy and giving orders to vote as in military drill, is an exotic notion and a naïve idea as applied to our country."

² Thivrier, the candidate standing in the Montluçon (1st) constituency, had polled 4,376 votes. He was elected in the second ballot.

³ Baudin, who stood, in the Bourges (2nd) constituency, had polled 5,089 votes in the first ballot and was the runner-up. He was elected in the second ballot with 8,002 votes against his opponent's 7,135. Cluseret, in the Var, came top with 3,255 votes and got in on the second ballot with 5,401 votes. Antide Boyer came top in the first ballot in the Marseilles (2nd) constituency with 5,467 votes and got in on the second ballot with 6,551 votes. Basly, standing in the 2nd constituency of the 13th arrondissement of Paris, polled 3,689 votes.

would not only have an effect on the Chamber and the public, but would also put the Poss[ibilists] in a ticklish position. It was the coexistence of our deputies and the Lassalleans in the Reichstag which, more than any other circumstance, forced the union of the two groups, that is to say, the capitulation of the Lassalleans. In the same way, our group would be the stronger and would in the end force the Dumays and Joffrins into our orbit, so that the Poss[ibilist] leaders would have to choose between capitulation or abdication.

In the meanwhile that is a matter for the future. But what is certain is that Boulangism is *in extremis*. And that seems to me most important. It was the third attack of Bonapartist fever: the first over the real and great Bonaparte; the second over the bogus ditto; the third over a man who is not even bogus Bonaparte, but simply bogus hero, bogus general, bogus everything, and whose main claim to fame was his black horse. And even in the case of this charlatan adventurer,¹ it was a dangerous thing, as you know better than I; but the acute attack, the crisis, is over and we can hope that the French people will have no more of these Caesaristic fevers. It shows that they have a sound constitution, far sturdier than in 1848. But the Chamber was elected to counter Boulangism and it feels the effects; this negative character will be inherent in it and I doubt whether it will be able to last out its natural term. Unless the majority is persuaded of the necessity for a revision of the Constitution, it is bound to be replaced shortly by a new Chamber with a revisionist but anti-Boulangist majority.² You, who must know the elements of the new majority better than I, can tell me if I am wrong. But I believe that had it not been for the Boulangist episode, there would already have been a revisionist Republican majority by now, or at least a strong minority.

¹ "Chevalier d'industrie" is the term used here.—*Tr.*

² That is, demanding a revision of the Constitution.

All this if there is no war. The defeat of the humbug of Portland Place will at least postpone war; but the ever-increasing armaments of all the powers push in the other direction. And if there is war, farewell to the socialist movement for quite a while. We shall be smashed up, disorganised, deprived of freedom of action everywhere. France, bound to Russia's chariot wheel, will be unable to move, will have to renounce all revolutionary claims on pain of seeing her ally pass over to the other camp; the forces more or less equal on both sides and England in a position to turn the scales in favour of whichever side she takes. That applies to the next two or three years; but should war break out later, I wager that the Germans will be beaten hollow, for in the 3-4 years young Wilhelm will have replaced all the good generals by his favourites, idiots and sham geniuses, like those who led the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz and who carry prescriptions for military miracles in their knapsacks. That tribe is swarming in Berlin now and stands every chance of getting on, for young Wilhelm is himself one of their number.

Kiss Laura for Nim and me. I shall write to her shortly.

Ever yours,

F. E.

356. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 7/10/89

My dear Engels,

The Boulangist and Socialist rout¹ just goes on. Guesde² has been defeated in Marseilles, polling but a few hundred

¹ Eventually only 45 candidates professing to support Boulanger were elected, as against 366 Republicans and 165 Right-wing deputies.

² Guesde polled 2,311 votes in the second ballot and his opponent Bouge was elected with 2,880.

votes; Basly,¹ the only Socialist deputy who had done anything for the workers, has been defeated by an unknown Boulangist in one of the poorest districts of Paris.

The choice on September 22nd and October 6th presented itself as between Republicans and anti-Republicans (Boulangists, Monarchists, Bonapartists, etc.); this is the only way to explain the lamentable defeat of socialism, when in fact socialism is gaining ground, as proved by the number of Socialist municipal councillors. Wherever a genuine Socialist, such as Guesde, Vaillant, Dormoy, etc., stood, he was badly defeated; those who, like Ferroul² and Cluseret, got in despite calling themselves Socialists, are Socialist only in name. The only two Socialist gains are those of Baudin in the Cher and Thivrier in the Allier.

Boulangism has rendered tremendous services to the bourgeois Republicans. It has enabled Floquet & Co. to come to power and the opportunists to recover thin purity; they have become the pillars of the Republic.

In your last letter you reproach me for not having given you details about the election of Socialists; but I did not have them. At St.-Amand, obliged to rush from village to village, I did not so much as read the newspapers, which in any case I could not have obtained. Probably we shall have some news now that the fight is over; but I think the less said about the Socialist Party in these elections the better.

Longuet³ suffered an honourable defeat at the hands of his opponent; his minority was impressive.

Guesde's⁴ failure is the more to be deplored in that the Germans contributed so much to ensure his getting in.

¹ Basly was defeated in the second ballot by the Boulangist Paulin Méry with 5,784 votes against 5,806.

² Ferroul was elected in Narbonne (1st constituency) with 4,829 votes against 4,287.

³ Longuet, who stood at Courbevoie, polled 5,259 votes in the second ballot against 6,036 for the Boulangist Brudeau.

⁴ A note in the margin in Engels' hand: "Action soc.!"

Bebel sent 500 francs and I received 610 francs. I had the happy thought to send 100 francs to Baudin's and Thivrier's committees, which will enable me to say that their contributions served some purpose.

The election campaign has drained our resources and I find myself compelled to apply to you.

Regards to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

Baudin, the successful Vierzon candidate, is a very intelligent and very active man. He is a porcelain worker; he lived in England after the Commune; he will be heard of. Thivrier, the former mayor of Commentry, sacked for having given his official support to the Bordeaux congress, is unfortunately not up to his position.

Another success to record for the Socialists is that in Villefranche, Rhône. The weaver Lachize got in with 10,906 votes, defeating his conservative opponent by almost 2,000. Cours, an important commune in the constituency, was in the throes of a strike; if this Lachize is the same as the weavers' delegate to the International Congress, he is an outstanding man.

357. FREDERICK ENGELS TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 8 octb. 89

My dear Laura,

What a melancholy set our French friends are! Because Paul and Guesde have not succeeded, they seem to despair of everything and Paul thinks the less said about these elections, the better! Why, I consider the result of the elections not a *déroute*¹ but a relative success worth registering both in England and Germany. At the first ballots

¹ Rout.—*Tr.*

we had between 60 and 80,000 votes, which is quite enough to show that we are nearly twice as strong as the Possibilists, and while they got but two men (of whom one moribond)¹ elected, we have Baudin, Thivrier, Lachize, and then Cluseret and Ferroul who are bound to cast in their lot with the first three; that makes five to two, and will be sufficient, with proper management, to put the two Possibilists in a very impossible position. But both in England and Germany, the effect will be made, not by the number of seats secured but by the number of *votes given*. So let me ask you to see to it that we get, as soon as possible, say *not later* than Monday morning next, but if possible before, the list of votes cast for our candidates at 1st and 2nd ballots, for the *Labour Elector* and the *S[ocial]-D[emokrat]*. Surely Paul will not push the *Droit à la paresse*² far enough to refuse me that little bit of work.

Of course Guesde's defeat is a misfortune, but then, while I thought it necessary to do everything to prevent it, I never believed much in his success, after the 1,445 votes au premier tour.³ What cannot be helped we must put up with. It is a far greater advantage for us to have got rid of la Boulange. Boulange in France, and the Irish question in England, are the two great obstacles in our way, the two side-issues which prevent the formation of an independent working men's party. Now Boulanger is smashed up, the road is cleared in France. And at the same time, the monarchist attack on the Republic has failed. That means the gradual passage of monarchism from the

¹ The two Possibilists elected were J.-B. Dumay (in Belleville) and Joffrin, who polled fewer votes than Boulanger but was declared elected. Joffrin, afflicted with cancer of the face, died on September 15th, 1890.

² The Right to be Lazy. An allusion to Lafargue's pamphlet of that name, originally published in the weekly *Égalité* in 1880.—*Tr.*

³ In the first ballot.—*Tr.*

grounds of practical, to that of sentimental, politics, the transfer of Monarchists to opportunism, the formation of a new Conservative party out of both, and the struggle of that Conservative-bourgeois-party with the *petits bourgeois* and peasants (Radicals) and the working class; a struggle in which the working-class Socialists will soon get the upper hand of the Radicals, especially after the way they have discredited themselves. I do not expect that everything will pass off in this simple, classical form, but the innate logic of French development is sure to overcome all side-issues and obstacles, especially as both forms of antiquated (not simply bourgeois) reaction—Boulangism and monarchism—have been so well beaten. And all we can ask for is that all these side-issues be removed and that the field be clear for the struggle of the three great sections of French society: bourgeois, *petits bourgeois* et paysans, *ouvriers*.¹ And that, I think, we shall get.

Then Ferry² is got rid of and I think Mother Crawford is right when she considers him an obstacle to even his own party.³ Colonial adventures will no longer bar the way, nor will the formation of the new bourgeois party be trammelled by the necessity of respecting the traditions of Ferryism.

Thus I do not despair at all, on the contrary; I see a distinct advance in the result of the elections, eine sehr bestimmte Klärung der Lage.⁴ Of course you will get Conservative government to begin with; but not what you had, the government of a *distinct set* of the bourgeoisie only. The opportunists were as much a mere section of the French Bourgeoisie as were the *satisfaits* of Louis Philippe and Guizot: these were the haute finance,⁵ the others

¹ And peasants and workers.—*Tr.*

² Jules Ferry, who stood in the Vosges, was defeated.

³ The *Daily News*, October 8th, 1889 (p. 5/VI): "The French Elections. Composition of the new Chamber."

⁴ A very definite clarification of the situation.—*Tr.*

⁵ High finance.—*Tr.*

are the set which strives to become the haute finance. Now, for the first time, you will get a real government of the *entire* bourgeoisie. In 1849/51, the rue de Poitiers under Thiers, too, formed a government of the whole bourgeois class,¹ but that was by the truce between two opposing monarchical factions, and by its very nature *passager*.² Now you will get one based upon the despair to upset the republic, upon its recognition as an unavoidable *pis-aller*,³ and therefore a bourgeois government which has the stuff to last until its final smash-up.

It was the splitting-up of the French bourgeoisie into so many sections, fractions and factions which has so often deceived the people. You upset one section, say the haute finance, and thought you had upset the whole bourgeoisie; but you merely brought into power another section. There are 1) the legitimist or generally monarchist landed proprietors, 2) the *old* haute finance of Louis Philippe's time, 3) the second set of haute finance of the Second Empire, 4) the opportunists who to a great extent have still their fortunes to make, 5) industrial and commercial bourgeoisie chiefly of the provinces who are generally hangers-on, practically, to whatever section happens to be in power, being themselves scattered and without this common centre. Now these all will now have to unite as "Moderates" and "Conservatives," will have to drop their old shibboleths and party-cries which divided them, and for the first time act as a bourgeoisie *une et indivisible*. And this concentration bourgeoisie will be the real meaning of all the concentrations *républicaines* et autres so much talked about of late, and it will be a great progress, leading gradually to a scattering of Radicals and a real concentration of Socialists.

Ouf! now that's enough on this blessed subject. Tonight I expect Longuet here and shall call wisdom from his lips.

¹ See Marx's analysis in *Class Struggles in France* on this point.

² Short-lived.—*Tr.*

³ Makeshift.—*Tr.*

I am sorry he is beaten as it was a very important personal issue with him.

Of Sam Moore no news since he passed Sierra Leone. Tussy has tried to see his brother but cannot find him at home. So we don't know whether his family have heard of him.

Nim has raved all the Summer about your garden and the vegetables and fruit therein; now I have her special orders to say that she anxiously awaits what she calls her share of the pears, grapes and other good things now about due.

Will you give Paul the enclosed cheque for £20.—

Ever your old

F. ENGELS

358. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 11/10/89

My dear Engels,

It is impossible to get the exact figures for the elections: not a single Paris newspaper gives them in full, let alone accurately. I thought that the *Journal officiel* would have published them; I went to the office and there learnt that the *Officiel* never publishes figures, confining itself to giving the names of the successful and defeated candidates. I have had to draw up a list from the *Petit Journal*, one of the best-informed papers.

In certain constituencies two Socialist candidates stood: in the Allier (Dormoy and Déchaud), in Marseilles (Guesde and Protot). In the Gironde one of our people, Jourde, a Marxist Socialist, called himself a Boulangist to get himself elected. The Bordeaux groups raised no objection. Jourde was elected.¹

¹ In the Bordeaux (3rd) constituency, Jourde, who ran on the Boulangist ticket, was elected in the second ballot with 7,116 votes against F. Faure's 6,445.

London 29 Octbr. 87

Myrica laevis

A sublime code of thanks I have to send
unto you for the great batch of papers sent
by Edward to me, in great part, & wholly
to the point. They were approved, & what was left
will be settled by next Monday.

The structure of his legend was also explained by Edmund that it was little known the name the anti-
narcotizing in English brain. Perhaps whenever
you are ready to come, we shall be ready to receive you.

I cannot have represented myself in the party about the impeding rule of the former Congregationalists as a class. I cannot but coincide in the sentiment of the Organized Congregationalists with persons generally - into the ranks of the Protestant Republicans, & forsook, as in 1857, when ^{the present Congress} ~~the Congress~~ they but joined over to Democrats, that of their leaders would shake to their old-fashioned party. Still it is true that with men a strengthening of the Protestant Republicans (though not necessarily of the Unitarian or the Unitarian Organ of Unitarianism) but at the same time a collision, unforseen, of the power of the old way: to refuse an organ. Now, surely then, the radicals can come to the fore as the Protestants, the Unitarians, and faithful opponents, & then you have the real conditions of the rule of the Unitarian Congregationalists, of Protestantism, in full flower: it is perfect struggle for the organ.

Facsimile of the beginning of the letter No. 360 from Frederick Engels to Laura Lafargue

The climate is very fine, 23° C in the morning,
26-29° at 2 in the afternoon & in July & August!
& is all appearance healthy. The rivers are
in flood, but also, between Orleans & Le Mans
just on the edge, there seems to be no regular
mail, the postmaster of Orleans is the change
of the River to with the date filled in in ink?

Adieu from Paris
Ever yours
F.E.

Facsimile of the end of the letter No. 359 from Frederick Engels
to Laura Lafargue

You are right, these elections have killed not only Boulangism, but the groups in the Chamber; I think a Republican majority will be formed with a few independent and Socialist dissidents, but there will no longer be a Left Centre, Extreme Left or other Lefts; all the Republicans were Left-wing: Newspapers of various shades of opinion call for the merging of all those factions whose existence was never justified by anything but the ambition of their leaders. This time Clemenceau will be allowed to go into an opportunist government, together with Constans and Rouvier.

Poor General! If he has not saved some money he will shortly be reduced to Belisarius' condition and go begging in the streets. The general stampede has begun; soon no one will remain to him except Déroulède and Laisant, the two crackpot members of the party.

Regards to everyone,

PAUL LAFARGUE

P.S. I have been unable to trace the number of votes cast for Pédron and Borque in the Marne, or for Viroleil in the Drôme.

I have included all Socialists without distinction of group; with the exception of Possibilists whose election campaign was financed by government money. They had only one candidate in the provinces, J.-B. Clément in the Ardennes. He polled 4,477 votes.

359. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 17 Octbr 89

My dear Laura,

Many thanks from Nim and myself for the splendid box of fruit which arrived in capital condition and into which we have already eaten a considerable hole. I stick to my

American habit of eating fruit every morning before breakfast and so you may imagine that the rate of disappearance of the produce of your garden is anything but slow. Tussy and Pumps, too, will claim their shares—in fact they are already set apart.

Since the Dock Strike Tussy has become quite an East Ender, organising Trades Unions and supporting strikes—last Sunday we did not see her at all, as she had to speechify both morning and night. These new Trades Unions of unskilled men and women are totally different from the old organisations of the working-class aristocracy and cannot fall into the same conservative ways; they are too poor, too shaky and too much composed of unstable elements, for anyone of these unskilled people may change his trade any day. And they are organised under quite different circumstances—all the leading men and women are Socialists, and socialist agitators too. In them I see the *real* beginning of the movement here.

The Federation¹ is for the moment played out—the violent attacks of *Justice* on Champion, Burns, etc., have suddenly ceased; there is instead a sort of hidden, ver-schämtes² sighing for some sort of universal brotherhood—the last report of the French elections³ for instance gives *our* results too, and without any nasty allusions or remarks; it looks as if the rank and file had become rebellious. If our lot here—I mean Champion especially—don't make mistakes, they will soon have it all their own way. But I confess I cannot get myself to have full confidence in that man—he is too dodgy. He used to go to Church congresses and preach socialism there, and now he has formed a committee for organising the East End women with a lot of middle class philanthropists who held a meeting with the Bishop of Bedford in the chair—and of course

¹ That is, the Social Democratic Federation.

² Sheepish.—*Tr.*

³ *Justice* of October 12th, 1889, published an unsigned article entitled: "Socialists and the French Elections" (p. 3/III-IV).

of this business they took good care to exclude Tussy! Now I don't like that, and if they go on that way I shall soon leave them alone. Burns is too fond of popularity to be able to resist such things and goes in with Champion—if I once see him alone, I shall speak to him.

Longuet told us you had said you were coming over at Christmas. We shall be very glad to see you here and have everything comfortable for you, unless you prefer coming in the better season, as you said to Nim you would do next time. But then, what *is* the better season here? After the exceptionally fine summer we had (and are having, for it is a regular rheinischer Altweibersommer¹ now) perhaps we are in for a whole year's rain!

Sam Moore has arrived at Asaba and has sentenced, as soon as he put his foot ashore, in Africa, a Nigger captain of a steamer to 9 months' hard labour for attempted rape. He says the climate is very fine, 23°C in the morning, 26-29° at 3 in the afternoon (in July and August!) and to all appearance healthy. Fuller news we are promised, but alas, between Akassa and Asaba (both on the Niger) there seems to be no regular mail, and the postmark of Akassa is the stamp of the Niger Co. with the date filled in in ink!

Love from Nim.

Ever yours,

F. E.

360. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 29 Octbr 89

My dear Laura,

A solemn vote of thanks I have to transmit to you for the fresh batch of pears sent by Edward and consumed, in great part, last Sunday with the port wine. They were

¹ Rhineland Indian summer.—*Tr.*

splendid, and what was left will be mellow by next Sunday.

The Christmas trip legend was also explained by Edward—that it was little Marcel who caused the misunderstanding in Longuet's brain. Anyhow, whenever you are ready to come, we shall be ready to receive you.

I must have expressed myself rather badly about the impending rule of the French bourgeoisie as a class. I meant that *zunächst*¹ the rank and file of the Royalists and Bonapartists will pass over—gradually—into the ranks of the Moderate Republicans, and forsake, as in 1851, when the mass of the Republicans and Royalists passed over to Bonaparte, such of their leaders as will stick to their old-fashioned party-shibboleths. That will mean a strengthening of the Moderate Republicans (though not necessarily of the Ferryist or the Léon Sayist cliques of speculators) but at the same time a cessation, once for all, of the power of the old cry: *la république en danger*. Then, and only then, the Radicals can come to the fore as "Her Majesty's, the Republic's, most faithful *opposition*," and then you have the real conditions of the rule of the whole bourgeois class, of parliamentarism in full blossom: two parties struggling for the majority and taking in turns the parts of Ins and Outs, of government and opposition. Here, in England, you have the rule of the whole bourgeois class; but that does not mean that Conservatives and Radicals coalesce; on the contrary, they relieve each other. If things were to take their slow, classical course, then the rise of the Proletarian party *would* no doubt finally force them to coalesce against this new and unparliamentary opposition. But that is not likely to come off; there will be violent accelerations of the development.

The progress consists, to my mind, in the proof that the fight against the Republic has become hopeless; in the consequent gradual dying out of all anti-Republican par-

¹ To begin with.—*Tr.*

ties, which means the participation of all sections of the bourgeoisie in the government—as Ins, or as Outs; the Ins to be, for the present, the reinforced Moderates, and the Outs the Radicals. One election cannot do everything at once; let us be satisfied that this one has cleared the ground.

About the defeat of the Socialists we agree perfectly. Only that I expected it—and a far worse one—and that our Paris friends have expected miracles which of course did not come off. I am perfectly satisfied with the result—under the circumstances. That we got six or seven men in *against either the Cadettists or the Boulangists*, and something like 120,000 votes, is more than I expected.

As to the policy with regard to the fellows that came in under Boulanger's flag, I am rather of the opinion of Vaillant and Guesde than of Paul. If you admit the Boulangists, you must admit the Cadettists too—Joffrin and Dumay. But moreover, after the infamous way in which the Boulangeo-Blanquists behaved to Vaillant in his circonscription¹ and brought him to fall, we ought, I believe, not to have anything to do with them. Moreover, we have no interest to reconstitute the dissolving Blanquist faction *as such*. We know what peculiarly "pure" elements it always contained. Granger is an imbecile chauvin, to have got rid of whom appears to me a blessing. As to Jourde (who seems to me the one after whom Paul really longs), perhaps he can be made to slip in later on, if he vaut la peine, ce que j'ignore,² and if he breaks off point-blank with the Boulangists. But there is no mistake, Paul's whilom Boulangist sympathies have done us an immense deal of harm and are now being used by Liebknecht who throws them into my face.

As it is, the new Socialist faction will be hard to manage, and the less its numbers are swelled by doubtful (still

¹ Constituency.—*Tr.*

² Is worth it, which I know not.—*Tr.*

more doubtful) elements, the better it will be. Especially as Guesde is not elected. If the thing is found to work well, then fresh additions of the above sort might be less harmful and could be taken into consideration; and then, the novices ought to do public penance, unless the French Party is to stand out as corrupt before the Germans, Swiss, Dutch and even Belgians. What a triumph would it be for the Possibilists if they could point to declared Boulangists in our ranks! And how difficult then for me to make the Germans understand the doings of our French Party!

Now another subject. Percy is completely smashed up. In order to avoid getting execution into their house, they have locked it up and are all here. There are negotiations going on with his father and brothers, to avoid the open bankruptcy, but how that may end nobody can tell; and unless it comes to something, he will have to declare himself bankrupt before the week is out. Old Rosher is half idiotic, has muddled his affairs irretrievably, has handed his business over to the two younger boys, and says he is himself without cash or credit (the latter he *has* managed to ruin almost deliberately). I had an interview with his mother the other day—it's a precious mess altogether. However it may end it's sure to cost me a lot of money.

