

COMMANDING HEIGHTS

Friedrich Engels

1

(1820-1895)

Partnered with Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels is acknowledged as the co-founder of communism, a revolutionary thinker in his own right who wrote on a wide range of topics, from economics to history to literature.

From "Engels, Friedrich." Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2001.

German political economist Friedrich Engels was a co-founder, with Karl Marx, of scientific socialism, now known as communism. Engels was born in Barmen (now Wuppertal). He came from a wealthy Protestant family. At an early age he was influenced by the works of the radical German poet Heinrich Heine and the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, and in 1839 he began writing on literary and philosophical topics for a number of publications. In 1842 Engels was converted to communist beliefs by the German Socialist Moses Hess. In the same year he met Karl Marx.

In a Manchester, England, textile firm between 1842 and 1844, Engels came into contact with chartism, the movement for extension of suffrage to workers. He contributed to the *Northern Star* and other publications and made a study of political economy. His experience and studies convinced him that politics and history could be explained only in terms of the economic development of society; he believed that the social evils of the time were the inevitable result of the institution of private property and could be eliminated only through a class struggle culminating in a communist society. These conclusions were embodied in a historical study, *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844), which established Engels's reputation as a revolutionary political economist.

In Paris, in 1844, Engels visited Marx, who had published works sympathetic to communism. The two men found that they had arrived independently at identical views and undertook to work together. Their many-sided collaboration continued until the death of Marx in 1883. It had two principal aspects: systematic exposition of the principles of communism, later known as Marxism; and the organization of an international communist movement. Lesser aspects of their collaboration included journalistic writing for the *New York Tribune* and other publications.

In elaborating communist principles, the two men began in the field of philosophy and subsequently turned to other fields. Marx dealt particularly with political thought, political economy, and economic history; Engels's interests included the physical sciences, mathematics, anthropology, military science, and languages.

The Communist Manifesto, which influenced all subsequent communist literature and is regarded as a classic exposition of modern communist views, appeared in 1848. It was written by Marx, partly on the basis of a draft prepared by Engels.

Contributions to the theoretical exposition of communism made by Engels include the following major works: *Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science* (known popularly as *Anti-Duhring*, 1878; trans. 1934), several chapters of which, published separately under the title *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1892), have become one of the best-known basic expositions of socialism; *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884; trans. 1902); and *Dialectics of Nature*, written between 1872 and 1882 and published posthumously (1925; trans. 1940). Engels made what is considered his greatest single contribution to Marxism after the death of Marx by editing, from rough drafts and notes, the second and third volumes of Marx's *Das Kapital*...

After the defeat of the revolutions of 1848 in a number of European countries, Engels again became an employee in the textile mill in Manchester, and throughout the years became the chief financial support of Marx and his immediate family. Engels joined the firm that owned the mill in 1864, and retired five years later. He moved to London in 1870 and, after becoming a member of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, or First International, began to relieve Marx of the work of directing the council's affairs. After the collapse of the First International in 1872, he maintained contact with revolutionists throughout the world. Engels took no direct part in the founding of the Second International in 1889, but his influence in shaping its programs and policies was considerable.

COMMANDING HEIGHTS

Friedrich Engels

3