Kautsky is not here yet.

Great lamentations by all here when they heard that Diane was lost or stolen.

Love from Nim and yours affectionately,

F. ENGELS

361. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 4/11/89

My dear Engels,

Liebkecht is very wrong to accuse us of being Boulangists or of having "flirted paradoxically with Boulan-

gism," as he wrote to Deville. We did not think the dirty war of the Possibilists and the newspapers in the government's pay ought to be waged against the general. We were of this view, not because we were Boulangists, but because we did not want to be confused with the Cadettists, and because this war of insults and idiotic attacks served only to inflate Boulanger's astonishing popularity. If Boulanger had not fled, or if he had returned to France before the elections, he would be master of the situation to-day; it is he who has done for himself; he has military courage, but the determination and energy of a Catilina, or even of a Napoleon III he utterly lacks; that, and not the abuse of the anti-Boulangists, is what ditched him.

Boulanger could still play a dangerous role if he were not fifty years old and a vulgar sensualist: he is finished despite the desperate agitation of the faithful Boulangists. And I think, as does Guesde, that one must let Boulangism die a natural death without attempting to put new life into it by attacking those who used his name for electioneering purposes. The attacks on Boulé succeeded only in opening the columns of the *Intransigeant*¹ to him and getting him nominated as a municipal candidate in the 17th arrondissement for the next elections in May 1890. You are wrong in thinking that I set any store by Jourde; he is a former officer, wounded in the Franco-Prussian War, decent but extremely conceited and steeped in army prejudices; he has a very imperfect understanding of socialist theories.

Here, as a matter of fact, is the plan which Vaillant, Guesde, Deville and I have agreed upon with common

¹ *Le Parti ouvrier* of October 26th published an article by J. Vidal (p. 1/V-VI), entitled: "Undoing of a Traitor," which reported that Boulé, who had run in the elections in the Haute-Marne on the Boulangist ticket, had been dismissed from his post as secretary to the Federation of Independent Trades Unions. Ernest Roche took up his defence in *L'Intransigeant* on October 29th (p. 2/III-IV). Boulé also wrote a series of articles on the cut-glass workers' strike in *Le Bourget* which appeared in the issues of November 2nd, 3rd and 5th.

consent. The Socialist deputies, elected without having compromised with the Ferryists and Boulangists, should form a group, of which Guesde will probably be the paid secretary. This group should issue a statement, whose terms we have decided upon, in which it should assert its independent and socialist character and announce as its immediate task the winning of parliament for the resolutions of the 1889 International Congress. We already have the support of Ferroul, Cluseret, Thivrier, Lachize and Baudin; others will join in—Vaillant is going to try and set up a similar group on the Town Council with Longuet, Daumas, Humbert, Chauvières, etc., which will combine with the parliamentary group, and the two groups together will combine with Socialists recruited outside the elected bodies. In this way the Socialist Party will have some sort of centralised representation.

Our party makes progress more or less everywhere. In the Nord department the workers have managed to collect some twelve thousand francs to start a printing-press, which will be exceedingly useful to us. We have four Socialist papers in the provinces which seem to be going well¹; what we lack is a central organ, perhaps we shall get one.

We were very grieved to learn of the misfortunes which have overtaken Percy, you will have a great deal of worry just now when you need all your peace of mind to finish the publication of Marx's works.

I have sent you an article by De Paepe on Chernyshevsky,² is it true or is it a Belgian fantasy?

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ Among these papers were no doubt included the Lille *Cri du travailleur*, the Rouen *Salariat* and the Lyons *Action sociale*.

² Chernyshevsky had died at Saratov of a cerebral haemorrhage on October 29th.

My dear General,

Will you look up your Béranger and see if I have translated *Le Sénateur*¹ properly, or rather, improperly? Love to you all!

YOUR LAURA²

362. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Thursday [November 14th 1889]

My dear General,

You are aware that Guesde has been appointed secretary to the Socialist group that seven deputies, more or less with us, have just constituted in the Chambers. Lachize, Thivrier and Baudin form a trio that our Party more particularly place their confidence in, the other elements being even less capable and certainly less sound. Thivrier we saw last week at a meeting of the Agglomeration on the evening of his reception: he makes a very good impression personally, being simple and unassuming; he is, for the present, a very indifferent speaker and not "fort"³ in any way, but if he is able and willing to "follow his leader," that is as much as one has a right to expect: Baudin is an excellent talker, but, of course, rather ignorant. Lachize we don't know.

Our imbecile bourgeois journalists have been copy-spinning, for these last three weeks, with the help of Thivrier's blouse. Daily the burning question is mooted as to whether Thivrier's blouse is of a light or dark blue, whether it is long or short, tight-fitting or full, whether worn under or over a coat and whether it is to be sported at all hours and on all occasions, at concerts, theatres,

¹ *Le Sénateur*, a poem by Béranger written in 1813.

² In English.—*Tr.*

³ Clever.—*Tr.*

cafés, evening-parties? And, in for a penny in for a pound, once in for the blouse, our professional "hommes d'esprit"¹—the greatest idiots out—thought they might as well go in for the rest and undress Thivrier completely: they proceeded to examine his boots and socks, necktie and shirt, all of which have been pronounced satisfactory, the shirt being described as "irréprochable."

This morning Paul got a letter from Marseille stating that according to tidings sent by the men of Cette "Sénégas s'est vendu à la réaction aux élections législatives,"² and they add: "Si ce renégat s'était retiré de la lutte, aujourd'hui Paul Lafargue serait le député de la 2^e circonscription de Montpellier."³ If you remember, two Socialists and a Radical had been proposed as candidates for Cette. The Radical retired in favour of the Socialist candidate Sénégas, whereupon Paul, to the very great disappointment of a goodly number of electors, desisted in favour of Sénégas also. Anyway Cette and Marseille are good for two Socialist candidatures at future elections.

If somewhat crest-fallen on the morrow of the elections, our friends have once again plucked up a fine spirit and are full of fight. That's the best of our French "neveux,"⁴ they are never seedy for long, and if they're in the dumps overnight, they are pretty sure to be in the clouds the following morning.

Mme Zetkine and her boys were here yesterday: she gave me news of Tussy whose agitation she is very enthusiastic about, especially her getting on tables and chairs to harangue the Silvertown women strikers.⁵ It may interest

¹ Wits.—*Tr.*

² Sénégas sold himself to reaction in the parliamentary elections.—*Tr.*

³ If this renegade had withdrawn from the fight, Paul Lafargue would have been the deputy for the Montluçon second constituency now.—*Tr.*

⁴ Chaps.—*Tr.*

⁵ The workers, both male and female, of the Silver rubber works in Silvertown had been on strike since the end of September. *L'In-*

Tussy and Edward to know that Madame Jankowska and Mendelsohn have just been *spliced*. Legally, that is; the more important and thoroughgoing part of the business had been gone through, it appears, a long while ago. That's the latest gossip in the Quartier Latin, but it finds its way to the innocent Le Perreux whose inhabitants are as ignorant as the lilies of the field, albeit they toil and spin like the rustics that they are.

Paul wonders if Kautsky is in London and if he is likely to hear from him one of these days.

Good-bye to you, my dearest General, and just give my love all round to all of our people. How is Nimmy? Edward told us that she often suffers from colds and bronchitis and a bit of asthma. Give her a good kiss for me and tell her she must positively come over here early in the year and superintend the sowing and gardening.

Your affectionate,

KAKADOU

363. FREDERICK ENGELS TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Nov. 16th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Let's say no more about your leanings, happily past, towards Boulangism. Why re-read, at this late date, your letters of yester-year? In any case the gallant general has not merely ruined himself by his failure to remain on the battlefield, but, what was far worse, by his royalist and Bonapartist alliances; he realises it now and would like to recover his republican virginity, but it is like the fair Eugénie.

transigeant published a letter from Edward Aveling about the strike on October 31st, which explained its importance to the workers in France, the firm of Silver having opened a branch at Persan-Beaumont.

*Ce soir s'il (Bonaparte on his wedding night)
trouve un pucelage,
C'est que la belle en avait deux.*¹

No one doubts that the discontent underlying Boulangism is justified, but it is precisely the *form* this discontent has taken which proves that the Paris workmen, or most of them, are no more conscious of their position than they were in 1848 or '51. Then, too, discontent was justified; the form it took—Bonapartism—cost us 18 years of Empire, and what an Empire! And whereas at that time a considerable section of the Paris workmen fought against it, in 1889 they prefer to celebrate the centenary of 1789 by grovelling at the feet of a good-for-nothing. This being so, you can hardly expect other people to pay the Parisians the kind of homage so readily accorded to their forefathers.

I am greatly relieved that the Boulangists—spurious or real—have been turned away from the Party as well as the Possibilists. If one had accepted them such as they are, I should not have known what to say to the English, the Danes, the Germans, etc. For twenty years past we have been preaching the formation of a party separate from and opposed to all bourgeois parties, and the adherence of people elected under Boulanger's flag, a flag which sheltered monarchists in the same elections, and was repudiated by them—that would have meant destroying our French Party in the eyes of the other national parties. And how the Hyndmans and Smiths would have exulted!

You say that the attacks on Boulé merely succeeded in opening the *Intransigeant* to him and getting him nominated as a municipal candidate—that is to say, in making him publicly declare himself a Boulangist, fall into step with that gang and receive the reward for his treachery. Thank you!

¹ *Tonight, should he find there's a maidenhead,
It must be that the fair one had two.—Tr.*

Your plan is good if it is workable, that is to say, if the provinces accept the leadership of this committee.

You are always talking about your provincial newspapers but you send me almost none of them. I did have a few from Bonnier, now I hardly ever see them. Anything you send me or have sent will bear fruit, for I use it to keep Bebel posted, and Bebel is ten times more important than Liebk[necht]; furthermore, if I know what is afoot I can influence Ede and the *S[ozial]-D[emokrat]*. All your papers would do well to arrange an exchange with the *S[ozial]-D[emokrat]* and the *Labour Elector*, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C. In any other country such things are arranged as a matter of course, but the gentlemen of France have to be implored—and sometimes implored in vain—to put us in a position to work in their interest. If this way of behaving goes beyond a certain limit, we for our part might grow weary of it. Is it really impossible to have a tiny bit of method and organisation?

But enough! I defend you so much and with such zeal to others that to redress the balance I must needs rate you soundly. At the moment I have no means of checking the *did-you-knows* of Mr. de Paepe; the Vienna *Arbeiterzeitung* has had confirmation of his death¹ from Petersburg; considering the Russian Government's lies and the fables about Russian revolutionists, anything may be true or false.

Now for Laura. Ever yours, F. E.

364. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 16 Novbr 1889

My dear Laura,

After I finished the enclosed to Paul, I went in the kitchen and had some Pilsener with Nim and Pumps, partly for

¹ Chernyshevsky's.

the sake of the Pilsener and partly because I am ordered to write with interruptions only. Having been, before, to the bank to pay in Sonnenschein's cheque, because I cannot afford to run the risk of keeping it, it will not astonish you to learn that it is now close upon four p.m. and as I dare not write by the gas light you see I am rather pinched for time.

Anyhow you have done a marvellous thing in the *Senator*,¹ about the most difficult thing on earth to be put into English. Not only that you have done it with all the proper impropriety, but even with a near approach to the lightness of the original. And that while both subject and metre are rebellious to translation, the senator of Empire No. 1 being an unknown quantity over here. If you were a boy I should say: Molodetz, but I am not versed enough in Russian to know whether that epithet (equal about to the English: you're a brick!) can be feminized into: Molodtza!

The reflex of Thivrier's blouse has fallen upon, and lighted up for a moment, even the English press. If he tears a hole into it, the whole respectability of Great Britain will cry out about the bad manners of these Frenchmen. Barring old Mother Crawford who is Irish and with all her crotchets immensely superior to the other lot because she *does* move on—the rest of the British journalists in Paris beat your French ditto into fits as far as imbecility goes.

The wise men of Cette appear to be quite up to our Krähwinkler and Schildbürger.² If Sénagas had retired, Paul would be deputy. If they had not put up Sénagas—they inside or outside the town—Sénagas (who seems to be a worthy descendant of Seneca) would never have been in a position not to retire.


Glad to learn that the barometer is rising again with our French friends—it's sure to rise more than it ought,

¹ See Paul Lafargue's letter to Engels of November 4, 1889.

² Equivalent to "wise men of Gotham."—*Tr.*

but that we are used to and cannot be avoided; how else could the proper average be restored.

Kautsky is in London and has been in possession of Paul's letter, etc., for about a fortnight; I will tell him tomorrow that Paul expects news from him.

Your pears are gradually being eaten up, but we keep them religiously until at their best, and then I get most of them for my breakfast. Nim has just discovered that the long  thus shaped ones are sold here 5d a piece to-day. Nim has what my poor wife called "a gam-my leg": rheumatism (articular) wandering from knee to hip and back. That of course is a most variable quantity though not, unfortunately, une quantité négligeable. The asthma will become less whenever the weather allows me to take her out a bit to Hampstead. Gumpert told her hill-climbing would mend it and so it does.

Pumps and Co. are still here—if a settlement is come to to-day, they will go back to Kilburn on Monday. The family of Percy has been forced to fork out a bit, but the job will cost me some 60 pounds at least, and then fully half their keep. Percy works for his brother Charlie who has some inventions that seem just now to suit the British philistines, but the pay is but trifling, and the whole thing uncertain.

The 4th edition 1 vol. is in the press and I am back to my III vol.¹ No easy job, but "mun be done" as they say in Lancashire.

Tussy is hard at work—tomorrow she won't be here at all, having two speeches afternoon and evening, so she won't get the cheque before Monday. Yours is enclosed, also the account—your share unfortunately but £1.17.6., but then in francs it looks much bigger.

¹ This refers to Vols. I and III of *Capital*.

We have got hold of another Mother Schack in Miss Harkness. But this time we have nailed her, and she will find out whom she has to deal with.

Ever yours,

F. E.

365. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 17/11/89

My dear Engels,

I am sorry to come pestering you just when you have so many worries and troubles over Percy's affairs, but I am compelled to do so, for we have exhausted our means; I had to pay the landlord, whose quarter's rent fell due on October 15th.

I try to manage; but there are no openings for my articles. I had thought that Madame Adam's *Revue* would attract attention to me and bring in some work; a few papers notice my articles, and occasionally praise them, but that is as far as it goes: the *Revue* is so full up that I can write for it at best twice a year. Mme Adam has had an article in hand for the past five months and it will not appear until December.¹ I had no luck with Dr. Braun; I had hoped to be able to get some articles into his *Annales*. I wrote a study on *Criminality and Its Relation to Economic Phenomena* for him; he accepted it with pleasure, paid me compliments on it, kept it for six months and in the end sent it back to me. I know not what went wrong. Kautsky has the article: it will appear in *Neue Zeit*.²

Guesde is actively working to start a paper. If the Socialist group in the Chamber, now definitely set up, makes a contribution, it will be easy for us to raise the necessary

¹ This refers to *La Nouvelle Revue*. The article in question did not appear in the issue mentioned.

² This article appeared in *Neue Zeit* in January (pp. 11-23), February (pp. 56-66) and March (pp. 106-16), 1890.

funds for bringing out such a daily paper, which would help in so many ways, both of a general and a personal nature. Daumas has promised 25,000 francs; he has undertaken to raise 100,000, which he hopes to get from his Buenos Aires associates who are coming to Paris shortly. If we had these 125,000 francs there would be no difficulty in getting a further hundred thousand francs: in that case we should have the requisite money to ensure the running of a big newspaper.

Elections don't suit me: I am haughtily turned down and come away with very unpleasant things. During the 1885 elections I ate so much hare, pheasant and other game that I returned from the Allier with eczema of the prostate. This year I think I brought back from Marseilles a tapeworm which I have just expelled with 20 grammes of kousso—what disgusting stuff! Cluseret, who is a great trencherman (in his youth he ate 24 pounds of meat, bread, vegetables, etc., in one sitting—for a wager), claims that nothing is more agreeable and convenient than a tapeworm: it takes over the digestion of what you ingurgitate over and above your requirements.

The Socialist group will make a start by tabling a bill for the benefit of the miners and fresh mine-working regulations. At the present moment there are strikes in the North-East pits.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you

P. LAFARGUE

We have this very moment received your two letters and the Sonnenschein cheque.

I am sending you the provincial Socialist papers; I shall write and tell them to arrange for an exchange with the English and German papers. Not understanding foreign languages, the French do not appreciate the charm of these exchanges.

366. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Nov. 18th, 89

My dear Lafargue,

Enclosed cheque for £20.

The fact that the staff of your newspaper don't understand foreign languages should be a reason for them to send out *their* papers without the others, the foreigners, having to send them what is, to the French, incomprehensible gibberish. But I fail to see that it is a reason for the French not to send their journals to people who can understand them and who have the utmost willingness to use them precisely in order to further the interests of the French Party.

The Pumps are still here, it is hoped that things will be settled to-day.

Yesterday evening I read Laura's translation of *Le Sénateur* to our friends. Everyone was delighted. That ought to be printed, Aveling said. But where? I asked, In the *Pall Mall Gazette*? Aveling's face fell to well-nigh immeasurable vertical dimensions.

If Laura set herself to translate some of Heine's things—the next time she comes here she could look up at the Brit[ish] Mus[eum] what translations have appeared and choose others—something could be done here perhaps. Heine is in fashion at the moment—and the translations are so British!

Kiss Laura for Nim and me. Nim is fairly well.

Ever yours,

F. E.

367. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

[End of November 1889]

My dear General,

I did not write to you at once to thank you for your letters and cheques—for which we thank you very sincerely—because I wanted to know what would come of our Punch-Conférence given in honour of our unfledged deputies, so that if anything interesting had turned up I might inform you of it. Well, our *Evening* went off well. The Marxists and Vaillant-Blanquists affirmed their union and the men and women present loudly cheered every allusion to their *German frères* and to the International Congress. It by no means follows that the French—for all their acclaiming of internationalism and the necessity of national and international organisation—are one whit the better organised at home, or better able to succour their struggling “coreligionnaires” abroad.—Alas, organisation is not improvised “du jour au lendemain.”¹ I say this in reference to what goes on at Silvertown, but every day the wretched anarchism which prevails here is brought home to us. It is something even to be able to say that Frenchmen no longer resent an appeal to organise.

I am very happy to learn that you are pleased with *The Senator*. I am translating some of *Pottier's* songs and I wish you were here to help me for they are devilish tough work.—Pottier's songs are the best, indeed the *only* revolutionary songs that our own French generation can boast of. I promised Pottier on his death-bed to try and get his poetry known and read abroad. Since I left Paris I have had more time to attend to work of that kind and I have sent a few sonnets and songs to Morris who has published them in the *Commonweal*² and appears to think them good.

¹ Overnight.—Tr.

² These songs appeared in *Commonweal* on April 13th, July 27th, September 21st, October 17th, December 28th, 1889, and April 12th, 1890.

"La situation est au brouillard,"¹ say the bulletins météorologiques du jour,² but there's a silver lining to many a cloud. Daumas is a rich man, you know, and bitten with a mania to be a "political somebody." There is a hope which looks like a certainty that he will turn some of his superfluous copper into the gold of a "journal socialiste, quotidien, grand format, à un sou."³ All this is "in the air" as they say here, but most things are in the air before they get "a local habitation and a name."

I am busy, my dear General, in the kitchen, and must ask you to put up with this slipshod style of writing.

Your affectionate,

KAKADOU

Love to Father Nim.

368. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Le Perreux, 13/12/89

My dear General,

I don't know how you and Nimmy fare at the foot of the hill where the primroses ought to grow,⁴ but we, Perreuxiens, have fallen on evil days. Snow and rain and fogs and wind and slush and mud—especially mud—have been dealt out to us with that liberality which distinguishes heaven in December. Bad Russia is sending us the influenza and Time and the hours are bringing round the season of the étrennes.⁵ It's quite lively! The sky is of the colour of Paul's poll and promises further contributions of snow

¹ Outlook foggy.—*Tr.*

² Meteorological reports for the day.—*Tr.*

³ Socialist daily of a large format costing one sou.—*Tr.*

⁴ An allusion to Engels' house in Regent's Park Road at the foot of Primrose Hill.—*Tr.*

⁵ New Year gifts.—*Tr.*

and rain.—Yesterday a letter came from Danielson inviting Paul to scribble away for *The Northern Review*.¹ And, oh lord, he does scribble! You should hear the obstreperous scratching of his pen that accompanies the discreeter humming of my own!

You are aware that Joffrin has got into Parliament.² You know that our deputies travel gratis and Joffrin has a seat in an express train that will soon carry him over to the majority. It appears that he is grown an awful sight and that he literally stinks in the nostrils of his fellow M.P.'s! But that's an unsavoury subject.

Last week Duc Quercy and his wife spent an evening with us; he gave us the benefit of his experience in animal magnetism and hypnotised my servant-girl, Juliet. She's an excellent subject, an ex-somnambulist, of a very amorous disposition and rather weak-nerved. She walked and talked in her sleep to Duc's bidding and next day bubbled over with confiding observations on Duc Quercy's "regard et sa belle barbe noire!"³ He has evidently made a conquest of her. Happily there is some chance of her finding a more practical admirer in the shape of our neighbour's gardener whom she is to meet at a ball tomorrow night and who would make a very personable Romeo.

A meeting of the "Conseil national" had been called for yesterday, but as nobody turned up beyond Guesde and Paul, I don't suppose that much business either national or international was transacted. Guesde and Quercy have given a few conferences in the North and are much pleased with the progress made there.

I send you a translation of Walther von der Vogel-

¹ This refers to the Russian review *Severny Vestnik* (*Northern Herald*).

² On December 9th the endorsement of General Boulanger's election was on the order paper of the Chamber. As he was ineligible, having been sentenced by the High Court, parliament endorsed Joffrin's election by 293 votes to 233.

³ Expression and his lovely black beard.—*Tr.*

weide's *Unter der Linde*,¹ which used to be a great favourite with you.

Good-bye, my dear General, and give Nim a kiss for me.

YOUR LAURA

369. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 22/12/89

My dear Engels,

You have treated yourself to the grippe in order to be in the fashion. Parliamentary debates, Boulangist invalidations and all political tittle-tattle is forgotten here while everyone is engrossed by *influenza*. This new name for the grippe is one of the happy finds of the doctors of 1889, of the centenary; anyone can nurse their own grippe more or less badly, but to cure their *influenza* they need an M. D. The doctors wanted to give it the forbidding name of *dengue*, but they are reserving that for next year.

When we received your letter announcing your bronchitis, I had just written to Danielson saying that your health was much improved, which is what Bonnier had given me to understand. Danielson had asked me for details concerning your health and about the publication of Marx. I told him in reply that the manuscripts which had to be deciphered, compared and transcribed, gave you a good deal of trouble owing to the condition they are in, their handwriting and your eyes, but that you were making progress with the work.

I am also asked when Marx's scattered works, such as *The Holy Family*, will be collected into one volume; I reply that I know nothing about it, that the most urgent and important thing is the publication of the manuscripts and that when that is completed there will be time to think

¹ (Under the lime-tree.—*Tr.*) Walther von der Vogelweide was a minnesinger at the end of the 12th century.

about works already published and about the correspondence.

We have learned of the Silvertown defeat; it was attributed to the *engineers* who did not want to make common cause with the rubber workers. What is happening about the gas workers' strike? Not a single French paper gives news of it.

I have received a letter from Danielson announcing that my articles have been accepted and the editress of the *Review*,¹ Madame Evreinov, will be writing to me. I have not so far heard from her at all.

You made our mouths water with the cakes that Hélène was busy making, we await her plum pudding with impatience; many of our friends look forward to sampling it. It is astonishing how much the French enjoy English cakes, particularly those made by Hélène. Tell H[élène] to beware of gas cookers; they sometimes cause headaches when the products of combustion are not drawn off by a chimney. Fortunately your kitchen is very large and the door often left open.

The season of gifts falls at an untimely moment for me, which is nearly always the case. I should be much obliged to you if you would send us a cheque.

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

Laura is in the midst of battling with a bombastic and imbecile article by Castelar; she has to put it into intelligible English. It's a hard task. This ass claims that Maximilian's Mexican empire is one result of the abolition of slavery in the United States.

You say you cannot understand Kautsky's case at all: here is the explanation. Professional rivalry. In Switzerland Kautsky taught the art of how not to make children; how can a Malthusian live with a woman who brings children into the world?

¹ *Severny Vestnik*.

370. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux [December 24th, 1889]

My dear Engels,

Merry Christmas.

Thanks for cheque.

New paper a woeful business.¹ Case of a capitalist who is willing to guarantee the production expenses of a journal (paper, type-setting and printing) for six months, but during which time the editorial staff is supposed to live on air. However, Guesde has managed to get 600 francs a month for himself and Quercy; but the other editors, 0.

A daily paper cannot be run with two paid journalists; the work requires at least five people. At the end of the first month Guesde and Quercy will be worn out and ill; they will only have succeeded in producing a duplication of the *Parti ouvrier*, in discrediting the Socialist Party by their failure and in making the publication of a Socialist daily paper—whose need is beginning to make itself felt—even more remote; but to succeed it must be undertaken in earnest and not on a scissors-and-paste basis, as will be the case with the Guesde-Quercy paper.

Merry Christmas for all.

P. LAFARGUE

371. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

New Year's Eve/89

My dear General,

Paul says that Nim "improves with age." We often agree to differ, but in this case we are altogether at one: we fancy that Nim's pudding is even better than usual.—

¹ This refers to the plans for a daily which, however, do not seem to have come to anything.

Anyhow we've got a claimant for every plum. I have sent a goodish slice to Paul's mother and I'm beginning to look disagreeable when asked for a taste of it.

Talking of looking disagreeable, you never saw a nastier, more woebegone lot than we've been this last week. Influenza or fever or whatever it is, we've been regular batons m.—There's really no other word for it.—First Paul had an attack and even Nim's cake—which he continued to devour with an orange on the top of every slice—couldn't sweeten him, and then it was my turn and Paul swears that I was the worse of the two, and that may be so for I was too "influenzée" to dispute. And I was three days railing at the mud of Le Perreux and the imbecilities of my Juliet and at the market which was too far off and the postman whose visits were too few and far between and the newspapers duller than the snow and dirtier, and the coals that burnt too quickly and the petroleum that smelt amiss and the fowls that with ostrich-appetites laid pigeon eggs and the absent Diane that ought to be here and that is out of reach!—But "things are beginning to find their level," and presently we shall have spring sprouting and daylight.

The version of *Unter der Linde* which I sent you is one out of a half dozen that I have attempted, but none of which appeared to me to be better *as a whole* than the one I decided on sending you. Here is the first stanza of two of these:

I

*Under the lime-tree
By the heath,
Where the bed of us two was;
There may you see
How we both
Broke the flowers and the grass.
By the wood, in the vale
Sweet sang the nightingale.*

*Under the lind
 Near the heather,
 Was the bed of both of us;
 There may you find
 How we together
 Broke the flowers and the grass;
 By the wood, down in the vale
 Sweetly sang the nightingale.*

These are verbatim and have¹ the advantage of being free from expletives, always hateful, but I rejected them because the translation is bald, which the original is not, because the third line of No. I, I feared, was what Byron calls *cramp* English and because neither exactly reproduces the rhythm of the original. Now the reproduction of the rhyme and rhythm is precisely what I aim at in translating a song, otherwise I should render it in prose, which means that I should not translate it at all. The three opening lines of each stanza would really translate themselves if one were not obliged to spoil them for the sake of the three that follow. If Edward sacrifices both the rhyme and the rhythm, he shirks whatever difficulty exists.—I ought to say that I have translated from a modernised German version, but it is very fine and has a quick, bird-like music, very suggestive of the blithe briskness with which the happy lovers go about their business.—But my object in writing you was not to bore you either with rhyme or reason but to kiss you and Nim and Jollymeier and the whole lot of you and to wish you as many happy new years as I may live to have myself, car après nous le déluge, ça m'est bien égal.¹

Your affectionate,

LAURA

¹ For I don't care what happens after we're dead and gone.—*Tr.*

1890

372. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 8 jan. 90

My dear Laura,

Prosit Neujahr avant tout!¹ Et puis après,² as I cannot bear the idea that you should translate Walther von der Vogelweide from a modernisation, I send you a copy of the original. You are quite right, the metre and rhyme of the original ought to be preserved in every translation of poetry, or else go the whole hog like the French and turn it at once into prose.

Hope you got over your influenza by this. We have it here too and pretty thick, although of our nearer circle none has as yet been caught. Percy is better, but Pumps is laid up with bronchitis and congested lungs, will however be up soon. Charley R[osher] is the only one I know who can boast of having the influenza.

Old Harney is laid up at Enfield with chronic bronchitis; I shall have to go some day this week and see him. Poor fellow, but he feels happy in one thing: *being out of America!* It is most amusing to see how America makes all Englishmen patriotic, even Edward was not without a touch. And all on account of a quarrel about "manners" and "breeding"! The Yankees, too, have a rather provok-

¹ First of all, a happy New Year to you!—*Tr.*

² And then.—*Tr.*

ing way of asking you how you like the country, what you think of it, and expect of course an outburst of admiration. And so poor old Harney has got so disgusted with the "land of the free" that his only wish is to be well back to the "effete monarchy" and never to return to Yankee-land. I am afraid he will have his wish; bodily he is ageing very much, no wonder after the eight years' torture with rheumatic gout he has had. But in spirit he is the old inveterate punster and full of humour.

I was glad, on receiving Paul's letter¹ about the new paper, that I had written to Bonnier my opinion that they ought formally to *engage you* on the rédaction for the German part. So he will see that I had no idea of the situation and at the same time considered it as self-understood that everybody got paid. He has not written again to me but to Tussy, saying the paper will come out 11th January, and wanting them to write and to get Burns, etc., to do the same.

I really think you are about the only person who can keep his or her head above water and clear in Paris; that place seems to make people cracked. Here is Bonnier, who was sensible enough as long as he was here and now all at once he is as mad as Guesde can be over this impossible paper. A daily paper with unpaid rédaction, unpaid correspondents, unpaid everything—why, it is ruination to begin with, and being kicked out of the paper you have made as soon as you demand the payment due for your work! He might well write to me *que la partie internationale doit être écrasante*²—when the *partie parisienne* is as good as non-existent from the beginning! And to expect people here to write *à jour fixe*³ regular letters, so that the fact may be announced *la veille*!⁴ For that he actually expected all of us, Burns and God knows whom

¹ See Paul Lafargue's letter [of December 24th, 1889].

² That the international side must be an overwhelming burden.—*Tr.*

³ On stated days.—*Tr.*

⁴ The day before.—*Tr.*

besides, to do here, and all for the honour of having the honour of being allowed to speak to the inhabitants de la ville lumière qui se fichent pas mal de nous tous!¹

It strikes me this affair will end in all sorts of muddles, if not in quarrels amongst our own people at the moment when everything seemed to promise well.

Anyhow I shall feel obliged and it will be useful to all of us if you or Paul will keep us well posted up with regard to this matter; for we shall surely be bombarded with all sorts of demands when once the paper is out, and experience shows that "in the interest of the cause" one half of the facts are kept from us. Of course we shall be very shy in engaging ourselves, but at the same time it will be better if we have not in every case first to inquire from you how the matter really stands.

I don't understand how Guesde can act in that way upon his own hook and let his meridional imagination run away without the consent of Paul, Deville and others. Bonnier's letters sound as if these people thought the whole world was idle, had more time on their hands than they knew to employ, and was anxiously waiting for the chance of a French paper coming out to which they might contribute gratis! Such things would not be suffered in the German or any other party—that one man engages the responsibility of all without a special mandate; that he acts upon delusions, as to the chances of his getting foreign contributors, which you and Paul would have at once destroyed, or, if you had a chance of refuting them, acts in spite of your better experience. Really if our friends will be guided by their delusion and fancies alone, nobody can prevent them from coming to grief.

I am called away suddenly and must conclude.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

¹ Of the City of Light which doesn't give a damn for any of us.—*Tr.*

373. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS

Le Perreux, 10/1/90

My dear Engels,

As Guesde is ill the paper¹ will not come out tomorrow, but on the 19th, unless there is a hitch.

The sponsor is a printer who is going to devote 60,000 francs to the paper: this will be squandered in two months without the paper having struck root, that is to say, having made any headway or exercised any influence. It means stupidly wasting a valuable sum of money which, combined with other sums, might ensure success. At the moment everybody wants a paper, there are various schemes afoot, perhaps it is just a matter of waiting for it to come off.

But there is another matter too. Roques, the director of *Égalité*, who kicked us out so unceremoniously² and who, ever since, has attacked and abused us, and has sold himself, turn and turn about, to Constans and Boulanger, now makes the proposal that we should go back on to *Égalité*. He has seen Vaillant who, instead of showing him the door or calling him a humbug, took his proposals seriously; he is of a mind to accept them. Chauvière has already sent some of his bad prose to the paper.³ We had a meeting at Guesde's place to decide what was to be done; the former editors who had not gone over to Boulangism were invited, but no one turned up for the appointment save Vaillant and myself; Daumas sent his apologies and Longuet gave no sign of life. We reached no decision and made an ap-

¹ The proprietor of *Le Combat*, Perragallo, had offered the management of this newspaper to A. Boyer and Guesde. In the end Boyer took on the management of the paper on March 19th, but Guesde only worked on it editorially. His first article appeared on March 9th.

² See Lafargue's letter of March 5th, 1889 (No. 301).

³ Chauvière's first article appeared on January 6th.

pointment for to-day at Daumas' place. Personally, I told Vaillant that it would be discreditable and idiotic to go on to *Égalité*, for Roques will always contrive to push us out when he pleases; it's not possible to make contracts with scum of that sort. Vaillant appeared very much put out: he is very keen to have a paper for the period of the municipal elections starting on May¹ 12th, and he has little confidence in the Guesde scheme.

Cluseret for his part needs a paper. He is at present conducting a campaign against railway freight charges; he is in touch with the big Les Halles contractors who have pots of money; perhaps he will raise funds from that quarter.

Daumas, too, has a scheme for raising five million, but nothing will be definitely decided until February.

I shall write to you tomorrow after the meeting at Daumas'.

Russia is very much on the go: she has bought the whole French press which, without exception, sings her praises; it is scandalous. It is becoming a matter of common knowledge that Boulanger accepted money direct from the Russian embassy. While the wretched general is done for, Boulangism is not dead in Paris, as will certainly be seen at the next municipal elections²; and possibly Roques' proposition is a manoeuvre on the part of the government which would like to let us have a paper to attack the Boulangists for the benefit of the bourgeois candidates; in short, to use us as it used Lissagaray and the Possibilists. Constans is very jaunty.

Farewell and good wishes,

P. LAFARGUE

¹ This should no doubt read "March."

² The municipal elections were held on April 27th.

374. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux 17/1/90

My dear Engels,

Laura told you in her letter that the committee of Socialist Big Chiefs decided to turn down both schemes for papers; for courtesy's sake, instead of replying to Roques of *Égalité* by dismissing the whole thing, Guesde was instructed to convey to him three pre-conditions which, in our view, amounted to a refusal. Here they are: Before entering into further negotiations, Roques was to restore matters to the state in which they had been prior to the dispute, hence to recognise the authority of the editorial board and its budget; further, to pay the women at the same rate as the men and to surrender to the board full rights to appear on the title page, so that he could not turn it out as he did before. We thought R[oques] would never accept such terms. On Wednesday evening I had word from Guesde telling me that R[oques] admitted himself beaten and agreed to accept our demands. Yesterday the Big Chiefs' committee met at wise man Daumas' to discuss the next steps. I wanted them to give up the idea of going back on to *Égalité*; R[oques] being a scoundrel as well as an ambitious imbecile, he might well be setting a trap for us. Guesde and the others urged the need for a paper for the May 1st demonstration and the municipal elections, the Boulangist collapse which facilitates our success, the importance of being on a paper which has a ready-made sale of round about 10,000; at the time we left it, it was selling between 14 and 16,000, the possibility of controlling R[oques], who, after a year of trying it, is convinced that it is impossible for him to run a Socialist paper without us, etc. In short, I had to bow to the will of the majority. Nevertheless, my mistrust increases as Roques grows more conciliatory. Guesde and Daumas were appointed to get in touch with him.

The best of it is that the committee of wise men narrowly avoided falling out over how the unhatched chickens should be shared. Vaillant wanted Chauvière, an imbecile intriguer but a Blanquist, to be on the editorial board. Everyone was opposed to this, the arguments used by Daumas and Guesde being decisive; Chauvière, without waiting for our decision, has already reached an understanding with R[oques] and is contributing to his paper. Thereupon Vaillant declared that he would resign. So I had to offer to come off the committee to appease Blanquist susceptibilities, which cannot admit of two Marxists to one Blanquist on a committee. It was agreed to leave the composition of the committee alone for the present, namely, with the former members of the board of *Égalité* who have not gone over to Boulangism; but once the contract is signed, the committee would be altered in such a way as to allow Marxists and Blanquists to be represented in equal numbers. Vaillant is satisfied.

As we have the mirage of 5 million from Paul y Angulo before our eyes, and as Daumas is awaiting his reply and the first 500 thousand francs to start the big Socialist paper, we have decided to drag out the negotiations over two or three weeks.¹

Regards to all and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

375. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 14 Febr. 90

My dear Laura,

Last night Bernstein called. We think it best you should write to Bebel asking him for some information. He has

¹ In the end the Roques scheme failed and *Égalité* remained in his hands.

the Parlements-almanach which we have not and a secretary who might copy out a few extracts. You might say Bernst[ein] and I had suggested this to you.

If you like to you might write also direct to
Carl Grillenberger, Weizenstr. 15, Nürnberg,
G. von Vollmar, Schwabing bei München,
J. H. W. Dietz, Furthbachstr. 12, Stuttgart,
F. Kunert, Red[aktion] der *Breslauer Nachrichten*,
Breslau, and ask them for personal details which no doubt
they would be glad to give you. Other addresses we have
not got.

I will ask Tussy about that niece of Mohr's Paul has
written about. I have not heard anything about her.
Would be curious if you should turn out to be connected
with little Abraham, vulgo¹ Alexandre, Weill!

Things are getting serious in Germany.² The *Kreuz-
zeitung*, ultra-conservative, declares the Socialist law
useless and bad! Well, we shall probably get rid of it, but
Puttkamer's word will then become true: we shall have
the major state of siege instead of the minor one, and
cannons instead of expulsions. Things go so well for us,
we never dared to hope half so much, but, but it will be
stirring times and everything depends upon our men not
allowing themselves to be provoked into riots. In three

¹ Commonly called.—*Tr.*

² When Bismarck introduced a bill in October 1889 increasing
the severity of the provisions of the anti-socialist law he came up
against the opposition of the National-Liberals and in the end the
bill was defeated on January 25th, 1890, by 169 votes to 98. This
vote marked the breakdown of the cartel upon which Bismarck had
hitherto relied. A rabid adversary of socialism, the Chancellor be-
lieved in the "military solution" of the social question, that is to
say, the crushing of the Socialists by force of arms. The policy which
Wilhelm II had introduced with regard to the working class in the
edicts of February 4th was to provide one of the causes for Bis-
marck's resignation on March 19th, 1890. The anti-socialist law,
not having been prorogued, ceased to be in force from October 1st,
1890.

years we may have the agricultural labourers, the mainstay of Prussia, and *then*—feu!

Ever yours,

F. E.

We went to-day up to Highgate. Tussy has been already in the morning, planted Mohr's and your Mama's grave with crocus, primroses, hyacinths, etc., very beautifully. If Mohr had lived to see this!

376. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 26 Febr. 90

My dear Laura,

Since last Thursday evening when the telegrams announcing victory came raining in here thick and fast, we are in a constant intoxication of triumph, brought, provisionally at least, to a climax this morning by the news that we had obtained 1,341,500 votes, 587,000 more than 3 years ago.¹ And yet—next Saturday² the orgy may begin again, for the stupefaction of all Germany at our success is so enormous, the hatred against the Kartell swindlers so intense, and the time for consideration so short that fresh successes, as unexpected as those of last Thursday, are quite possible, though I for one do not expect many of them.

The 20th February 1890 is the opening day of the German revolution. It may be a couple of years yet until we see a decisive crisis, and it is not impossible that we have to pass through a temporary and severe defeat. But the old

¹ The previous Reichstag elections had taken place on February 21st, 1887. (See Engels' letter of February 24th, 1887, No. 214.)

² The second ballot took place on Saturday, March 1st. Twenty Socialist deputies had been elected in the first ballot. A further fifteen were returned on March 1st.

stability is gone for ever. That stability rested on the superstition that the triumvirate Bismarck, Moltke, William, was invincible and all-wise. Now William is gone and replaced by a conceited gardelieutenant, Moltke is pensioned off, and Bismarck is very shaky in his saddle. At the very eve of this election, he and young William had a squabble over the latter's itching to play the working men's friend¹; Bismarck had to give way and took care to let the philistine know he had done so; he himself evidently wished for "bad" elections, in order to give his master a lesson. Well he has got more than he bargained for, and the two have made it up again for once. But that cannot last. The "second old Fritz, only greater" cannot and will not stand leading by the Chancellor's hand; "in Preußen muß der König regieren"²—this he takes au sérieux, and the more critical the time, the more divergent will be the views of these two rivals. One thing is certain to the philistine: the man he can trust, is losing his power, and the man who holds the power, he cannot trust. Confidence is gone even among the bourgeoisie.

Now look at the state of parties. The Cartel³ has lost a million votes, has had 2½ million for, 4½ against itself. That mainstay of Bismarck's parliamentary power has gone to smash, and all the King's horses and all the King's men cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again. To form a government majority, there are but two parties; the

¹ On February 4th, 1890, the Emperor Wilhelm II signed two edicts inviting the neighbouring powers to an international conference with the object of expanding protective labour legislation (insurance, etc.) and limiting hours of work. Bismarck, believing that these measures, on the eve of the elections, would lead to a Socialist victory, opposed them. But the edicts were nevertheless officially published, without his countersignature.

² In Prussia the king must rule.—*Tr.*

³ The alliance of the large landowners in the East with the big industrialists in the West had constituted the Cartel which had secured a stable majority for Bismarck in the 1887 elections.

Catholics (Centre) and the Freisinnigen.¹ The latter, although already burning with the desire to form a fresh Cartel, cannot do so—as yet at least—with the Conservatives, but only with the National-Liberals, and that gives no majority. The Centre?² Bismarck reckons upon it, and the Catholic junkers of that party are eager enough to unite with the old Prussian junkers. But the sole *raison d'être* of the Centre is: *hatred of Prussia*, and just you try and make a Prussian government party out of that! As soon as the Centre becomes anything like that, the Catholic peasantry—its force—break loose, while the 100,000 votes the Centre had less (against 1887) have been taken away by us in the Catholic towns, see Munich, Cologne, Mainz, etc.

So this Reichstag is unmanageable. But Bismarck's last resource, a dissolution, will hardly help him. The confidence in the stability of things being gone, the supreme factor now is the discontent with the oppressive taxes and increasing dearness of living. That is the direct consequence of the fiscal and economic policy of the last 11 years, and by this Bis[marck] has driven the people right away into our arms. And Michel is rising against that policy. So the next Reichstag might even be worse.

Unless. . . . Bismarck and his master—on this point they will always agree—provoke riot and fighting and crush us before we are too strong, and then alter the Constitution. That is evidently what we are drifting to, and the chief danger to be avoided. Our people, you have seen, keep excellent, wonderful discipline; but we may be forced to fight before we are fully prepared, and there is the danger. But when that comes on, there will be other chances in our favour.

Nim's dinner-bell—so good-bye for to-day—more about

¹ Liberals.

² The Centre was the Ultramontane Catholic Party.

your dogs in more peaceable times—also about Paul's articles.

En attendant, vive la révolution allemande!¹

Ever yours, F. E.

377. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, March 7th, 90

My dear Lafargue,

The election period is over at last. Impossible to do anything during that upheaval, that coming and going, those ceaseless errands. But, when all's said and done, it was worth it this time. Our working men have made the Emperor of Germany work for nothing and have sent the reporter of the *Gaulois* to Le Perreux.²

The gallant Wilhelm is first and foremost emperor. It is not so easy as you might suppose to send a Bismarck packing. Just leave time for that storm to blow up. Wilhelm can no more part all of a sudden with the man who forced the youngster's grandfather³ to turn himself into a great man, than Bismarck can part with Wilhelm whom he, B [ismarck], has accustomed to see himself as a Frederick II. But they will be able to agree on only one matter henceforth: opening fire on the Socialists at the first opportunity. On all other matters, divergence, and, later on, open conflict.

February 20th is the date of the beginning of the revolution in Germany; that is why we must not let ourselves be smashed up before our time. So far we have but one soldier in 4 or 5 and, on a war footing, possibly 1 in 3.

¹ In the meantime, long live the German revolution!—*Tr.*

² *Le Gaulois* published on March 3rd, 1890, under the heading "In Germany" (pp. 1/VI-2/II), an interview with Paul Lafargue by Paul Roche about the German elections and Wilhelm II's social schemes.

³ That is, Wilhelm I.

We are penetrating the countryside; the elections in Schleswig-Holstein and above all in Mecklenburg, as in the eastern provinces of Prussia, have proved it.¹ In 3-4 years we shall have the agricultural labourers and day-labourers, i.e., the most solid upholders of the status quo, and on that day, Prussia will be no more. That is why we must come out for the time being for legal action and not react to the provocations which will be lavished upon us. For, short of a bloodletting, and a pretty severe one at that, Bismarck and Wilhelm are doomed.

Those two gallant fellows, it is said, are struck with consternation, have no settled plan and B[ismarck] has his work cut out to counteract the court intrigues which multiply against him.

The bourgeois parties will unite on the common ground of fear of the Socialists. But they are no longer the parties they were. The ice is cracking, soon there will be a general break-up.

As for Russia, she will have need of many more French millions before she is in a position to make war. The weapons of her army are completely out of date, and what's more, there are doubts about the wisdom of giving the Russian soldier a repeating rifle. The Russians are exceedingly steady so long as they are fighting in mass formation, but that is no longer done; as sharp shooters they are no good at all, they lack individual initiative. And then, where to find officers for so many in a country without a bourgeoisie?

In *Neue Zeit* and *Time* of April and May there will be articles on Russian foreign policy which I have written.²

¹ The Social-Democrats polled votes in, amongst other places, six Brandenburg constituencies, Pomerania (in particular, in Stettin), East Prussia (with one successful candidate in Königsberg), three Mecklenburg constituencies and four Schleswig-Holstein ones, with a successful candidate in Altona.

² This refers to two articles entitled: "The Foreign Policy of Russian Czarism," which appeared in *Neue Zeit* of April (pp. 145-54)

We are trying here to wean the English Liberals from Gladstone's Russophilia, it is a propitious moment, the unparalleled cruelties to the political prisoners in Siberia have made it well-nigh impossible for the Liberals to continue in this strain. Aren't they talking about it in France? But in your country the bourgeoisie has become almost as stupid and villainous as in Germany.

As for *Time*, it is not a Socialist review, quite the contrary; Bax is terrified lest the word socialism be used in it. In failing to answer his telegram "reply paid," you have brought down upon yourself his sovereign displeasure. But you would do wrong to copy his manner of taking umbrage. It is impossible for *Time* to have too many articles signed Lafargue. It is, however, equally impossible to take one that has appeared in *La Nouvelle Revue*, just as Madame Adam would not take one that had appeared in *Time*. And as for an arrangement whereby simultaneous publication was ensured, would Mme Adam lend herself to that? Do be reasonable; the article has been placed with her and with her it will make a world tour.

Aveling and Tussy intend to publish *one* article by a foreigner each month; that is the most to which one can treat the British public; as you had an article in the February issue, Bax had an excuse for refusing yours, more particularly since nobody will be talking about Huxley's attack on Rousseau any more in a few months' time. All this comes of your not having sent the "reply paid." It's paltry, but it's Bax.

Poor Laura! Let's hope she has no further dealings with Castelar. That man is as repulsive to me as was the handsome Simon von Trier in 1848, every one of whose speeches was composed of scraps taken from Schiller, and with

and May (pp. 193-203) 1890. They are dated: London, end of February 1890.

whom all the Jewesses of Frankfurt, young and old, were in love. Thank you for Iglésias' letter which I will return to you next time—this Back is a German Russian from the Baltic provinces who published a Baltic journal (in German) about ten years ago in Geneva and whom old Becker, for want of something better to do, tried to convert to socialism. He has also written an article for Kautsky on the Spanish Party which he himself has invented, but K[autsky] gave me the MS. without publishing it. What presumption on the part of this Balto-bogus-Russian to put himself at the head of a Spanish Party consisting of three officers and no men!

I also wanted to say something about Laura's dogs, but now it's 5 o'clock and the new gong (a present from Aveling) announces dinner. Between Laura and Nim duty pulls both ways, but my stomach takes a hand and settles the matter. Nim is able to scold me and Laura is far away!

Best wishes to you both,

F. E.

378. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 16 April 90

My dear Laura,

At last! a free hour to write a line to you. I am pestered almost to death with letters, verbal and other applications of all sorts, and wish I could shut myself off for a month or so—for I find it impossible to reply to all my letters, much less to do any serious work.

Many thanks for the kind wishes in your poem but I am afraid the Lord on high and the lord below will settle my task for me some day and find me a place somewhere. But that need not trouble us now.

And now a little business:

1) Will you give me Longuet's address?

2) Will Paul procure me the title, publisher's name, etc. of a pocket edition (cheap) of the Code Napoléon as at present in force, for Sam Moore? (Les cinq codes suf-front, civil, proc[édure] civile, pénal, proc[édure] crimi-nelle, de commerce¹) and price.

3) Enclosed a bill found in last lot of French news-papers.

The Parisian workmen are acting indeed as if they had but one purpose to live for, and that is to prove how utterly undeserved was their revolutionary reputation. It's all very well for Paul to repeat over and over again that they are Boulangists out of pure opposition against the bourgeoisie—but so were those who voted for Louis Bona-parte, and what would our Parisians say if the German workmen, to spite Bismarck and the bourgeoisie, threw themselves blindfold in the arms of young William? It is plainly cutting off your nose to spite your face, and the Parisians have still so much left of their former esprit² that they can still back up the worst of all possible causes by the best of all possible reasons.

No, the cause of this surfeit of Boulangism lies deeper. It is chauvinism. The French chauvins, after 1871, resolved that history should stand still until Alsace was recon- quered. Everything was made subordinate to that. And our friends never had the courage to stand up against this absurdity. There were fellows at the *Citoyen*³ and *Cri* who howled with the masses against everything German, no matter what, and our friends submitted to that. The con- sequences are there. The *only* excuse for Boulangism is la revanche, Alsace reconquered. What not one party in Paris ever dared to oppose, is it a wonder that the Pari- sian workmen now cling to as a gospel?

¹ The five statutes will do, civil, civil and penal proc[edure], criminal proc[edure] and commerce.—*Tr.*

² Ingenuity.—*Tr.*

³ See Vol. I. Letter No. 61, p. 105, Note 2.

But in spite of French patriots, history did not stand still—only France did, after the fall of Mac-Mahon. And the necessary consequence of this French patriotic aberration is that the French workmen are now the allies of the Czar against not only Germany, but against the Russian workmen and revolutionists too! In order to preserve to Paris the position of revolutionary centre, the revolution must be crushed in Russia, for how to conquer, without the help of the Czar, the leading position belonging to Paris by right?

If the desertion en masse to Boulanger of the French or rather Parisian workmen should cause Socialists abroad to consider them as completely *déchus*,¹ there would be no cause to be astonished. What else can they expect?

Of course I should not be so hasty in my judgement. This momentary aberration would not lead me to such a conclusion. But it is the third time that such an aberration occurs since 1789—the first time Napoleon No. 1, the second time Nap[oleon] No. 3 was carried to the top by that wave of aberration, and now it's a worse creature than either—but fortunately the force of the wave, too, is broken. Anyhow we must apparently come to the conclusion that the negative side of the Parisian revolutionary character—chauvinistic Bonapartism—is as essential to it as the positive side, and that after every great revolutionary effort, we may have a recrudescence of Bonapartism, of an appeal to a saviour who is to destroy the vile bourgeois qui ont escamoté la révolution et la république² and in whose traps the naïfs ouvriers³ have fallen—because, being Parisians, they know everything from birth and by birth, and need not learn like vulgar mortals.

So I shall welcome any revolutionary spurt the Pari-

¹ Degenerated.—*Tr.*

² Who have done away with the revolution and the Republic.—*Tr.*

³ Simple working men.—*Tr.*

sians may favour us with, but shall expect them to be again volés¹ afterwards and then fly to a miracle-performing saviour. For *action* I hope and trust the Parisians to be as fit as ever, but if they claim to lead with regard to *ideas*, I shall say thank you.

By the bye Boulanger is so deep down now that the other day Frank Rosher who was in Jersey on business—a boy of 22, and the most conceited snob in London—called on him and was received courteously and both assured each other of their mutual bienveillance et protection!²

I hope the 1st of May³ will not disappoint the expectations of our French friends. If it turns out a success in Paris, it will be a heavy blow to the Possibilists⁴ and may mark the beginning of an awakening from Boulangism. The 1st May resolution was the best our congress took. It proves our power all over the world, is a better revival of the International than all formal attempts at reorganisation, and shows again which of the two congresses was representative.

I am afraid I shall not be able to take one of your

¹ Robbed.—*Tr.*

² Goodwill and patronage.—*Tr.*

³ The 1889 International Congress, held in the Salle Pétrelle, had passed the following resolution, moved by R. Lavigne:

“A great international demonstration shall be organised on a given date in such a manner that, in all countries and in all towns simultaneously, the workers shall call upon the public authorities on the same day to reduce the legal working day to eight hours and to implement the other resolutions of the Paris International Congress.

“In view of the fact that a similar demonstration has already been decided upon by the American Federation of Labour at its Congress held in St.-Louis in December 1888, which adopted May 1st, 1890, that date shall be that of the international demonstration.

“The workers of the various countries shall carry out this demonstration in accordance with the conditions imposed upon them by the specific situation in their own country.”

⁴ The Possibilists refused to take part in the demonstrations of May 1st, 1890.

two dogs. The one is a bitch and Nim objects firmly to have again to do the massacre of the innocents, and the other is a pointer, id est a sporting dog, and there are most absurd laws here with regard to them—I could not take him out to Hampstead without being stopped by the police as a potential poacher; that is the reason why pointers, fox-hounds, setters, etc., are kept only for real sporting purposes and never, as with us on the Continent, for private amusement. Voilà ce que c'est de vivre dans un pays aristocratique.¹

In Germany we shall have to keep the 1st May as quiet as possible. The military has strict orders to interfere at once and not to wait for requisition from the civil authorities, and the secret police—on the point of being discharged—are straining every nerve to provoke a collision. In fact if the telegrams just to hand by Reuter are worth anything, they are beginning already and have found a few anarchists to provoke some “outrages.”²

Nim says she can't come, her gardening days are over. She has rheumatism in the hip-joint—not much, but there it sticks.

By the bye our Paris friends seem to go all to pieces. There is the *Parti socialiste*³—a paper to work the municipal elections, that I can conceive as a rational purpose. But then there is Okecki's *Autonomie*, and then a daily paper the *Combat* in Boyer's hands⁴ and now Guesde wants to organise a lithographic correspondence—why, this looks like an attempt at gaspillage⁵—they all

¹ That's what comes of living in an aristocratic country.—*Tr.*

² The papers of the day, reporting an explosion in a Berlin factory, claimed that it was a dynamite outrage organised by socialist workers in reprisal for the management's refusal to close the factory on May 1st.

³ On March 9th a weekly paper, *Le Parti socialiste*, appeared with Vaillant, Chauvière, Baudin, Lachize, Féline, etc., as editors.

⁴ See Note 1, Letter No. 373, p. 358.

⁵ Squandering.—*Tr.*

cry after a daily paper and now they have one they don't seem to use it—or are they all at sixes and sevens? I cannot make it out.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

379. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

*Paris, Taverne Gruber,
May 1st, 1890*

My dear Engels,

Everything is going splendidly; large numbers of working men in their working attire are sauntering along the boulevards, converging on the Place de la Concorde which, with Laura, we have just crossed. A vast throng of police and dragoons is on guard in the Place to prevent any assemblage; every now and again there are charges to push back the crowd which gives way good-humouredly; nevertheless, there are reports of police brutalities.

The crowd is disappointed, they had expected a riot, a rumpus¹; Constans will have to take the consequences. He tried to inspire fear in the Parisians so that he could pose as a deliverer, and they realise that there was not the slightest danger. His Socialist spectre, which was to have replaced the Boulangist bogey destroyed at the recent elections, has come to nothing. Tomorrow he will be chafed and forced to clear out of the Ministry.

It is very fortunate that everything should be so peaceful, for rumours of Boulangist riots had been spread in

¹ Paris was put under military occupation and the boulevards sanded to facilitate cavalry charges. In the centre, the shops were shut. Many bourgeois, fearing riots, had fled from the city. It was estimated that 100,000 demonstrators invaded the Place de la Concorde during the afternoon, whilst a delegation from trade-union and socialist organisations and the Labour Exchange went to deliver petitions to Floquet, the President of the Chamber.

the suburbs. Perhaps Constans will get his own back this evening and create disturbances.

Many factories have closed down, which is the main thing: it's a proper holiday.¹

They say that Guesde has been arrested, but it's untrue; I have not been troubled. Perhaps the police have not got my address, known to everyone else. There's nothing so stupid as the police.

We are drinking beer to toast the First of May.

Laura sends you her love. Good wishes to you and to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

380. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 10th May 1890

My dear Laura,

Only a few lines this busy Saturday—I am awfully behindhand with my correspondence—to thank you for your card and to enclose the £20.—cheque I promised Paul. I also send you *The People's Press*² with report of Sunday last. It was tremendous. England at last *is* stirring, and no mistake. And it was a great victory for *us* specially, for Tussy and Aveling who with the help of the Gas Workers (by far the best Union out amongst the new ones) have done it all. In their naïveté they had called in the Trades Council without ensuring to themselves the possession of the Park first.

¹ In the provinces, delegations were sent to the authorities in over a hundred towns. The shut-down was complete in various industrial centres, including Roanne, Cours, Thizy, Tarare and St.-Quentin.

² On May 10th, 1890, the *People's Press* devoted nearly eight pages to a report of the May 4th meeting in Hyde Park.

The Trades Council allying itself with Hyndman and Co., stole a march on them, and applied for platforms for Sunday at the Office of Works and got them, thus hoping to shut us out and being able to command; they attempted at once to bully us down, but Edward went to the Office of Works and got us too 7 platforms—had the Liberals been in, we should never have got them. That brought the other side down at once, and they became as amiable as you please. They have seen they have to do with different people from what they expected. I can assure you I looked a couple of inches taller when I got down from that old lumbering waggon that served as a platform—after having heard again, for the first time since 40 years, the unmistakable voice of the English Proletariat. That voice has been heard by the bourgeois too, the whole press of London and the provinces bears witness to that.

Paul spoke very well—a slight indication of the universal strike dream in it, which nonsense Guesde has retained from his anarchist days—(whenever we are in a position to *try* the universal strike, we shall be able to get what we want for the mere asking for it, without the roundabout way of the universal strike). But he spoke very well, and in remarkably grammatical English too, far more so than in his conversation. He was received best of all, and got a more enthusiastic cheer at the end than any one else. And his presence was very opportune as we had on our platform two or three philistine speakers qui faisaient dormir debout leurs auditeurs¹ so that Paul had to waken them up again.

The progress made in England these last 10-15 months is immense. Last May the 8 hours working day would not have brought as many *thousands* into Hyde Park as we had *hundreds of thousands*. And the best of it is that the struggle preceding the demonstration has brought to life

¹ Who sent their audience to sleep.—*Tr.*

a representative body which will serve as the nucleus for the movement, en dehors de toute secte¹; the Central Committee consisting of delegates of the Gas Workers and numerous other Unions—mostly small, *unskilled* Unions and therefore despised by the haughty Trades Council of the aristocracy of labour—and of the Radical clubs worked for the last two years by Tussy. Edward is chairman of this Committee. This Com[mittee] will continue to act and invite all other trade, political and Socialist societies to send delegates, and gradually expand into a central body not only for the 8 hours Bill but for all other revendications²—say, to begin with, the rest of the Paris resolutions and so on. The Com[mittee] is strong enough numerically not to be swamped by any fresh accessions, and thus the sects will soon be put before the dilemma either to merge in it and in the general movement or to die out. *It is the East End* which now commands the movement and these fresh elements, unspoiled by the “Great Liberal Party,” show an intelligence such as—well, I cannot say better than such as we find in the equally unspoiled German workmen. They will not have any but Socialist leaders.³

Well, now make up your mind and put your house in order so as to be here before the month is out. Let us know when it will be most convenient to you. We only hope that by then the present miserable weather will have exhausted itself. Yesterday we had fires all day again!

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

Love from Nim.

¹ Regardless of sect.—*Tr.*

² Demands.—*Tr.*

³ See Engels' article “The Fourth of May in London” in the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* of May 21st and 23rd, 1890, which gives an analysis of the demonstration.

381. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

Friday, 4th July 1890

My dear Laura,

I hope you got as safe to Paris as we¹ did to Norway. We had a very quiet passage, though lots of people sick, sighted the coast of Norway yesterday afternoon, and by 6 were between the islands and rocks. Went up the Hardanger Fiord, which leads right into the heart of the country, and are now at the farthest point, Odde, where we remain until tomorrow. Had a drive up the valley this morning and only just back; it rained a little, but not enough to spoil the scenery which is grand. The sun set yesterday at 10 and there was no real night, only a rather deep dusk, and red sky in the north. The people are very primitive, but a sound strong handsome race; they understand my Danish but I cannot make much of their Norwegian. Here at this place the invaders coming by this one ship have cleared the place of Norwegian money in change for English, and the post-office of postage stamps.

We sail from here tomorrow and shall on Monday be at Trondhiem, a good way farther up north. If the scenery does not get worse than what we saw to-day, I shall be quite satisfied. It is in some respects like Switzerland, in others very different. So far the beer is not what one might expect, but I shall reserve my judgement until I have seen the towns. This Odde is about twenty houses, including church, hotel, post-office and skolehus.² Everything built of timber, although they have about 1,000,000 times more stone than wood.

Well, I hope Nim is well; enjoying herself, and you and Paul are the same. If Mémé was here she would have

¹ Engels was accompanied by Schorlemmer on his voyage to Norway.

² School-house.—*Tr.*

plenty to say about my nose,¹ the sun has burnt it so that it cracks at every corner.

So now love to the lot of you and enjoy yourselves.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

382. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 30 July 1890

My dear Laura,

Here we are again from the icy regions of the North—temperature mostly 10° in cloudy weather, very hot when the sun shone, two flannels and a topcoat not too much on an average! The journey has done us both a world of good, and with a Nachkur² at the sea-side I hope to be completely set up again. I found Nim quite enthusiastic about her stay in Paris, she never enjoyed herself so much, and if I am not mistaken and you do not take care, you will have her an annual customer.

We met the German fleet at Molde but young William was not there³—he sneaked past our steamer later on in the Sunelvsfjord in a torpedo boat—so that, with the impossibility of getting papers, we were out altogether of la grande politique. Fortunately nothing happened worth knowing—the first news at Bergen were about the reorganisation of the German Party after Oct[ober] 1st,⁴ and on arriving here, the splendid news about the two fights at Leeds⁵ where young Will Thorne proved himself a

¹ Nose.—*Tr.*

² After-cure.—*Tr.*

³ Wilhelm II was cruising round the Norwegian coast during the same period.

⁴ The date on which the anti-socialist law became void.

⁵ The Leeds gas workers had won the 8-hour day in February 1890 after a strike. The company having broken the agreement, they

leader in battle of both courage and ability. This mode of *lawful* resistance is very much to be approved of, especially here in England—and it succeeded.

Enclosed I found on my return and opened, but it is for Mémé.

Cannot any one in Paris give us any information about that de Lavigerie who here gives as references Baudin, Ferroul, *Guesde*, the whole of the party in the Chamber and those in the Conseil Municipal? Of course, if none of all these gentlemen will either disavow or acknowledge this man, or give any information about him, what must the people here do? So long as none of his references repudiate him, the people here cannot but take him for genuine, and if afterwards he turns out a black sheep, or does harm to our French friends (for to the people here he can do none), they must blame themselves.

Now I must conclude. You will not want telling that I found an immense heap of correspondence, papers, etc. here and that I have my hands full for some days—so excuse this short note. Have you seen Paul's Portrait in the *Neue Welt Kalender*—it is very good, so are the other Frenchmen.

Love from Nim, Schorlemmer,

and yours ever,

F. ENGELS

383. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 4 VIII 90

My dear Engels,

We knew that a mountain of letters would be awaiting you on your return and did not want to add our prose to that which you would be condemned to read. We were

went on strike again on July 1st and, on July 5th, won a complete victory, regarded as the most important one since the dockers' success in 1889.

deeply disappointed to learn that, instead of coming to see us at Le Perreux to tell us about the North Pole and the midnight sun, you would be going on to the English sea-side. We had plotted with Hélène for your visit; but her diplomacy does not appear to have been very successful. It is a great pity; I believe that a stay at Le Perreux would have done you good and would have entertained you by virtue of the complete change in your manner of life which it would have brought about. We can only hope that it has been postponed until next year.

Lavigerie and Coulon strike us as a couple of intriguers, working for we know not precisely what end. Coulon turned up at the meeting of the Paris 8 Hours League as some kind of delegate from the English Socialists and I see that he assumes the same role in England. Neither he nor Lavigerie has received an official mandate from us and the personal letters they have must have been obtained by underhand means; consequently no account should be taken of these two gentlemen. They told Vaillant that they were busy organising the London working-class exhibition and giving it an essentially socialist character: that is probably another lie.

I wrote to Delcluze, a municipal councillor in Calais, as soon as I had Tussy's letter, asking him to do his best to prevent French sailors and stokers from going to Dover to replace the strikers.¹ Delcluze is very active; one can rely upon him to do everything necessary.

The socialist movement limps along in Paris. We are still suffering from the Boulangist crisis; the Paris working men, so trustful when it comes to the Radicals, are extremely suspicious of the Socialists; they believe we are trying to lead them into a trap. In order not to ruf-

¹ On July 26th the engineers, stokers and crew of the mail-packets on the London, Chatham, Dover and Channel service went on strike for the reinstatement of six stokers who had been dismissed for having joined their Trade Union.

fle their feelings we had to leave the organisation of the 8 Hours League in the hands of the Trade Unions who accomplish nothing useful. You have to have the patience of an angel and the dullness of an ass to do political work with the Paris working men.

Death is now ridding us of some of the Possibilists: Chabert is dead¹ and Joffrin dying; these two, with Brousse, were among the most important. According to what Vaillant tells us, they are no longer united on the Town Council and civil war will break out between them over the places left vacant by Chabert and Joffrin; the nomination of four Possibilists has already been announced. They will fight each other. Longuet is expected to stand for Joffrin's seat; he would have a good chance of getting in as a deputy.

It appears that Constans and Rouvier are at logger-heads in the government.² Although all the parliamentarians regard Constans as a *shrewd fellow*, they are nevertheless, since the ignominious fall of Boulanger, beginning to get over their initial enthusiasm; Constans is already encountering opposition in the Senate. It seems that he wants to leave the Ministry of the Interior for that of Foreign Affairs; he would like to play Bismarck's role in France and be the man to whom the European powers listen. But whether he stays at the Ministry of the Interior or goes to Foreign Affairs, France is set for peace. A senator with whom I was recently put in touch told me that there was not a single general among all those in the Senate, the Chamber and at the Ministry of War who was in favour of war; all they aspire to is a quiet life. This was corroborated in a conversation I heard at Mme Adam's between Russian agents who are

¹ Chabert died on May 24th, 1890.

² Rouvier was the Minister of Finance and Constans the Minister of the Interior in the Freycinet Cabinet (his fourth government) which took office on March 18th, 1890.

trying to stimulate enthusiasm for the Russian alliance in France; they were complaining bitterly of their lack of success in government circles which, according to them, were more in favour of a German alliance. If Wilhelm does not commit any blunders, we can count upon peace where France is concerned.

Give our love to H  l  ne and tell her that the beans she planted are doing well and will be in flower within a week.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

384. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 24 VIII 90

My dear Engels,

What has become of you? Where are you? Have you been to the sea-side as you planned? Probably neither Liebknecht nor Bebel was able to make the journey to London that they had planned. They are going to have trouble with the careerists, the mischief-makers and the declassed bourgeois whom Bismarck was kind enough to keep well away from the Party. Their troubles will start now: the police will invent anarchists to annoy the Socialists. The French press is following the quarrels and dissensions which have broken out amongst the German Socialists¹ with surprising interest considering its usual indifference to everything that goes on beyond the boule-

¹ In the course of the previous few years, a large number of young intellectuals had joined the Social-Democratic Party and scathingly criticised the parliamentary fraction. This "opposition" was grouped round Schippel and Werner. The Halle congress, which opened on October 12th, asserted the unity of the Party. See Engels' letter to Sorge of August 9th, 1890, on these internal dissensions, and also his letter to Lafargue of August 27th (No. 385) and that to C. Schmidt of August 5th, 1890 (pp. 495-497, *Selected Correspondence*, Lawrence and Wishart 1956—*Tr.*).

wards. Until now the German Socialists were fashionable, they were looked upon almost as allies; but since the May demonstration and the international accord it revealed, the enthusiasm for them is beginning to wane; they are afraid of them and would be pleased to see the Socialists beyond the Rhine tear each other to pieces, as the French Socialists have done. The congress is impatiently awaited: the bourgeois believe that discord will prevail there and that the Party will be split. Their malicious hopes will be disappointed.

The *Figaro*¹ is at present publishing disclosures about Boulanger which show him up in a very sorry light: he was nothing but a vulgar sybarite incapable of sacrificing the smallest pleasure for his political ambitions. All he wanted was to live well and have a gay time; for the rest he relied upon his lucky star which was supposed to do everything for him; his fatalism was positively Turkish, or rather Breton. It seems that he still believes that fate may yet bring him back to France, where he would again play an important political part. Undoubtedly the young Roshers' visit unhinged his mind and made him believe he was a great man.

I have re-written the pamphlet on the *evolution of property*² which the *Sozial-Demokrat* Library has already published: I have almost doubled its length. Laura is translating it into English for Sonnenschein who is to publish it and who will pay ten pounds as soon as

¹ Twice a week (on Wednesdays and Saturdays) from August 20th *Figaro* published a series of articles entitled: "Behind the Scenes of Boulangism," signed X. The series was interrupted between October 4th and 18th, but apart from that, continued until October 20th, when the author identified himself as Mermeix, a former Boulangist.

² This work appeared in 1895 under the title: *The Origin and Evolution of Property*, published by Delagrave (see Engels' letter reviewing it, April 3rd, 1895). It had also appeared in the form of articles, one of which was published in *La Nouvelle Revue* of February 1st, 1890.

National Hotel, Melbourne 27/8/90

Mon cher Lafargue

Qui nous amènes au bord, et ce
je n'ai pas dit, pour à l'arrivée de votre lettre
de 4 personnes avec nous une proposition
d'aller au théâtre, ce qui me rend j'ai
fait avec beaucoup de plaisir, n'étant re-
pour des raisons assez valables dont j'ai
parlé à Emma et qui, alors, nous pour-
rait les trouver bonnes. Après 15 jours au
jardinier nous sommes ici, dans un petit
jardin house, la maison, très-belle femme,
nous traite très bien, mais le logis est
confortable mais est pas fait clair, nous
avons le quatrième lit dans le salon.

Comme je dois dans une certaine mesure
sur l'état de mon soldat anglais banque,
ne pouvant composer mes livres je ne puis
vous faire un tel que pour les hivers,
le soir.

Il y a en réalité d'admirables dans

Facsimile of the beginning of the letter No. 385 from Frederick Engels to Paul Lafargue

Sur la liste d'officiers qui j'écris ci-dessus
de la province de For. ce doit être un sous-officier
de province balthique qui à Genève il y a dix ans
encore fut chef d'une revue balthique (ou allemande)
et que le duc de Mecklenbourg, prince de Schwedt, a
découvert au moment où il venait d'être
arrêté à Rastatt par les troupes espagnoles
par lui-même, mais il n'a donné le
nom ni l'empereur. Juste temps de ce balthi-
fanz. Peut-être de le mettre à la tête d'un
petit escadron composé de trois officiers
sans solde.

Il croit encore dans quelques-uns
craqueleurs de la rue au milieu d'elles
et le nouveau gong patrouille d'ordinaire,
qui amène, à l'heure. Entre les
Nin, a fait de devoir, mais on
est une de mal de le part d'elles.
Nin fait une grande, et L'arras
tout !

Yours as ever
T. E.

he gets the manuscript; but in the meantime I have used up the cheque you sent me before your departure, so I would ask you to let me have another.

I have had an article accepted by the *Revue bleue* on the Adam and Eve myth¹; Mme Adam, the erstwhile Eve, has an article in her files which she has promised me to publish shortly; *Time* will no doubt print my article on the *Athene Myth* this month. That will keep the wolf from the door.

I have read Kovalevsky's work on the family and property²; it is very feeble and an uncommon far-rago. He has not read Morgan and, apart from a few scattered personal observations, there is nothing new either in the way of facts or general considerations. K[ovalevsky], who has contrived to quote all the bourgeois, does not once mention either Marx or you: he was afraid of compromising himself.

Mémé and Laura are well and send you their love, as also to Hélène.

Good wishes,

P. LAFARGUE

385. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX³

Bellevue Hotel, Folkestone, 27/8/90

My dear Lafargue,

Yes, we are at the sea-side, and what is more, until the arrival of your letter of the 4th, nobody had suggested my coming to Le Perreux, which, as a matter of fact, I should

¹ This article did not appear in 1890.

² Maxim Kovalevsky: *Tableau des origines et de l'évolution de la famille et de la propriété*, Stockholm, 1890.

³ An extract from this letter was published in the *Socialiste*, No. 115, of November 24th, 1900—dated, incidentally, October 27th. We give the complete text here from the original, which has been found.

have had much pleasure in doing, if only for the quite weighty reasons which I mentioned to Laura who, at the time, seemed to find them good. We have been here since a fortnight to-day in a little public house; the landlady, a very handsome woman, treats us excellently, but the place is a long way from the sea and not first class; our fourth bed is in the parlour.

As I am in some ignorance about the state of my bank balance, having been unable to go over my accounts. I can make you out a cheque for only *ten pounds*, and here it is.

There has been a students' revolt in the German Party.¹ For the past 2-3 years, a crowd of students, literary men and other young declassed bourgeois has rushed into the Party, arriving just in time to occupy most of the editorial positions on the new journals which pullulate and, as usual, they regard the bourgeois universities as a Socialist Staff College which gives them the right to enter the ranks of the Party with an officer's, if not a general's, brevet. All these gentlemen go in for Marxism, but of the kind you were familiar with in France ten years ago and of which Marx said: "All I know is that I'm no Marxist!" And of these gentlemen he would probably have said what Heine said of his imitators: I sowed dragons and reaped fleas.

These worthy fellows, whose impotence is only matched by their arrogance, have found some support in the new recruits to the Party in Berlin—typical Berlinism, which is to be interpreted as presumption, cowardice, empty bluster and gift of the gab all rolled into one,

¹ This refers to the conflict between certain groups who called themselves the "youth," or the "independents," and the leadership of the Party. See also Engels' letter to Sorge of August 9th, 1890.

seems to have come to the surface again for a moment; it provided the chorus for the student gentry.

They have attacked the deputies without rhyme or reason, and nobody could understand this sudden recrudescence; it was because the deputies, or most of them, had not made enough of these petty scamps. It's true that Liebk[necht] conducted his polemic in the name of the deputies and the Central Committee with uncommon clumsiness; but now Bebel, who was the main target, has smashed up two of their papers¹ at a couple of meetings—in Dresden and in Magdeburg; the Berlin meeting was protected by the police who covertly egged on the opposition, or got others to egg it on. However, it's over and done with and the congress² will scarcely need to devote any more time to this business. The little shock has done us good, insofar as it has made clear the impossibility of giving the Berliners the role of leaders. Would that they were Parisians—but we have had enough and more than enough of your Parisians.

The Boulanger revelations in *Figaro* must be damning—could you send them to me? It's very hard on the 247,000 or 274,000 boobies who allowed themselves to be taken in by this bogus great man in January 89.³

There is one important thing in Kovalevsky's book and that is, that between the matriarchy and the communism of the Mark (or the mir) he places the patriarchal household community, such as existed in France (Franche-Comté and Nivernais) up till 1789 and still exists to-day among the Servians and Bulgarians under the name of Zadruga. He tells me that this is the view generally accepted in Russia. Should it be corroborated,

¹ This probably refers to the *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung* and the *Magdeburger Volksstimme*.

² The Halle congress met on October 12th, 1890.

³ This refers to the elections of January 27th, 1889. (See Note 3, p. 192.)

it would raise several difficulties in relation to Tacitus and others, whilst removing others. The great fault in K[ovalevsky]'s book is the *juridical fiction*. I shall refer to this in the new edition of my book.¹ Another fault (common among Russians who go in for science): an exaggerated faith in the *recognised authorities*.

Love from Nim and Pumps.

Kiss Laura and Mémé for me.

With good wishes,

F. E.

386. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS AT FOLKESTONE

Le Perreux, 31/8/90

My dear Engels,

What a strange idea to go and shut yourself up in a little public house in Folkestone! You say the landlady is a very handsome woman, but do her personal charms compensate for the disadvantages of her hostelry? At Le Perreux you would have been just as well, if not better lodged, and there are some exceedingly pretty women hereabouts who would have equally gladdened your eyes.

The principal fault in Kovalevsky's book is not only those "juridical fictions," but mainly his incapacity to take a comprehensive view of the subject he claims to be treating. He has confined himself to describing very inadequately what you call the communism of the Mark, and which, in my view, should rather be called family collectivism, to distinguish it from primitive commu-

¹ This refers to *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1940.—Tr.). Engels, indeed, used much of Kovalevsky's work, particularly in the chapters on "The Family" and "The Gens Amongst the Celts and Germans."

nism; and to giving some of the reasons for the transformation of the Mark into private property; he has not understood, or tried to understand, the disintegrating effect of the burden of taxation, which saddles the collectivist village with the usurer and makes him the owner. in fact if not in name, of the land and produce of the mir. Modern taxation in money, instead of in kind and in proportion to the harvest, is by itself more destructive than the other reasons he mentions. The Russian exchequer saps the very foundations of the Czar's autocratic power, namely, the economically independent collectivist communes which have no federal ties amongst themselves.

You say that the important thing about his book is that he has placed the patriarchal household community between the matriarchy and the communism of the Mark: I believe there is another way of envisaging this matter in more comprehensive terms and in greater conformity with the known facts.

The matriarchal family has its origins in the heart of primitive communism. To start with the clan lives in one or several communal dwellings; the married women each have their private rooms. The provender supplied by fishing, hunting and rudimentary agriculture is put under the control and in the care of the women, who are also in charge of the husbandry. When the communal dwelling is split up into as many huts as there are married women, their economic position remains the same. They have control over the provender; sometimes there are communal granaries under their supervision—Morgan cites examples. If the partitioning of arable land is then introduced as a consequence of the splitting up of the communal dwelling, the plots of land are allocated to the women, as was the case with the Spartans, the Nairs, the Egyptians, the Basques, etc. Thereupon you have a matriarchal household community which comes between primitive communism in its primitive matriarchal form and the communism of the Mark.

But when the family revolution occurs in the midst of primitive communism, this matriarchal-community form is replaced by the patriarchal form.

Hence one may say that, before reaching the collectivism of the Mark, it went through a transitory communism, sometimes matriarchal, sometimes patriarchal in form.

I am sending you *Behind the Scenes of Boulangism*; it is beginning to be highly entertaining, for the reporter in the wings shows that everyone was implicated in Boulangism.

Longuet who announced that he would come and take Mémé to the sea-side, did not turn up, as usual; we have taken this opportunity to give her a vermifuge to-day. She is very well.

Our love to Hélène and Pumps and good wishes to you.

P. LAFARGUE

387. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Sept. 15th, 1890

My dear Lafargue,

In all haste.

Bonnier wrote to me about the 1891 Congress and the convocation drawn up by the Belgians. I have answered him in a letter which I have asked him to send on to Guesde for him to discuss with you, Deville, etc., as also with our Blanquist allies, and to tell me then what all of you think.

The point is that the Belgians have played us a trick which puts our whole congress in jeopardy.¹ They have

¹ The Belgians, who had been officially mandated solely by the Possibilist International Congress of 1889 (they had attended both congresses), had issued invitations to an international congress in Brussels in 1891. The International Congress held at the Salle Pétrele had chosen Switzerland as the meeting-place for the next congress.

invited the Trades-Unions who were at Liverpool¹ and who have accepted enthusiastically. Naturally, we were not there to invite them instead. Why are we always conspicuous by our absence whenever there is something decisive to be done? Why were we so stupid as to leave the next congress preparations to the Belgians and Swiss?

Tussy and Aveling tell me that the English will certainly go to the congress of the Belgians, that is, of the Possibilists, and that there is not the slightest hope of making them understand that there is to be another congress which will be of greater importance. I myself am entirely of the same view: the English will go *en masse*, and with the fervour of neophytes, to the first international congress to which they have been invited.

There is but one way to counteract it. That is for us to propose a merger. If it takes place—indispensable conditions: absolutely equal footing, convocation by the representatives of the *two* 1889 congresses, the 1891 congress in *complete* control of its functions, method of representation, mutually agreed upon in advance—in which case we shall easily have the best of it. If it does not take place, that will be the Poss[ibilists]' fault; we shall have demonstrated to the whole working-class world that they are the sole cause of splits and in that case there will be a chance of re-opening the campaign successfully here in England.

If the French approve this in principle, I would suggest taking advantage of the Halle congress, Oct. 12th,² to settle the preliminaries. One or two of the

¹ The Trades Union Congress which opened on August 14th at Liverpool had marked the victory of the New Unionism and brought about the resignation of H. Broadhurst from the Secretaryship of the Parliamentary Committee. (The Liverpool 1890 T.U.C. is recorded as having C. Fenwick as Secretary to the Parliamentary Committee—a position he retained until the 1894 Congress—Broadhurst not being recorded as holding that position after the Dundee T.U.C. of 1889.—*Tr.*).

² The German Social-Democratic Party's Congress.

French will be there. D. Nieuwenhuis, Adler from Vienna, probably a Swiss, perhaps a Belgian. Tussy would come to explain the position in England to you. It would be a regular conference. The plan of action could easily be sketched out and the work set in train.

It's a case of the decisive opportunity, perhaps the last for 5 or 10 years, for the French, Germans and English to form an alliance. If we let it slip, don't be surprised if the movement here sinks for good into the rut of the *S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation]* and the Possibilists.

Our rivals are active and astute. They have always been superior to you in this respect; we have indulged the right to be lazy too freely in our international affairs. Let's put an end to that, let's be up and doing!

As soon as I have the approval of all of you, I shall write to the Germans.

I think I committed a blunder in writing to B[onnie], who is at Templeure, instead of to you direct. But it was his letter which forced me to deal with the matter and the subject expanded under my hand as I put pen to paper.

Kiss Laura.

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

388. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 16/9/90

My dear Engels,

The harm is not as great as you suppose, although there is a dirty Belgian trick behind it.

We had discussed the meeting-place for the next congress among ourselves and we had considered the possibility of holding it in Belgium, for the following reasons. The behaviour of the Possibilists over May 1st has utterly ruined them in the eyes of the Belgians and the Dutch,

consequently it is very unlikely that the Possibilists would go to their own congress; that's what happened at Troyes,¹ where they did not dare to show themselves with us, even though they had called the Troyes congress. In any case, the Possibilists consider the international game lost; Brousse is publishing a monthly journal called *La France socialiste* and he told Mendelsohn, who repeated it to me, that one ought to stop dreaming about international socialism, which had no future, and confine one's efforts to one's own country. At the same time there is war in the Possibilist camp. On the one hand Allemane is in control of the *Federated Union* (the Paris organisation of the Possibilists), whilst Brousse leads the group of elected councillors and Labour Exchange people. The war will break out openly at the elections to replace Joffrin, who has just died,² for Allemane is running and Brousse is putting up Lavy to oppose him.

There is little to fear from Possibilist quarters.

Nevertheless, we preferred Switzerland as the meeting-place for the next congress, as more central and more convenient for us; but we shall certainly attend the Belgian congress; particularly in view of the Liverpool decision.

I would advise you not to address yourself to Bonnier to settle anything; he is simpler than a child and does not know how to judge the situation.

I will speak to Guesde. Our congress is to be held on the 9th and 11th at Lille, and that of the Trade Unions from the 11th to 18th at Calais: we have chosen those towns and dates to enable us to attend both. I shall probably go to both: I am trying to find some opening as a correspondent which would pay for my travelling expenses. Guesde will probably go to Halle to bring

¹ A workers' congress was called at Troyes at the end of 1888 by the Possibilists who in the event abstained from attending it.

² Joffrin, the Clignancourt representative, died on September 15th.

greetings from the two congresses and the decision made on the congress question.¹

In accepting Belgium we shall appear generous-minded and peace-loving; and in refusing to make their appearance, the Possibilists will put an end to their unhealthy role.

Regards and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

389. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 19/9/90

My dear Engels,

I have just this moment received a letter signed Caron, accompanied by a circular which announces, amongst other things, the publication of Marx's *Poverty* and of my pamphlet on *Being Lazy*.

Naturally they did not dream of asking your permission, nor mine, nor anyone else's: they are uncommonly cool customers here. Caron says he is writing to you; please do not answer him, or if you do, tell him to address himself to me.² I knew this Caron in the 5th arrondissement, but later he dropped out of the movement and has only come on the scene again recently.

I am refusing him my authorisation because, as his business is a private one, I expect to be paid and because we are in the process of reviving our *Socialist Library*, which will undertake the publication of our pamphlets. I was anxious to warn you immediately.

Brousse is in a decidedly bad way; his reign is coming to an end. He did not dare to turn up at Joffrin's

¹ The International Congress.

² The rough draft to Engels' reply is published in the Russian edition of the *Works* of Marx and Engels (Vol. 28, pp. 240-41). Engels used Lafargue's arguments and sent on a copy of the letter to him.

funeral,¹ where Allemane acted as master of ceremonies. They say that J[offrin] has left a will in which he attacks Brousse; we shall hear some fine stories. All the parties are decomposing; our chances grow.

It is rumoured that, in order to restore his much tarnished prestige, Clemenceau will tender his resignation and stand in Montmartre to replace Joffrin. It's a sign of the times: Montmartre used to be a Possibilist stronghold; Clemenceau must consider them done for, and must have a few little documents in hand to muzzle them. He wants to reconquer Paris. If he has the courage to play his cards well he stands a chance of getting in. Longuet will be tricked yet again and as usual by his friends the Radicals, who made him give up his 11th (arrondissement) constituency for Floquet at the last elections.

Would you please send me a cheque; the last month's is down to the last pound.

Laura is working like a negress on the translation of my pamphlet on *Property*,² which is twice as long as in the German edition; it will be ready at the beginning of October.

Have you read the *Athene Myth in Time*?³

Regards to you and to everyone,

P. LAFARGUE

390. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 22/9/90

My dear Engels,

Tomorrow, Tuesday, we are meeting to settle the congress question.⁴ Vaillant, at present in Vierzon, could

¹ Joffrin's funeral took place on September 18th. The main speeches were made by J. B. Dumay and Allemane.

² See Letter of August 24th, 1890.

³ See Note 2, pp. 367-68.

⁴ This refers to the 1891 International Congress.

not be summoned, but his consent has been obtained to the decisions to be taken. I shall communicate your letter to the meeting: I believe there is little to add; you have foreseen all the possible dangers. The Belgians will have no difficulty in accepting your propositions, for they are pretty much the same as those which they supported at The Hague conference: sovereignty of the congress in checking credentials—that is the most important item.

To launch the 1891 congress it is important that the date and place be settled at Halle if possible, with or without the Belgians. However, it would be better if they were there. They might be invited, as you suggested to Bebel; but such an invitation ought to be extended to the other workers' parties: if there are enough foreign delegates at Halle, nothing would be simpler than to settle the congress matter. In that way, whilst being obliged to accept Belgium, we should nevertheless appear to have acted freely and after studying the situation. At our two congresses at Lille and Calais we shall manoeuvre for Belgium to be agreed upon and for the Swiss Committee to be asked to consult the other parties on the question. We shall make out that we know nothing of what went on at Liverpool.

It was good of you to reply at such length to Caron. His business is a shady one and may well be like the *Idée nouvelle*—a pure pretext to send round the begging box. That's why he makes such a hash of names, from Marx to Brousse.

Don't reply to the *Idée nouvelle*. I am sorry that, by my silence, I allowed them to reprint my articles; Deville forbade them to mention his name. (He was quite right!)¹

I shall write to you tomorrow after the meeting.

Ever yours,

Thank you for the cheque.

P. LAFARGUE

¹ In Laura's handwriting.

Love to Nimmy and to you and to Schorlemmer.

(L.L.)

Aveling never wrote to me about Lavigerie, but what's certain is that I never signed any invitation. That is a forgery. I shall mention it to Guesde tomorrow and we shall take the opportunity to expose the fellow publicly.

391. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 24/IX/90

My dear Engels,

We met yesterday; Guesde and I placed your letter before the meeting and we unanimously and unhesitatingly reconsidered our choice of a meeting-place for the international congress, and have decided to propose Belgium. Guesde will go to Halle and let them know of our decisions, as also of the Lille and Calais congress resolutions, which will ratify our decision. We resolved to demand the sovereignty of the congress only in regard to the inspection of credentials, the determining of the programme of matters to be discussed and the settling of the voting procedure, which is to be by individuals and not by countries, as the Belgians suggested in Paris.

All things considered, Belgium is better than Switzerland. What is needed at the moment is to draw the trade-unions into the socialist movement: Belgium being nearer, a larger number of English delegates will be able to attend the congress. In choosing Belgium we give evidence of our desire to establish international understanding; and as Brousse & Co. will not come to their own congress, we shall gain a victory which will have cost us nothing.

The movement is going very well in the provinces and

in Paris: the Boulangist dissolution is beginning to bear fruit. The need to organise is felt on all sides and it is we who will form the nucleus of the new organisation.

Our paper has been well received¹; we have already over 200 subscribers and their number will go on increasing, to judge by the letters of congratulation and encouragement received. The paper is being printed in Lille at the Party's press on special terms; the first thousand is costing us 35 francs and the rest 12 francs. In these circumstances we stand a good chance of survival.

Kindest regards,

P. LAFARGUE

Are you receiving the paper?

Guesde has written to Aveling about Lavigerie.

My dear General,

On the heels of this epistle you will receive, I hope, a box full of pears! These pears, I can assure you, have been a source of anxiety. They have ripened in the most ridiculous way: daily we have had to throw away a lot and yet there was never a decent dozen of them ripe "all at once."—As it is, we send them in an unripe state, but under Nim's severe supervision they are sure to behave themselves and sooner or later turn out fit for eating. A few of them will have to be buried at once: there's a big brown fellow who will want doing away with badly by the time he reaches you.

Good-bye to you, my dear General, and tell Nim I'm savage every time the sun shines,—and that has been all day long for this long while—when I think of the miserable drip-drip time of it she had here!

YOUR LAURA

¹ The first number of *Le Socialiste* came out on September 21st, 1890.

Mémé, who takes as great an interest as ever in the General's "nase," left us on the 4th, since which date we have not, of course, had any sort of news of her, seeing that she is with the father.¹

392. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Sept. 25th, 90

My dear Lafargue,

Bebel writes to me to say that he agrees with us about Belgium. Now I have charged him with sending out invitations to a preliminary conference "with a view to discussing the means of avoiding in 1891 a repetition of what occurred in 1889, namely, two independent and rival working men's congresses"; and with inviting everyone, Belgians, Swiss, the two Danish parties, Swedes, Italians (have you the addresses?), Spaniards and English (the Parliamentary Committee, the Eight Hours League, the S[ocial] D[emocratic] F[ederation] and the S[ocialist] League).

As for your decision not to insist upon anything apart from the three matters of inspection of credentials, determining of the agenda and voting procedure, it strikes me that here you are venturing on rather dangerous ground. It means accepting, in all other respects, the resolutions of the previous Possibilist congresses and inviting, as each case presents itself, a fresh debate to clear away these obstacles. It means recognising the series of Belgian-Possibilist congresses, including the 1888 London² caricature, as the only true international working class representation, and reducing ours

¹ This post-script by Laura Lafargue in English.—*Tr.*

² This refers to the International Industrial Congress of November 1888, convened by the Trade Unions and the Possibilists.

of 1889 to the role of an act of rebellion without either a basis or an issue.

Just consider what you would be doing. You want to propose, without other reservations than those mentioned above, that voting should be by individuals. And at the last Possibilist congress *three* delegates for each organisation were admitted. It's true that these had but one voice when it came to voting; but, unless you waste all the congress time on roll-calls, how are you going to control that? What is to stop the Belgians sending three delegates from every little organisation and getting the upper hand of the congress by virtue of your own proposal? And how often would you be able to take a roll-call amidst the yells of an impatient congress?

I think you are befuddled over the Possibilist collapse; don't forget that between now and September 1891, when the congress will probably meet, many things can happen. Why relinquish important positions that we hold to-day? Between now and then we may have great need of them. Remember that there are Possibilists more or less everywhere, and not least in Belgium.

I have not received your paper, has it really come out?

Kind regards,

F. ENGELS

393. FREDERICK ENGELS

TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 25 sept. 1890

My dear Laura,

To-day being your birthday¹ will be duly celebrated with a good bottle of wine and your health drunk with musical honours—and *such* musical honours! Nim, Schorlemmer and myself, three splendid musicians!

Many thanks for the pears which Nim is expecting with the utmost anxiety. That "brown fellow" of yours

¹ Laura was in fact born on September 26th, 1846.

shall be settled before he knows where he is; as for the rest, Nim will certainly take care that their

*Lebenslauf
ist angefangen und beschlossen in
Der Santa Casa heiligen Registern.¹*

To-day the last No of the *Sozial-Demokrat* is published.² I shall miss that paper almost as much as the *N[eue] Rh[einische] Zeitung*. Ede is going to remain here; Tauscher left yesterday for Stuttgart; Fischer, the best of the lot after Ede, will settle in Berlin; the unspeakable muddler Motteler and his elegantly-bred missus nobody knows what to do with, so I suppose they will stay here for some time longer, though we could miss them very well—only, unfortunately, everybody else seems to be in that same position.

Bebel and Liebk[necht] have now both removed to Berlin. In case urgent communication with them might become necessary, I give you Bebel's address, the only one I have:

A[ugust] B[ebel], Großgörschenstr. 22a, Berlin.

Fine scandals in Berlin amongst the nobility³—one shot himself while quarrelling with a rat de ballet,⁴ another for debt and swindling, a third in prison for everlasting rows and delirium tremens, a chief officer—Major—of the Unterofficierschule at Potsdam shot himself and even

¹ Life's span
begins and ends in
the holy records of the Santa Casa.—*Tr.*

² The last issue (No. 39) of the *Sozial-Demokrat* to be published in London appeared on September 27th, 1890. It contained an article by Engels: "Farewell Letter to the Readers of the *Sozial-Demokrat*."

³ This no doubt refers to the suicides of Graf von Schleinitz and Graf von Schaumburg and to the arrest of Graf von Kleist.

⁴ Ballet student.—*Tr.*

the *Kreuzzeitung* telling the nobility that they are close upon the deluge which they expect only "après nous"!¹ Could not be better!

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

394. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 26th Sept. 1890

My dear Löhrr,

Yesterday we celebrated your impending birthday by a bottle of good claret, and to-day we shall drink, in honour of the real event, a bottle of champagne and wish you many happy returns of the day, hoping that you have only arrived

Nel mezzo del cammin della tua vita.²

As a birthday present herewith your share in Meissner's remittance of £45, just to hand, in shape of a cheque for £15.—it comes very appropriate!

The last No. of the *S[ozial]-D[emokrat]* is creating a stir here—Edward yesterday had a long extract in the *Daily Chronicle*,³ and is to interview E. Bernstein for Monday's *Star*⁴ (with photograph).

Meissner has not yet sent the account, only the remittance, and further particulars must be delayed.

Love from Nim, Schorlemmer and yours ever,

F. ENGELS

¹ After they are dead and gone.—*Tr.*

² In the middle of the journey of your life (opening words of Dante's *Inferno*).—*Tr.*

³ The *Daily Chronicle* of September 25th, 1890, carried an article (p. 3/III): "The New Era in German Socialism," the second part of which consisted of Engels' article in the final issue of the *Sozial-Demokrat*.

⁴ The *Star* of September 29th published an interview with Bernstein (p. 2/VI), with his photograph, under the heading: "Socialist Smugglers—Germany Flooded with Papers from Kentish Town—A Talk with the Editor."

Next time you come here you will be able to have a hot bath in the house. The old Marquis died some time ago and the estate has gone into the hands of other agents, so I posais la question de cabinet¹ and gave notice unless a new kitchen range and a new bath with hot water arrangements was put in. To-day the people have been here to look at the premises and I am informed that these demands of mine will be complied with. Of course there may be some little difficulty yet, but from what I hear I believe that I have carried my point.

The box of pears has not arrived yet up to 3 p.m. to-day but very likely it will be here before dinner.

395. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Sunday 28th septbr. 90

My dear General,

A thousand thanks for your kind letter and cheque and for having drunk champagne and claret "à mon intention."² And that reminds me of the unforgettable Maitrank you brewed for us when I was last in London, and a second edition of which, let's hope, you'll brew for us again next year, with or without the forbidding Madame Julius Caesar Motteler, to whom I owe "une pinte de bon sang."³

I am happy to think that *Das Kapital* is becoming popular in Germany; daily events are like a living commentary to the book and will help the learned and unlearned to the understanding of it.

You will have received a letter from Guesde; he is very anxious to go to Halle and that's right enough, but what he proposes to do there without the faintest knowledge

¹ Raised the question of a water-closet.—*Tr.*

² In my honour.—*Tr.*

³ A hearty laugh.—*Tr.*

of German I don't exactly see. Duc-Quercy also goes as reporter, accompanied by an artist of the *Illustration*, who is to make sketches and portraits of men and manners at the congress. Of course, Duc doesn't know a word of German either. The Joffrin succession¹ bids fair to lead to sore scrimmage and the Possibilists are already beginning to soap their dirty linen in public, but the French public is long-suffering and can bear much in that line. After, no less than before, the Boulangist adventure and the revelations anent the *fripouille*² that made up the *entourage* of the Duchess d'Uzès' favourite, it takes a great deal of low scoundrelism to shock "nous autres Français et patriotes."³ As Rochefort says: "les temps héroïques sont passés et les temps crapuleux sont venus,"⁴ and the spirituel⁵ Rochefort is himself a product of those times.

I shall miss the *Sozial-Demokrat* immensely; it was unique in its way and cannot be replaced, and I shall miss your own pen or rather your sword that fought so cheerily in its pages!

Paul continues to board and lodge his "ver solitaire."⁶ He calls it his Walt Whitman; but as he has grown very thin since this intruder took up his abode inside of him, I am beginning to feel somewhat anxious on the subject.

The Avelings shall have their invitation.

Your postcard just to hand. The box *ought* to have reached you on *Thursday* morning.

Love to you all, my dear General, and beg Schorlemmer to wait a day or two for me to write to him for

¹ The Clignancourt by-election took place on November 16th.

² Scamps.—*Tr.*

³ Us Frenchmen and patriots.—*Tr.*

⁴ Heroic times are at an end and dissolute times have set in.—*Tr.*)—a phrase from Rochefort's editorial in *L'Intransigeant* of September 27th, 1890. This article, entitled "The Impossible," dealt with the attacks on Rochefort and the question of his amnesty.

⁵ Witty.—*Tr.*

⁶ Tapeworm.—*Tr.*

to-day, Sunday, we have got folks for dinner and I'm extra-busy.

YOUR LAURA

I enclose the invitation for the Avelings.

The manuscript for Sonnenschein will be ready in a few days; I shall write to Aveling when I send it to him.

I have not got Sorge's address.

It is very annoying that the box has taken so long to reach you. The peaches will have been spoiled, as also the beans. I was very anxious that Hélène should taste them in the best possible condition so that she should realise how successful her planting was.

Best regards to Chloromajor and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

At the congress which the Possibilists are to hold in Paris¹ they will announce the end of Brousse, Lavy, Paulard, etc., as too authoritarian. That will be funny.²

396. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

3rd/octbr./90

My dear Engels,

Paul has had to go round to the *Nouvelle Revue*, wherefore I write you in his name and stead.—It is unfortunately impossible *at such short notice* to send a “seaman” from France to the Glasgow meeting. Something might *possibly* have been done if we had had earlier intimation of what was wanted. Our people have no rela-

¹ The Possibilist National Committee had decided to hold a National Congress at Châtellerauld on October 9th. The Central Federal Union, in which the Allemane trend predominated, convened a Regional Congress in Paris for October 2nd, which had on its agenda the questions of discipline and propaganda.

² Both post-scripts by Paul Lafargue were written in French.—Tr.

tions with *the Havre*: Calais is nothing to the purpose:—Marseilles and Bordeaux alone could have supplied the representative wanted. We had a Captain Dupont from Bordeaux at our Paris congress and a delegate to Glasgow might have been obtainable—had we known in time.—It is a great pity.

Forgive me, my dear General, for being extra-brief—but I've got the devil himself in the household this afternoon!

YOUR LAURA

397. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 16/10/90

My dear Engels,

I see from the *Daily Chronicle*¹ which you sent me that Aveling has given a good brief account of the Lille congress,² but he did not have the time, nor the freedom of expression to convey the real character of the congress, the most important one that we have had in France, with the exception of the International Congress and the Marseilles congress³ at which, for the first time, the aristocracy of the French proletariat lisped communist phrases, without quite understanding their import.

The notable thing about the Lille congress is that almost all its members had been the victims of bourgeois vengeance: a great many had lost their usual means of livelihood and had to find another by taking on small

¹ On October 14th, 1890, the *Daily Chronicle* gave a report of the Lille congress (p. 5/I-II), under the heading "Socialist Congresses on the Continent."

² The Lille congress of the Guesdist Party was held on October 11th and 12th.

³ That is, the Congress of 1879, which marked the revival of the French working-class movement and which is generally regarded as the Foundation Congress of the French Workers' Party.

jobs, such as newsvendors, oil-hawkers calling from door to door to sell a pound of oil, vegetable sellers and coalmen, tavern-keepers, etc.; but, to make up for it, many of these delegates had been chosen by their comrades to represent them on municipal, county and district councils and conciliation boards. Almost all the towns and communes represented at the congress sent delegates who had won the votes of their fellow-citizens for other elective positions. Nothing shows better the influence which the Party is beginning to exercise over the working-class masses.

We are disorganised, there are no links between us; and yet, in every corner of France there exists a genuine movement which has already shown itself by the formation of Socialist units, arising, so to speak, spontaneously. And these nuclei are numerous and have a really big effect. The Socialist minority on the municipal council in many towns is large and influential; in others the majority is Socialist and in several the municipal council consists entirely of Socialists. For example, one of the two delegates from Cette had been nominated by the municipal council at an official session to represent that council, which gave him his credentials on official paper, with the official Town Hall stamp. Wherever the majority is Socialist, the work for the commune is given direct to individual or combined workers, without the intermediary of a bourgeois contractor. At Roanne, the municipal council has managed to provide work for a large proportion of the unemployed workers in a most ingenious way, which deserves to be noted. The town had navvying work to be done on roads, drains, buildings, etc. The unemployed workers were weavers, unfit for this heavy labour. The Socialist majority on the council gave out the work to be done to teams of 20 men, including 6 to 8 weavers and 14 to 12 navvies by trade. These teams undertook the jobs on piece-work and the earnings were distributed equally among all the members of the team, although the weavers

had done less work. At first the navvies grumbled, saying that they did not want to work for others; but the Socialists made them see that in employing direct labour, instead of going through an intermediary, the council had been able to raise their daily earnings from 1 franc 50 to 2 francs and that, to enjoy this advantage, they would have to share with all the workers in the team without discrimination. They grumbled at first, but ended by accepting it and were glad of this new method of contracting jobs.

There are to-day splendid elements for organising the Party: it is Paris that is defaulting and as long as it defaults, everything will remain in a sporadic state. Happily the dissolution of the Possibilists, which you will have been able to follow in the papers I have sent you, will rid us of these nuisances; but we shall still have to wait a little.

What a success the Halle congress was! The French papers are full of it,¹ even too full: they falsify the reports and attribute strange words to the delegates. I am sending you an interview with Bebel from *Gil Blas*.² Could Bebel have possibly said anything of the kind? Perhaps it is necessary to humour the new recruits to the Party, who see everything rose-coloured. But you must admit that it is going a bit far to deny the class struggle and express reservations on certain of Marx's trends. Which ones?

Tussy had a great success, her speech at the Lille Hippodrome was very well conceived and very well delivered. She is very sure of herself. It was I who got

¹ Most of the French papers reported the Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party. Even *Le Figaro* gave daily accounts of it. *L'Éclair* published the congress resolutions in full.

² On October 17th *Gil Blas* published an interview with Bebel signed S. (p. 2/IV-VI). The tone of the interview alone leaves no doubt at all of the apocryphal character of the statements attributed to Bebel.

her elected to the chair, and fearing that she might feel embarrassed by that position, I got Langrand from St.-Quentin appointed to assist her; they know how to chair stormy meetings. But she acquitted herself to everyone's satisfaction. In any case, the meeting was uncommonly enthusiastic; our people in Lille had taken steps beforehand to make the anarchists see reason; they held their peace.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

398. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 19 octobre 1890

My dear Löhr,

At last! This week I have been if not busy, at all events "occupied" and "engaged" over head and ears. I have sorted about 4 cubic feet of old letters of Mohr's (that is to say addressed mostly to him) of the period 1836-64. All higgledy-piggledy, in a big basket which perhaps you may remember. Dusting, straightening, sorting—it took more than a week to put them into rough order. During all that time my room upset, covered with paperasses in various degrees of order and disorder, so that I could neither go out nor do any other kind of work. That was Nr. I. Then came the congresses with—not work, but loss of time for me by callers etc. And finally, Nim has been quite out of sorts all this week, went to bed of her own accord on Thursday and actually sent for the Doctor—who however told her there was no reason for her to stick in bed: she might sit up at least a few hours, which she does. He cannot as yet exactly make out what it is, there are symptoms (jaundice) of liver complaint, she has no appetite and is weak. However since last night she is better and in better spirits, and I hope will be well in a few days.

I hope Paul has got rid of his intimate friend inside. If he has not, it's his own fault; a dose of *filix mas* or cousoo will soon put an end to that nuisance. It will poison the brute and do him no harm.

Our congresses have come off gloriously and when we compare them with the Possibilists,¹ they come out in still bolder relief. *That* nuisance now will soon put a stop to itself. Only I hope that our friends will give them every inch of rope they may require and not interfere in the least by approaches or otherwise. Il faut qu'ils cuisent dans leur propre jus.² Any attempt on our side to meddle with them would only arrest for a time the process of disintegration and pourriture.³ The masses are sure to come round to us by and bye. And the longer we allow the leaders to kill each other, the less of them shall we have to take over on the day of reunion. If Liebknecht had not been in such a hurry with regard to the Lassalleans coming over to us, he would not have had to take over Hasselmann and others who had to be kicked out six months afterwards. And now in France, as then in Germany, the whole lot of the leaders are rotten to the core.

To my great surprise and relief, in last *Justice*⁴ Hyndman declares for Brousse! What a piece of good luck! I was beginning to be afraid I might get into a position where Hyndman would have to be taken on again as at least passively a friend, whereas I like him 10,000 times better as an enemy.

Paul now *may* be right: the Poss[ibilists] *may* abstain again from their own congress. The date and place appear

¹ The Châtellerault congress (October 9th-14th), preceded by the Paris regional congress, marked the rupture between the supporters of Brousse and those of Allemane, who shortly after formed a new party.

² They must stew in their own juice.—*Tr.*

³ Rot.—*Tr.*

⁴ There was an unsigned article in *Justice* on October 18th, 1890, entitled: "The Split in France" (p. 1/III).

to have been fixed at Halle: Brussels, 16 Aug. 91. This is all I know. Tomorrow I shall hear it all from Tussy who left Halle yesterday, her return ticket to Cologne expiring on that day.

I am glad Fischer has been put on the Parteivorstand.¹ You have seen him here. He is very intelligent, very active, revolutionary, *absolutely anti-philistine*, and more international in his ways and manners than most Germans. Tussy writes that after the Lille congress, the German Reichstag men, a great portion of them, at least, made a rather philistine impression upon her. I fully expected that. As our M.P.'s are not paid, we cannot get always the best men, but must accept from those in a relatively bourgeois position the *least bad*. Therefore our masses are far better than the *fraction*. The latter may congratulate themselves that they had such asses and shady fellows (many of them probably mouchards²) for an opposition. If they should rebel against Bebel, Singer and Fischer, they will have to be acted against—but I am sure Bebel will always be strong enough to cow them.

Paul est bien naïf avec ses questions sur Bebel et le *Gil Blas*. Il connaît Bebel et il connaît le *Gil Blas*; est-ce qu'il ne se connaîtrait plus soi-même?³ At any rate I shall send the *G[il] Blas* fortement souligné⁴ to Bebel and tell him to disown. Such impudent lying exceeds all measure, even for *Gil Blas*.

Tussy is quite in love with the Lille delegates, and indeed they seem to have been a regular élite and shown the very qualities which it has been the fashion of late in France to cry down because the Germans showed them to a higher degree, though up to 1870 it had been the regular

¹ Party leadership.—*Tr.*

² Police spies.—*Tr.*

³ Paul is really naïve with his questions about Bebel and *Gil Blas*. He knows Bebel and he knows *Gil Blas*; he won't recognise himself next.—*Tr.*

⁴ Heavily underlined.—*Tr.*

thing to claim discipline, esprit d'organisation et action combinée as des qualités tout ce qu'il y a de plus françaises.¹ I was very much interested in Paul's account of these delegates and shall take care that it gets into the English and German press. The great advantage of the French is that they are bred and born in a revolutionary medium. Both English and Germans lack that advantage and are moreover brought up in the religion of the bourgeoisie, protestantism. That gives to their habits, manners and customs a spießbürgerlichen Anstrich² which they have to shake off by going abroad, especially to France. Look at the redaction of the Lille and the Halle resolutions!

That is the great progress: we cannot now do without any one of the three. Only the Belgians and the Swiss we could very well spare.

Love from Nim and yours affectionately,

F. E.

As Paul has said so much in the *N[eue] Z[eit]*³ about the fleets constructed by Mohr for you girls when you were children, I enclose him the, probably, last specimen extant of Mohr's naval architecture.

399. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 23/10/90

My dear Engels,

You are perfectly right, one must leave the Possibilists alone to stew in their filth. In any case, they are so deeply

¹ A spirit of organisation and action combined, as the most French of all qualities.—*Tr.*

² Philistine tinge.—*Tr.*

³ This probably refers to the article on Karl Marx by Lafargue, which appeared in *Neue Zeit* in 1891 (Nos. 1 & 2, 9th Year). Engels had no doubt had the manuscript in his hands.

embroiled amongst themselves that it is out of the question that they should call off their quarrels. The dispute has gone on for a long time, but the anti-Boulangist agitation, which kept the malcontents busy and in funds, postponed the declaration of war: the electoral succession to Joffrin and Chabert touched off the powder-magazine. Have no fear, we want no more of Allemane than of Brousse, and we shall do our utmost to ruin the one and the other; they are villains of the same kidney, which is why they are able to fight together.

Poor Hélène! We had hoped that her little trip to Paris would have helped her to pass a comfortable winter; and now she has begun to be ill when the weather is still at set fair. Could it not be some gastric trouble, complicated by an inflammation of the liver? She should be careful of her diet, dilute her wine with Vichy water, not drink much beer and go out a bit more than she does. Magnesium citrate does a lot of good; she should take a spoonful with every meal. We hope your next letter will tell us that she is up and about again and more or less restored.

It is not worth while for Bebel to send a repudiation to *Gil Blas*, which no one takes seriously. Guesde has come back; the fatigue of the journey prevented him from attending the Berlin meeting which Liebknecht wanted to organise. The Halle congress has made a great impression, to judge by the attacks in the bourgeois papers which, up till now, have affected to admire the Socialist Party beyond the Rhine. The dyed-in-the-wool Blanquists like Granger join in the bourgeois chorus and organise meetings to demonstrate the superiority of French to German Socialists. But whether they say something or nothing, it's all one.

You shall see what a splendid First of May we shall have next year and what enthusiasm for international socialism there will be in France. Brousse, Malon & Co. thought to have frightened away the Trade Unions by crying up the Calais congress in the press as a Marxist

congress; that was why I abstained from going to it, and you saw the reception they gave Aveling and how Marx's name was acclaimed there. A fine current is sweeping the working class along, it has but to be helped.

I am far from happy about my guest; I gave him 3 doses of couso and 2 of filix mas and I have still not succeeded in getting rid of him. I have just administered a third dose of fern, taken in two helpings; we shall see the effect in two months. If you know of any other specific, let me know, I shall try it next time, if need be.

Give our love to Hélène and our wishes for a speedy return to health; and kind regards to you,

P. LAFARGUE

Mémé has been with us since Sunday; she sends her greeting to the General of whom she retains such a pleasant memory.

400. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 26/X/90

My dear Engels,

I have received the following letter from Bebel which I sent at once to *Gil Blas*:

To the Editor-in Chief of *Gil Blas*

"Sir,

Gil Blas published in the form of a correspondent's report an 'Interview with Mr. Bebel' on October 17th.

I take the liberty of pointing out that you have been duped and that there is not one word of truth in the interview insofar as it concerns myself. The utterances which your correspondent ascribes to me are of his invention.

Believe me, etc.

A. -B."

I do not know whether *Gil Blas* will publish this letter accusing it of a hoax, but I shall have it printed in the *Socialiste*,¹ and that is the main thing. We who hold up the German Party as a model and who publicly profess the most unreserved admiration for its leaders, we were disconcerted by *Gil Blas* attributing such views to B[ebel]. We were not concerned that he should send a correction to that pornographic journal, but we are glad to know that Bebel never spoke such words. The *G[il] B[las]* report was so circumstantial and so sober that one could not believe it was entirely imaginary. The bourgeois papers tell so many lies about the German Socialists that one can't waste one's time challenging them, but B[ebel]'s letter will give us the opportunity of putting our people on their guard against the many peculiar things they read in the press: that's why I am glad to have B[ebel]'s letter to print in the *Socialiste*, albeit regretting that he should have sent a denial to a paper like *Gil Blas*.

We are very happy to hear that Nim is beginning to get better and eating oysters again. Well done! May she keep up these good habits.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

Sunday evening

My dear General,

Will you tell Nimmy that poor Madame Fanty, the mother of *Gingerbread*, whom she knows, died early in the morning of to-day.

Madame Fanty was one of the best and finest-natured women I have known. She was always more than good to

¹ We have not been able to verify whether this denial was published in *Le Socialiste*, there being a gap in the only file available in Paris (that in the Bibliothèque nationale) between September 21st (No. 1) and November 16th (No. 9).

me and I was deeply attached to her.—Will you let Tussy know of this who saw Madame Fanty at congress-time.

Forgive my apparent negligence in not thanking you for your letter.

YOUR LOHR

—I will tell you what I think of this *Gil Blas* business some other time.¹

L.

401. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 28/10/90

My dear Engels,

I have had to pay my quarter's rent this month, which is to say that our funds are exhausted, even more completely than I had feared owing to a purchase which I had to make for the winter, now beginning to make itself sharply felt. This will be the last time I shall have recourse to your purse this year, for one of my articles will appear in *La Nouvelle Revue*² in the course of November and will enable me to keep going until New Year's Day.

You must have felt pleased with our statement on the Russian alliance; announced by Guesde at Halle, it had tremendous repercussions in France. The press, which is completely in Russia's pay, howled at us: we are traitors who are trying to surrender France to Prussia by depriving it of its faithful ally. Guesde and I are accustomed to these fulminations; but Ferroul is a trifle put out; he fears that his position in the Chamber will be made untenable, that they will prevent him from speaking; he has already been asked to tender his resignation.

Guesde and Ferroul came back from Halle full of en-

¹ Both post-scripts by Laura Lafargue in English.—*Tr.*

² This article did not appear.

thusiasm; the impression made upon them by the Lille congress was entirely effaced by the magnitude of that left by the German congress. What they saw represented there was a large, disciplined, splendidly organised Party, knowing what it wanted to do, its own master and not permitting itself to be diverted from its aim by side-issues, such as those stirred up by the Werners & Co.¹—Wollmar² made the worst impression on them, his behaviour seemed to them extremely shady.

Give our love to Hélène, who must be more or less restored now, and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

402. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO PAUL LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX

London, Nov[ember] 2nd, 1890

My dear Lafargue,

Poor Nim is very ill.³ It appears that for some time past there has been a renewal of menstruation, and three weeks ago she had a severe loss of blood. Dr. Read whom we consulted found her complexion very yellow, although he could detect no trace of bile in her urine—he suspects the possibility of a uterine tumour but has not examined her manually. Then she had pains in the left groin whenever the faeces passed through the colon towards the sigmoid flexure—that went off again and I thought she was on the road to recovery when very sharp pains in the left foot started. The whole time, a total lack of appetite and great thirst (she has lived on nothing but milk and

¹ Werner was one of the leaders of the so-called Berlin opposition, that is, a group which had attacked the parliamentary fraction. Their policy was more or less unanimously rejected by the congress.

² Wollmar was a Right-wing Socialist.

³ Hélène Demuth (Nim) died two days later.

beef-tea, without solid food). The pains in the left foot came to a head in a thrombosis in a vein of the calf. That seemed to take its natural course, the pains subsided, and this morning she woke up after a good night, much refreshed in appearance and even lively. But between 11 o'clock and midday a change set in and Read found her temperature was $104^{\circ}\text{F.} = 40^{\circ}\text{C.}$ though she had had the thermometer in her mouth but $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. She fell into a state as though half asleep, her mental faculties are impaired, her pulse rapid and feverish, in conformity with the temperature. In fact Read suspects that in the cachectic condition of her blood (more or less indicated by the previous symptoms), the coagulated blood is decomposing and poisoning the healthy blood. He will try and come back this afternoon with Heath of the Gower St. Hospital for a consultation.

That is all I can write to you just now. If H[earth] comes, I shall add a word to let you know the result.

Kiss Laura for me.

Sincerely yours,

F. E.

Consultation with a Mr. Passard, the only one who was to be found. He thinks there is a spreading suppuration of the foot causing septicaemia; the method of fomentation has been changed and 4 grains= $\frac{4}{15}$ th grammes of quinine administered. The uterus has been examined after a fashion but so far nothing has been found except a small slightly suspect spot at the orifice, to which, however, "so far" no importance is attached. Naturally, there is always present the possibility of an embolism and with it the possibility of further complications, pulmonary or otherwise. But the fellow sees the case in a more "hopeful" light than Read.

If there is any change I shall write again tomorrow.

403. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux 19/XI/90

My dear Engels,

The Clignancourt election result¹ will have surprised you, it was a disappointment all round. Everyone expected Longuet to top the poll and he came 3rd with less than half the votes cast. Longuet's defeat can only be explained by the fact that his candidature was supported by *La Justice*. Clemenceau's unpopularity reflected on Longuet and it was bad luck for him in the election that the Toulon affair² occurred during the election campaign. The mayor of Toulon, Fourroux, is a Radical, one of Clemenceau's protégés. One of the major criticisms made of Longuet was that he was a Clemencist. This election, moreover, was just a fight between Boulangists and anti-Boulangists; people voted only for the two candidates who had distinguished themselves by their abuse in the Boulangist campaign. The repentant Boulangists, and there are many of them in Montmartre which was one of Boulanger's strongholds, scattered their votes indiscriminately. Those who are disgusted, as well as the hardened Boulangists, abstained. This election is typical of the mental outlook of the Paris public, which does not know to what policy to give allegiance.

Last Sunday's result so upset Longuet's supporters that they want to re-open the fight with a different candidate who has never had any Clemenceau connections. They considered Benoît Malon, but in the end nominated Dau-

¹ This refers to the parliamentary by-election on November 16th, 1890, caused by Joffrin's death. The results of the first ballot were: Lavy, 2,343; Lissagaray, 2,045; Longuet, 1,143; Dejeante, 1,069, etc. In the second ballot, on November 30th, Lavy the Possibilist was returned with 3,220 votes against Lissagaray's 2,121 and Longuet's 431.

² The mayor of Toulon was implicated in a case of adultery and abortion, which gave rise to scandal.

mas, who is to put up as the candidate of the Republican and Socialist *concentration*—that is the fashionable word. I do not know whether Daumas will accept; it means running the risk of an ignominious defeat, but the voters are so unpredictable that they may yet have another surprise in store.

*Le Figaro*¹ which I sent you contains an article on a Dr. Mathieu who is another one claiming to have a cure for phthisis. The French resent the fame of their Pasteur being eclipsed by that of a German. However, Koch's discovery is so important that it silences many people's chauvinism. Hypodermic treatment is, I believe, the most important medical discovery ever made: it will revolutionise therapeutics altogether. I think Koch presents it in its true light: he does not claim to kill the bacillae, but to alter the tissues affected and enable them to resist attack. The first step is everything with this method; it will soon be fashionable to administer medicaments, not through the stomach but through the skin or the blood stream. Elixirs of longevity will be brought to light again; Brown-Sequard's alleged discovery was a kind of magic medicine. But if Koch's experiments with lupus and consumption are confirmed, anything may happen.

The French have had a triumph which has consoled them for Koch's discovery: the Bank of France has lent 75 million to the Bank of England.² All the papers have vied with one another to extol this loan as demonstrating France's credit. In their absurd enthusiasm they failed to notice that Russia and Brazil had done as much; and they have forgotten that the Bank of France was saved by Russia. But here is another aspect: they say that there is

¹ *Le Figaro* published an article on November 17th "At Doctor Mathieu's" (p. 2/1), signed Gris.

² On November 16th the Bank of France sent 75 million in gold ingots to the Bank of England which the heavy withdrawals from Baring's had placed in temporary difficulties. Russia lent 30 million and Brazil 200.

some Rothschild business behind it and that the Bank of France, which the Rothschilds control, and the Ministry of Finance, where they have placed their agent Rouvier, have merely played their game for them. In the *Intransigent*¹ you will find the charges which Laur was prevented from making in the Chamber of Deputies. What do you think of it? What are they saying in London about the Baring crash?

If Mrs. Kautsky has arrived give her our kindest regards.

Cordially yours,

P. LAFARGUE

Mémé's love and mine to you, my dear General. The weather is so mild that we are doing without fires and sit with doors and windows wide open. I hope you are able to take your afternoon stroll to Hampstead.

YOUR LAURA²

404. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London 1 dec. 1890

My dear Laura,

Enfin!³ I have got that 70th birthday behind me. On Thursday Bebel, Liebknecht and Singer arrived. On Friday letters and telegrams en masse, the latter from Berlin (3), Vienna (3), Paris (Roumanian and Audruch [?])

¹ *L'Intransigent* of November 20th published an article entitled: "Our Money" (p. 1/VI), in which it was claimed that the loan by the Bank of France was due to the Rothschild family's interests, which profited by the Baring failure to take over the financing of the Argentine railways, until then in Barings' hands. Laur wanted to challenge the Minister of Finance on "the measures he intends to take to prevent the draining of our gold for the benefit of foreign markets."

² Laura Lafargue's post-script in English.—*Tr.*

³ At last!—*Tr.*

and Frankel), Berne (Russische Sozialdemokraten), Leipzig Stadt und Land, Bochum (Klassenbewusste Bergleute¹-miners), Stuttgart (Soz[ial] Dem[okraten] Württemberg's), Fürth, Höchst (Paulis), London (Arb[eiter] Verein),² Hamburg. The fraction sent me a splendid album with their 35 portraits, Dietz a book of photos of some excellent Munich pictures, the Solingers a knife with inscription, etc., etc. Enfin j'étais écrasé!³ Well, in the evening we had the whole lot here, embellished by and by by little Oswald and four delegates from the Arbeiter Verein (one of whom speechless drunk) and we kept it up till half past three in the morning and drank, besides claret, 16 bottles of champaign—the morning we had had 12 dozen oysters. So you see I did my best to show that I was still alive and kicking.

But it's a good job. One can celebrate one's 70th birthday only once. It will take me a devil of a time to reply to all those letters—even those I *must* reply to personally. That is the prose following upon the poetry of life, and to break my fall I begin by writing the only one I can write with true pleasure—this one to you.

Louise Kautsky⁴ came on the Tuesday after you left and has since then made me extremely comfortable. As to the future, we have not yet talked about it; I want her to see how things will settle down before asking her to come to a definite resolution. We are getting on very well with Pumps; my lecture and a few hints, repeated later on, that her position in my house depends very much upon her own behaviour, seem to have had some effect. We'll hope it may last.

Bebel looks rather delicate and a deal older than when

¹ Class-conscious mine-workers.—*Tr.*

² (German) Working Men's Association.—*Tr.*

³ In fact I was overwhelmed!—*Tr.*

⁴ Kautsky's first wife had hastened to Engels' side after Nim's death. She installed herself with him, acting as both housekeeper and secretary.

I last saw him. Singer too is getting grey, and of course Liebknecht too, though he looks fat and content de lui-même,¹ he complains awfully about the few capacities among the younger generation, and the impossibility consequently of getting good men for his paper, but otherwise he is very well satisfied with things in general and the Berliners in particular. Tomorrow the Reichstag opens, and we had the greatest trouble to keep Singer and Bebel here to meet Burns, C. Graham, Thorne and others at Tussy's. And now we have kept them here, a damnable fog is setting in (2 p.m.) which even prevents me from writing and may, if not dispersed in time, nullify the whole intended international conference.

Interrupted by fog—forbidden to write by the gaslight—done, conclusion.²

Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

Dites à Mémé que mon nase se porte parfaitement à l'extérieur mais qu'à l'intérieur il y a un rhume de cerveau.³

405. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF THE FRENCH WORKERS' PARTY

Citizens,

I thank you cordially for the congratulations you were good enough to send me on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of my birth.

You may rest assured that what remains to me of life and strength shall be devoted to the fight for the prole-

¹ Pleased with himself.—*Tr.*

² Wherefore I close.—*Tr.*

³ Tell Mémé that my nose is perfectly well on the outside but that inside it has a cold in the head.—*Tr.*

tarian cause. When I am no longer capable of fighting, may it be granted that I die.

But the battles won by you, by our brothers in Germany, in England, in Austro-Hungary, in Russia, indeed everywhere, constitute a brilliant series of victories which should suffice to rejuvenate a man older and more spent than I. And the fact which rejoices me most of all is the sincere fraternity established, I hope for ever, between the French and German proletarians despite the chauvinist screams of our corrupt bourgeoisies.

It was your great compatriot Saint-Simon who was the first to foresee that the alliance of the three great Western nations—France, England and Germany—is the prime international condition for the political and social emancipation of all Europe. That alliance, the core of the European alliance which will put an end for all time to the wars of governments and nations, I hope to see achieved by the proletarians of the three nations.

Long live the international social revolution!

London, December 2nd, 1890

FREDERICK ENGELS

406. FREDERICK ENGELS TO EDOUARD VAILLANT

*122 Regent's Park Road, N.W.
London, December 5th, 1890*

Dear Citizen Vaillant,

Thanks, many thanks for your letter of the 28th of last month and for your kind congratulations. On that day I was heaped with honours by the Socialists of every country. Destiny has willed it that I, in my capacity of survivor, should reap the honours due to the labours of my deceased contemporaries, and above all to those of Marx. Believe me, I do not entertain any illusions on that score nor on the very small part of all these tributes which is owed to me personally.

Thank you also for the sympathetic words you send me

about the death of dear Hélène, thanks to whose care I was able to work in peace for seven years. It was a very grievous loss to me. But we are still in the very midst of the fight; it is forbidden to us to look back too much when the enemy is before us; if I am not mistaken, the crisis of the battle is approaching. In your country the collapse of Boulangism has, on the one hand, rid the corrupted and corrupting opportunist government of all immediately dangerous enemies, and opened the market again where France is sold to the Stock Exchange sharks; whilst on the other hand, this collapse has set free once more, to regroup themselves anew, the revolutionary opposition elements who had gone astray and who should—after the elimination of treacherous leaders—reappear in the field, united in one way or another with the mass of revolutionists who have remained loyal to their traditions. After the farce, the tragedy.

In my country, the swift advance of the Socialist Party should hasten the disillusionment of young Wilhelm about the magnetic force which he flatters himself that he exerts on the working class. That, too, should lead to a crisis; the longer it is delayed, the harder it will be.

Thus, in four or five years at the most, we shall have a crisis which I hope will lead us to victory. And I hope to see it—that “fin de siècle”!

Remember me kindly to Mme Vaillant and to Madame your mother.

With heartfelt greetings,

F. ENGELS

407. FREDERICK ENGELS
TO LAURA LAFARGUE AT LE PERREUX*

London, 17 Dec. 1890

My dear Laura,

Two pieces of good news.

First. Your usual box of puddings, cake and sweets, for Mémé and brothers, has been sent off yesterday as usual,

and hope will reach by Friday at latest. Otherwise please apply at the Bureau des Expéditions Grande Vitesse, Gare du Nord, or at 23 rue Dunkerque, P. Bigeault or 18 rue Begère chez E. d'Odiardi.

Second. Louise Kautsky remains here for good. So my troubles are settled. She seems to like it better after all than setting other people's children into this world.¹ And we get on capitally. She superintends the house and does my secretary's work which saves my eyes and enables me to make it worth her while to give up her profession, at least for the present. She wishes me to send you her kindest regards.

Padlewski² deserves a monument and a life pension. Not so much for polishing off that vile brute Seliverstoff than for delivering Paris from the Russian members. The change in the Paris press since that execution is indeed wonderful and if a voyou³ like Labruyère⁴ finds it to pay him to get Padlewski out of the way, the revulsion of feeling generally must be very great indeed. Even the Boulangists and the *Intransigeant*⁵ have to follow suit.

But it's genuine Parisian. Argument and reason is no use against this chauvinistic enthusiasm for the Czar's alliance. All at once a fact occurs, which lightens up the mental darkness like a flash of lightning. Now they see that they are making themselves accomplices of this Rus-

¹ After separating from her husband Louise Kautsky had qualified as a midwife.

² On November 18th the Russian General Seliverstoff, the Head of the Russian police in France, was murdered in his room by a Pole, Padlewski, who sought refuge with Mme Duc-Quercy and left France a few days later.

³ Guttersnipe.—*Tr.*

⁴ In an article in *L'Éclair* of December 14th, covering nine columns, Labruyère related how he had helped Padlewski to escape. Since Labruyère had quarrelled with Duc-Quercy the motives for his conduct remained rather obscure, if not suspect.

⁵ At first the articles in *L'Intransigeant* spoke of "General" Seliverstoff, but very soon laid stress on his role as a police spy and on his police organisation in France.

sian official infamy, and that, if they themselves have not the courage to get out of it, a Pole has, and can they assist in handing that Pole over to bourgeois "justice"? The enthusiasm for the Czar is at once transferred to the Poles and Nihilists, and the Czar is in for it, for his trouble and his money spent.

All the same, the effect would hardly have been so great if our people had not so constantly and determinedly attacked the Czar.

Anyhow, je m'en réjouis.¹

Pumps has all at once come round. Louise and I coaxed her a bit. After the talking-to I had given her, Percy gave her another, and now she is friendliness all over, not only with Louise but also Annie. Well, I hope it will last, and if it does not, it will be her own fault and then I shall be in a clear position and act accordingly. This time I *can* be master and I shall.

How is Paul's affair with Levraut getting on?²

Fortin writes to say that he and Paul wished to publish the *18 Brumaire* in the *Socialiste* but required my consent. That of course I gave him with pleasure.—He also said the *Revue Socialiste* wanted the same and also the *Misère de la phil[osophie]* for republication. I said as to that, Marx would never forgive me if I entrusted any M.S. of his to the hands of such people who were capable of making all sorts of changes in it; as to the *Misère*, after all the disappointments I had with that, I should consent to its republication in *bookform only*, and only after having full guarantees for the execution of the promise.

What Paul writes about the part of the Rothschilds in the Krach Baring seems not without foundation. The Barings are rich enough to pay all losses and have plenty left. So that the guarantors will be perfectly safe. But the Barings cannot remain a first-rate firm and cannot therefore continue to be financial agents of the Argentine Govern-

¹ I am delighted by it. *Tr.*

² See Letter No. 408.

ment. There the Rothschilds will naturally step into the Barings' shoes. And in order to squeeze the Argentine Government into compliance, the French and German Argentine committees must resist the very sensible (in the interest of *all parties*) proposals of the London Committee, and insist upon cash payment of the coupons which the Londoners are willing to suspend for 3 years and have the amount transformed into a new debt. And the gobe-mouches of the Paris press, payés comptant,¹ work hard in the interest of the Rothschilds.

I am afraid this will be the last long letter you will have for some time. I am so overworked that correspondence will have to be confined to the necessary minimum. I have an urgent quarrel with Brentano² on my hands (preface 4th édit. *Kapital*) and those sort of things I cannot dictate.

Love to Mémé. Ever yours,

F. ENGELS

Bien des choses à Paul.³

408. PAUL LAFARGUE TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 19, 12/96

My dear Engels,

Your letter brought us very glad tidings by announcing that Mrs. Kautsky (whose other name we do not know) has decided to remain with you. We feel sure that this arrangement will suit you both very well. Please give her our wishes for a merry Christmas and thank her for

¹ Paid in cash.—*Tr.*

² This refers to accusations brought against Marx by Professor Brentano in which Marx was said to have distorted Gladstone's words. Engels replied in an article published in *Neue Zeit*: "Brentano versus Marx."

³ Good wishes to Paul.—*Tr.*

the trouble she must have taken to prepare our usual Christmas presents, which will, as always, be welcome.

Your letter had a good effect upon the horrible temperature. For the past three weeks we have been frozen; it has been between 5 and 12° below zero. The banks of the Marne were frozen, the Seine was full of huge ice-floes and I myself was completely numbed; I could not go on working. Fortunately I had your book on the workers in England¹ which I read by the fireside, and also Ure's *Philosophy of Manufactures*. I am doing a course of reading in preparation for the Town Hall lectures which I hope to give. Laura wrote and told you that I had seen Levraut, the president of the Education Committee; he is one of my old Medical School colleagues. We have renewed our acquaintance. He was very friendly and is in favour of Vaillant's proposal to start lectures on the history of labour. The main and the greatest difficulty is finding premises. These lectures, being of a popular character, should be held in the evening; but the Town Hall has only one room to put at the disposal of such lectures and that is occupied every evening. Thereupon Levraut bethought himself of the Public Assistance lecture theatre which is opposite the Town Hall; this hall is free in the evening and is used only once a year for the medical students' examinations. But diplomacy is needed to get it. Also, Vaillant thinks we should wait until Lavy has resigned before submitting the matter to the Council, for the only opposition he foresees is that of the Possibilists, who fortunately have lost a great deal of their influence.

The Padlewski business is not clear. I was able to get permission to visit brave Madame Duc-Quercy² in prison.

¹ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which Lafargue probably read in the English edition published in America in 1888. (According to Engels' 1892 Preface to the Allen & Unwin edition, the Wischnewetzky translation was published in New York in 1886.—*Tr.*)

² Mme Duc-Quercy had been arrested following Labruyère's disclosures. Both of them came up before the 9th District Court on

She is convinced, as are many others, that Labruyère must have been bribed by Constans to arrange P[adlewski]'s escape—his trial would have been extremely embarrassing for him, precisely by reason of the public sympathy he has aroused. There is not a single paper which attacks him and, on the contrary, they have all published ugly stories about Seliverstoff. Russia is definitely on the decline. Russian circles in Paris are very far from agreeing. One section of the Russians in Paris is doing all it can to remove Mohrenheim from the embassy: M. de Cyon, who represents the Pan-Slavist Party in Paris, is at the head of these schemers. In the last *Nouvelle Revue*, Mme Adam made a thoroughgoing attack on the ambassador,¹ accusing him of opposing everything done by Russia's friends and denouncing him to the Czar as a Pole and practically an enemy of Russia.

You answered Fortin very well. Malon is making advances to us; if he wants to publish *Poverty* he should undertake to print 1,000 copies of the book to be put at our disposal in return for the favour. If he writes to you and you give him your consent, tell him to get in touch with me to settle the terms.

I have almost finished my work on *Capital* for Guillaumin: it will consist only of the first 9 chapters.

I had expected not to have to ask you for anything this year, as I had hoped to be paid by Mme Adam for my article, but it will not appear until January 15th. But the amount you send me shall be put to next year's credit, which I hope I shall not use up. If I obtain the post of

December 24th. Labruyère was sentenced to one year's imprisonment and Mme Duc-Quercy to two months.

¹ In the December 15th issue of *La Nouvelle Revue*, Mme Adam in her "Letters on Foreign Policy" (Vol. LXVII, pp. 822 et seq.) formally accused the Russian ambassador, Mohrenheim, of having opposed everything to reach a Franco-Russian understanding and, in particular, of having hampered the activities of the Association of the Friends of Russia.

lecturer at the Town Hall I shall be out of my difficulties at last. None too soon, as you well know.

Regards to everyone and good wishes to you,

P. LAFARGUE

409. LAURA LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON*

Dec. 20th/90

My dear General,

Your letter warmed our place till the thermometer went up and the thaw set in and the ice melted and the snow turned into slush. And now in place of the dead calm that reigned here, the air is full of pleasant noises, the sound of running waters, the cooing of pigeons and crowing of cocks. I cannot remember as cold a winter in France, save one, perhaps, when I first left England "pour l'inconnu"¹ some twenty and odd years ago. We had dropped to I don't know how many degrees below freezing point (Paul says 15° au-dessous de zéro² in our parts and 19° on the neighbouring heights); we have had no water to drink or to cook with and had altogether given up washing either our linen or ourselves. Paul drowsed by the fireside all day long, only showing some alacrity at feeding-time.

The Box has reached us, my dear General, and I thank you for it in my own name and in that of the children, including Paul Gateau. You should have seen Mémé's eyes when they lighted on the pudding. The sweets too she has a weakness for, and the oranges are most welcome, being sweet in the mouth and anything but bitter in the belly.

The little lady who has helped Padlewski to shirk the guillotine you may remember my speaking of to you. She

¹ For the unknown.—*Tr.*

² Below zero.—*Tr.*

is a nervous and excitable little body, but very intelligent and excellent as far as generosity of feeling and goodness of heart go. She was at one time very thick with the fair and false Séverine, but now hates her worse than poison. And now the two young women have met face to face before the juge d'instruction¹ and have no doubt said pretty things to each other. Only Séverine est une farceuse² and Madame Duc is a good and genuine little article with nothing worse in her composition than an inordinate love of frippery and finery and "les dernières modes."³ But when Coquette meets Cocotte, then comes the tug of war. Mendelson is out of Mazas and I hope that Madame Duc may never get into St-Lazare, thanks to her fellow-culprit, Labruyère, who is not likely to be ill-used. But the Russians will, I fear, be expelled sooner or later.

I am delighted to hear that you have managed so well with Pumps and that she is grown reasonable, and I am very glad that Louise has seen her way to stop with you. In helping you to save your eyesight she is rendering a service to the Party and to all of us.

I am unable to give you any news of friends or foes, having been shut up in Le Perreux for the last three weeks and except a few stray beggars, who held up a signal of distress as they stopped for a moment at our gate on their forlorn tramp, I have seen nothing of the outer world. And damned glad I was when the pinched and red-nosed postman, like a dove, brought us green and living branches in the shape of letters from murky London.

Auer wrote yesterday to tell Paul that a fresh edition had been decided on of the *Recht auf Faulheit*.⁴

Good-bye, my dear General, with our loves and best

¹ Examining magistrate.—*Tr.*

² Is a humbug.—*Tr.*

³ The latest fashions.—*Tr.*

⁴ *The Right to be Lazy*.—*Tr.*

wishes. Remember me affectionately to Louise Kautsky and to all friends. Chatterbox Mémé is writing to her grand-mother and threatens to write to you.

YOUR LAURA

410. PAUL LAFARGUE
TO FREDERICK ENGELS IN LONDON

Le Perreux, 22/12/90

My dear Engels,

Thank you for your cheque.

You cannot imagine the stupidity of the upper classes in French society. The bank clerk at the *Crédit Lyonnais* who cashed your cheque for me tells me that a Russian loan has just been made without any publicity: the price of the subscriptions was very high—2,300 francs—and these shares were snapped up, so much so that he received orders not to accept further subscriptions. The loan was at 4.5 per cent. A further one is announced for next year; Russia is developing a taste for them.

Brave little Mme Duc-Quercy will be tried today; she will probably be sentenced. She has behaved admirably, not only having found means of hiding Padlewski, but also means of raising the 3,000 francs which he needed to renew his wardrobe and get away. She had made all arrangements for him to reach England when Labruyère intervened in the affair.

The cold is worse than ever.

Thank you for the oranges which reminded me of the pleasant Sunday evenings spent at Regent's Park Road.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Kautsky (tell me her name), to Pumps and to everyone.

A Merry Christmas.

P. LAFARGUE

CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAL OUVRIER SOCIALISTE

I



RAPPORT
DE LA
COMMISSION
D'ORGANISATION

PARIS

1889

Imprimerie polonaise de la Walka Klas et du Przedswit
à Genève

APPENDIX
INTERNATIONAL
SOCIALIST WORKING MEN'S CONGRESS,
14th to 21st JULY, PARIS, 1889
Report of the Organisation Commission

The Socialists of France could not permit the centenary of the bourgeois revolution to pass without asserting the close approach of a working-class revolution which, over the ruins of capitalist society, will proclaim equality for all men and women in the right to work, to the means of subsistence and to enjoyment.

For that reason the industrial Trades Unions and the Socialist organisations of France resolved at their Bordeaux and Troyes congresses that during the Exhibition an international congress be held.

Proletarian solidarity, which bourgeois reaction thought to have drowned in blood, will thus be given a striking opportunity to demonstrate that it could not be impaired by the crushing of the Commune nor by the outlawing of the International; since, being the inevitable result of capitalist production and exchange, it defied all persecution and survived all defeats.

For the organising of this Congress, the National Council of Trades Unions, with its headquarters in Bordeaux, and the Executive Commission of the Socialist Federation, with its headquarters in Troyes, are setting up a commis-

sion in Paris drawn from the various workmen's and Socialist bodies. To emphasise the uniting character of the work with which it was charged, the Commission invited the Paris Trades Unions and Socialist groups to elect delegates to participate in its work. Our Commission, thus open to all men of goodwill, may therefore be regarded as genuinely representative of French Socialist proletarians, united, despite differing shades of opinion, by a common idea: the international unity of the proletariat.

At the same time, an international industrial congress held in London shortly after the Bordeaux congress, resolved to hold an international congress in 1889 in Paris; and, despite the presence of delegate Farjat, who was mandated by over 250 non-Possibilist trade-union bodies, it entrusted the organisation of that congress to the Possibilists alone, without realising that this meant quite improperly taking sides in the divisions among the French and depriving all non-Possibilists of an unquestionable right.

Justly perturbed at the coexistence of these two international congresses in the same city, the foreign Socialists sought to fuse the two congresses into one. A private international conference was convoked at The Hague on February 28th, this year, on the initiative of the German Socialists.

Those present were:

Bebel and Liebknecht, delegates from the German Social-Democrats;

Scherer and Reichel, delegates from the Swiss Socialist Party;

Anseele and Volders, delegates from the Belgian Socialist Party;

Croll and Domela Nieuwenhuis, delegates from the Dutch Socialist Party;

Paul Lafargue, delegate from the National Council of

French Trades Unions and from the Executive Committee of the Socialist Federation of France.

The delegates of the Danish Socialist Party and William Morris of the Socialist League of England sent apologies for absence, declaring their readiness to accept the resolutions that should be passed in the interests of the international unity of Socialists.

The Federation of Socialist Workers, otherwise known as the Possibilist Party, was invited in the same terms and at the same time as socialist and working-class France, but refused to be represented at The Hague conference and gave as the reason for its refusal its unwillingness to allow the mandate it had received at the London congress, which it considered its exclusive property, to be open to discussion. This amounted to transforming the duty of convoking an international congress into a right overriding the will of the European Socialist parties.

In fact, the London Industrial Congress was not qualified to pass resolutions binding upon the Socialist parties, for, although there were Socialists at that congress, it was not a Socialist congress but purely an industrial congress, run by the trade-union parliamentarians, who went so far as to threaten to expel foreign delegates from the hall which they had hired. They had, furthermore, taken precautions to exclude from the congress the German and Austrian Socialist parties and all Socialists who were not manual workers.

The Socialists could not therefore have given any weight to a mandate conferred by a congress of this character.... As for the French Socialist organisations, they were firmly resolved not to be represented at an international congress convoked by the Possibilists. Their resolve stemmed from the essential fact that the Possibilists, by openly giving allegiance to the bourgeois parties and by acting as election agents in Paris and the provinces for various Ministries, had lost every trace of that independence from which no Socialist Party can swerve without abdicating.

Despite these considerations, The Hague conference, governed by the desire for international concord, refrained from challenging the validity of the mandate conferred on the Possibilists, and confined itself to laying down the conditions under which the Socialist parties represented at The Hague could participate in an international congress.

The Possibilists, regarding the international congress as their private business, arrogated to themselves in a preliminary circular the right to settle the date and agenda of the congress and to impose a method of inspecting credentials which would leave to their discretion the admission of French delegates. These pretensions were unanimously set aside by the delegates at the conference, who passed the following resolutions:

The undersigned invite the French Federation of Socialist Workers, by virtue of the mandate given by the 1888 London congress, to convoke the Paris International Congress, in agreement with the working-class and Socialist organisations of France and of other countries.

This convocation, signed by the representatives of working-class and Socialist organisations, shall be brought to the attention of the working class and Socialist public of Europe and America with the least possible delay.

The convocation shall lay down:

1. That the Paris International Congress be held from 14th to 21st July, 1889;
2. That the congress be open to the workmen and Socialists of all countries on terms compatible with the political conditions obtaining in each;
3. That the congress be sovereign with regard to the inspection of credentials and the fixing of the agenda. The following questions shall be treated, provisionally:

- (a) International labour legislation. Legal regulation of the working day, day-work, night-work, holidays, work of adult males, of women and of children.
- (b) Inspection of factories and workshops, as well as of domestic industries.
- (c) Ways and means of winning these claims.

The Belgian delegates were made responsible for bringing the resolutions of The Hague conference formally to the notice of the Possibilist Party.

Citizen Volders, having carried out his duty in respect of the Possibilist Council, reported to our commission. He informed us that the Possibilists refused to agree that the French workers and Socialists should join with them in signing the circular convoking the international congress, or to recognise the sovereignty of congress for the inspection of credentials.

The National Council of Trades Unions, the Executive Committee of the Socialist Federation and the Congress Organising Commission decided unanimously to abide by the resolutions of The Hague.

Among the foreign Socialists the desire for unity was so strong that they tried to make the Possibilists reconsider their refusal: they appealed to the English Democratic Federation, which maintains friendly relations with the Possibilists, and asked them to use their influence to win their support for the reasonable demands of The Hague conference. The Democratic Federation fared no better than the delegate from the international conference. On the contrary, the Possibilists took advantage of the enforced inactivity to which these conciliatory efforts condemned the Congress Organising Commission: they intrigued here, there and everywhere, issued slanders about our Organising Commission and treacherous attacks on our congress to the bourgeois press, and sent delegates into the provinces and to Belgium, Spain and Portugal with the function of recruiting supporters for their congress at any price.

Faced by the insurmountable obstinacy of the Possibilists and their Party determined to split the international proletariat as, for too long, they have split the French proletariat, the European Socialist parties decided to proceed, leaving the Possibilists with the responsibility for holding a counter-congress which we had done our utmost to avoid, and they issued jointly with us the following Convocation:

**INTERNATIONAL
SOCIALIST WORKING MEN'S CONGRESS,
14th to 21st JULY, PARIS, 1889**

To the Workmen and Socialists of Europe and America

The workmen's congress at Bordeaux, composed of delegates of more than 200 Trades Union bodies, with offices in every industrial centre of France, and the Troyes congress, composed of delegates from 300 workmen's and Socialist groups, representing the whole of the working class and revolutionary socialism in France, resolved that during the Exhibition an International Congress, open to the proletariat of the whole world, be convoked in Paris.

This resolve was joyfully acclaimed by the Socialists of Europe and America, glad of the opportunity to meet for the purpose of formulating working-class demands on the question of international labour legislation with which the conference of European government representatives is to deal at its meeting in Berne during September.

The capitalist class is inviting the rich and the powerful to come to the World Exhibition to contemplate and admire the products of working men condemned to poverty in the midst of the most colossal wealth ever possessed by human society. We Socialists, who stand for the emancipation of labour, the abolition of wage-labour and the establishing of a system in which one and all, without distinction of sex or nationality, will have the right to the wealth produced by common labour, we invite the produc-

ers to come to Paris on July 14th. We bid them to come and draw closer the fraternal bonds which, by consolidating the efforts of the proletariat of all countries, will hasten the advent of the new world.

"Proletarians of all lands, let us unite!"

GERMANY. *For the Social Democratic Party:* A. Bebel, Dietz, Frohme, Grillenberger, Harm, Kuhn, W. Liebknecht, Meister, Sabor, Schumacher, Singer, Socialist deputies to the Reichstag.

ENGLAND. *For the Socialist League:* W. Morris, F. Kitz.

For the Labour Association: R. B. Cunningham Graham, Socialist Member of Parliament, W. Parnell, G. Bateman, H. Champion, Tom Mann.

For the Ayrshire Mine-Workers' Union: J. Keir Hardie.

AUSTRIA. *For the Socialist Workers' Party:* J. Popp, V. Adler, E. Kralik, A. Zinnram, N. Hoffmann, J. Kreutzer, J. Winnig, G. Popper (Vienna); J. Mackart, H. Flockinger, K. Sams (Innsbruck); A. Weignis, J. Sieg (Linz); A. Friemel, T. Heinz, V. Wiener, A. Bozek (Steyr); K. Schneeweiss, A. Klofac, A. Sobotka, J. Hybes (Brunn); V. Sturz, F. Dozek, F. Nemecek (Prague); F. Zednicek, R. Zacholko (Prossnitz); A. Gerin, C. Giekar, J. Lax (Trieste); J. Daniluk (Lemberg); F. Adenan (Klagenfurt); C. Rieger (Bratzan); J. Zimmermann (Jägerndorf).

BELGIUM. *For the Socialist Workers' Party of Ghent:* Anseele, Van Beveren.

- SPAIN. *For the Socialist Workers' Party:* Pablo Iglesias, Francisco Diego.
- FRANCE. *For the Federation of Trades Councils and Labour Unions of France:* R. Lavigne.
For the Socialist Federation of France: G. Batisse.
- GREECE. *For the Hellenic Socialist Groups:* Plato E. Dracoulis, Editor of the Athens Socialist organ *Arden*.
- HOLLAND. *For the Social-Democratic Party:* Domela Nieuwenhuis, deputy; Croll.
- HUNGARY. *For the Socialist Workers' Party:* Leo Frankel.
- ITALY. Amilcare Cipriani (*Revolutionary Socialist Organisations*); Aldissio Sammito (*Sicilian Socialist Groups*); Gniocchi Viani (*Socialist Groups of Milan*).
- NORWAY. *For the Norwegian Social-Democratic Party:* Carl Jeppesen.
- POLAND. S. Mendelson (*Walka Klas Group*); L. Anielewski (*Workers' Committee of the Warsaw "Proletariat"*).
- PORTUGAL. Carvalho (*Socialist Workers' Association*).
- RUSSIA. *For the Union of Russian Social-Democrats:* Vera Zasulich, Plekhanov, Axelrod, Stepniak.
- SWEDEN. *For the Social-Democratic Party:* August Palm, Hjalmar Branting, Axel Danielson.
- SWITZERLAND. Brandt, Vice-President of the Grütli Association; *For the Socialist Party:* A. Reichel, A. Steck.

QUESTIONS PUT ON THE AGENDA BY THE HAGUE CONFERENCE

- A. International labour legislation. Legal regulation of the working day, day-work, night-work, holidays, work of adult males, of women and of children.
- B. Inspection of factories and workshops as well as of domestic industries.
- C. Ways and means of winning these claims.
- D. Abolition of standing armies and the arming of the people. (Question added by the Paris Organisation Commission.)

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Paris International Congress be held from 14th to 21st July, 1889.
- (2) That the congress be open to the workmen and Socialists of all countries on conditions compatible with the political conditions obtaining in each.
- (3) That the congress be sovereign with respect to the inspection of credentials and the fixing of the agenda.
- (4) That every Trades Union and every Socialist group shall have the right to be represented by one delegate.

THE CONGRESS ORGANISATION COMMISSION

For the Federation of Paris Trades Unions: Boulé, Besset, Roussel, Féline.

For the Socialist Group in the Paris Town Council: Dumas, Alphonse Humbert, Longuet, Chauvière, Vaillant [Town Councillors].

For the Socialist Organisations of Paris: Vaillant, Guesde, Deville, Jaclard, Crépin, Malon, Lafargue.

For the Socialist Group in the Chamber of Deputies: Basly, Camélinat, Cluseret, Ferroul [Deputies].

Secretary for France: Besset, Boot and Shoe Section, Labour Exchange, rue J. J. Rousseau, Paris

Foreign Secretary: Paul Lafargue, Le Perreux, near Paris

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Before we had so much as issued our first circular, a Congress of the Belgian Workers' Party opened at Jolimont; the Possibilists hastened to delegate one of their number to make a breach in The Hague resolutions; and, despite the efforts of the latter, the Jolimont congress decided by 39 votes to 33 that a delegate should be sent to the Possibilist congress, whereas they decided by 55 votes to 22 to be represented at our International Congress.

The Danish Workers' Social-Democratic Party passed the following resolution at its meeting on May 23rd:

The meeting deeply deplores the fact that two international congresses are to be convoked in Paris and resolves that the Danish Social-Democratic Party shall not support either of the two congresses whilst two congresses are in being; but it enjoins the Party Council to exert the utmost influence on the parties in dispute for the two congresses to unite.

Only the English Democratic Federation, setting itself in opposition to all the Socialist organisations which exist in Europe and America, has espoused the Possibilists' cause, without, however, claiming that its mere presence will give an international character to a Possibilist congress so destitute of any international element.

The workers of both hemispheres will thus find that there is only one congress which can lay claim to represent and interpret them, since it alone is convoked by Socialist parties of every country and it alone will include delegates from that section of the world proletariat conscious and resolved to found the emancipation of labour and of mankind upon common ownership.

To avoid any misunderstanding and to foil any last-minute manoeuvres, the Organisation Commission has brought to the notice of international Socialists the history of the steps taken to bring about conciliation and union before congress assemblies.

For the Organisation Commission and By Order, The Chairman of the Session: Daumas

Secretaries: Besset, Jaclard, Lafargue, Vailant

P.S. At the last moment we have received a correction from Citizen Farjat which, sent to the paper *Le Parti ouvrier*, but not printed, states that not only did he not vote for the motion giving the Possibilists the right to organise the international congress, but, further, that this motion was never put to the vote at the London congress. He furnishes, and is at any time ready to furnish, proofs of his statement.

TO THE READER

*The Foreign Languages Publishing House
would be glad to have your opinion of the
translation and the design of this book.*

*Our address is 21, Zubovsky Boulevard,
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ФРИДРИХ ЭНГЕЛЬС

ПЕРЕПИСКА
С ПОЛЕМ И ЛАУРОЙ ЛАФАРГ

т. 2